

H2N Conflict Sensitivity and Human Resources

This H2N is based on the [FDFA Equal Opportunities Policy 2010-2020](#) and the new [EDA Aktionsplan zu betrieblicher Chancengleichheit, Diversität, Inklusion 2021-2028](#). The purpose of this H2N is to give orientations to SDC's staff on essential elements that can be taken into consideration when integrating conflict sensitivity in human resources management. Since a coherent and inclusive workforce diversity policy allows SDC to represent, adapt and respond to the needs of different groups in the society, it also has the potential to prevent tensions and conflicts in programme's implementation.

The workforce of a country should reflect the wider society and represent its social and cultural diversity. Conflict-sensitive human resources policies are therefore essential for SDC, especially when working in fragile and conflict-affected situations. Below are some key elements related to **Workforce Diversity** and to the **Psychosocial Support** that should be carefully taken into consideration in order to promote conflict-sensitive human resources management, and thus prevent and address tensions and potential conflicts in the course of programme implementation.

1. Workforce Diversity and Conflict-Sensitive Human Resources Management

Workforce diversity means representing the social and cultural diversity of a country within the staff of an organization, e.g. gender, ethnicity, religion, cast, language, age, disability, culture, etc. It enhances the ability of organisations like SDC to represent, adapt and respond to the needs of different groups, better understand the context and issues at stake and accordingly serve all the people, including those who tend to be excluded and marginalized. Furthermore, it enables to embrace new ideas and integrate different perceptions and perspectives into our work, therefore reducing the risks of tensions and conflicts among the staff. Work force diversity is of particular importance in fragile contexts, because staff composition and management can have an impact on the understanding of a particularly volatile and highly politicized context and on the perception of impartiality (e.g. affiliation with particular groups or conflicting parties). A more diverse team composition also helps to retrieve key information for the security situation assessment, by integrating perspectives from different groups of the society and therefore helping preventing and/or mitigating tensions and conflicts.

Measures for Conflict-Sensitive Human Resources Management:

SDC Offices can take the following measures to manage human resources in a conflict-sensitive way:

- Develop workforce diversity and inclusion among staff, consultants and implementing partners as a corporate goal (e.g. integrate measures in Cooperation Programs, ToRs, MbOs, etc.);
- Periodically assess the composition of staff in terms of gender, ethnicity, age, religion, language, age, disability, culture etc. in order to identify possible disparities and re-balance them;
- Take affirmative action for increasing workforce diversity (e.g. integration of staff from minority groups; internship programmes for young people from marginalized groups);
- Reinforce the connection and team spirit between colleagues in the office through setting values, code of conduct, intercultural trainings, PSEAH.
- Adopt diversity-sensitive and transparent recruitment and selection procedures (incl. locally recruited project personnel) and reach excluded groups through alternative communication channels for vacancy announcements (e.g. local radio).

Gender Equality as a Cornerstone for Workforce Diversity

- Organisations are not gender neutral – the staff composition influences how gender equality is institutionally integrated. Gender balance and the promotion of equal opportunities for men and women are crucial elements for SDC's Workforce Diversity Policies in field offices.

2. Psychosocial Support

In fragile contexts, the staff of SDC's Cooperation Offices and partner organizations are exposed to a higher level of stress and risk. SDC has a responsibility for the physical and psychological well-being of its staff members and therefore needs to provide adequate support by implementing measures such as:

- Discuss psychosocial aspects in pre-departure seminars (e.g. Ausreiseseminar);
- Integrate psychosocial aspects in the security concept of the organization unit (e.g. selfreflection on psychosocial health, practices on personal attitude, culture of care);
- Foster a culture of mutual trust and allow for team building activities including all staff;
- Promote the implementation of SDC's Code of Conduct as protection against all forms of abuse (links below);
- Contact FDFA psychologists if stress raises too high (contact below, confidential support).

References

[FDFA Equal Opportunities Policy 2010-2020](#)

[Code of conduct for FDFA employees abroad \(2018\)](#)

[Code of Conduct for Contractual Partners of the FDFA \(2018\)](#)

[List of FDFA – approved psychologists](#)

H2N - Conflict Sensitivity and Psychosocial Approach

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