



Coexistence International at
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Introduction

The Republic of Mauritius has, since independence, been promoted as an “island of success” both economically and in terms of social development. It continues to function as a successful democracy, and although there are some tensions among different social groups, these are more likely to be solved through the democratic process than through conflict. The population generally takes pride in promoting Mauritius as a “rainbow nation.” The recognition that there is inequality coupled with a desire to address this problem helps in alleviating social tension. There is visible public dialogue on coexistence issues, especially through the diverse and highly accessible media. Mauritius benefits from a relatively high standard of living and from the fact that national unity has never really been tested through civil war or other internal conflict. Nevertheless, there remain some areas where more subtle forms of discrimination based on ethnicity and gender remain, such as in recruitment and promotion opportunities, particularly in the public sector.¹ Additionally, there is an outstanding human rights dispute pertaining to indigenous peoples in outlying territories claimed by Mauritius.

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Context

The Republic of Mauritius, a small island nation in the Indian Ocean, is a relatively young country that has been populated for just over four hundred years, becoming independent in 1986 and a Republic in 1992. Settled by the Dutch in the 17th century (the islands that now form the Republic were previously uninhabited), it was the subsequent colonization by the French (1715-1810) and the British (1810-1968) that left an indelible mark on local socio-economic and cultural development.

Everybody in Mauritius is, in some way, either an immigrant or the descendant of an immigrant — however many generations removed and whether or not the original immigration into the islands was voluntary, forced, or coerced. Both the Dutch and the French imported slaves, with the majority originating from Africa. The French cultivation of sugar cane through slave labor created an industry that has remained to this day. Following the abolition of slavery by the British administration in 1834, indentured laborers were brought in from India to replace the emancipated slaves who generally declined to continue working in the sugar-cane fields. Tempted by the commercial opportunities in the emerging colony, some immigrants from the Hakka-speaking parts of southern China followed. The echoes of this past are still present in the social, political, and economic demography of the country—in other words, in the ethnic and religious divisions in modern Mauritius.

In the Census of 2000, the population was 1,178,848, and by religion, which is the best local proxy for ethnicity, was made up of fifty percent Hindu, thirty-two percent Christian (comprising white descendants of colonial settlers, the Creole descendants of African slaves, and some converts from Chinese and Indian peoples), seventeen percent Muslims of Indian descent, and one percent of others. It is perhaps significant that just half of one percent recorded that they had no religion. All major religions have an equal number of public holidays per year that, together with national holidays, are given to all members of the population. Provisions in the labor laws ensure that minor religious holidays may be celebrated to some degree but on

a more individual and personal basis, with time off from work granted for religious observance. Mauritius is constitutionally a secular country but religion pervades nearly all aspects of life.

The Republic of Mauritius is composed of two main islands, Mauritius and Rodrigues, and some smaller islands and islets scattered around the southwestern Indian Ocean. Rodrigues became a semi-autonomous region of the republic in 2002 through peaceful negotiation and the creation of its own Island Assembly, although it also retains some representation in the National Assembly of the Republic of Mauritius. As the population of Rodrigues is almost completely Afro-Mauritian in descent, the demography is different from that of the main island. In the Census of 2000 the population of Rodrigues was 35,779, of which ninety-eight percent were Christian. All people born in the Republic of Mauritius are Mauritian citizens, and the spouses of Mauritian citizens have the right to citizenship upon the fulfillment of certain residence criteria. Their offspring are deemed Mauritian citizens as well (as adults they can choose to defer to another nationality if eligible).

Mauritius does not have a standing army but retains a small paramilitary unit attached to the police force known as the Special Mobile Force (SMF). Mauritius also has a National Human Rights Commission in whose annual report it states, “At a meeting between parliamentarians and national human rights institutions...in 2005, the former were asked whether they read the Annual Report of their national human rights commission after its publication. They admitted that they did not...Fortunately in Mauritius, the annual reports of the National Human Rights Commission are consulted and used by civil society and NGOs involved in the constant struggle for the preservation and improvement of human rights.”² In general, the main human rights abuses noted were related to perceived unjust imprisonment and violence perpetrated against prisoners. One major human rights case is the situation of the Ilois, a Creole-speaking people of African origin, who in the 1960s and 1970s were forcibly removed by the British from their ancestral homes in the Chagos Archipelago, a territory claimed by Mauritius, to make space for the American military base on the island of Diego Garcia. The representatives of the Ilois consistently win legal claims for redress and restitution, but these judgments are not accepted by the British Government,

who have appealed every decision made by the highest courts granting the Ilois the right of return and have even turned to archaic legal mechanisms to deny the islanders their rights. As of 2007, the claims of the Ilois are still being heard in the international courts.

In the context of other post-colonial African countries, Mauritius is regarded as one of the best governed, with relative political stability leading to relative prosperity for a small island developing state. In the Human Development Index (HDI) for 2006, Mauritius is ranked 63rd of 177 countries with an HDI Value of 0.800. According to the HDI, in Mauritius there is an average life expectancy at birth of 72.4 years and, in education, a combined primary, secondary, and tertiary gross enrollment ratio of 74.5 percent. The United Nations Development Programme gives the Human Poverty Index (HPI-1) as 11.3 percent for Mauritius compared to, for example, 60.2 percent for Mali (with lowest percent being the goal).³ However, these figures should be viewed with caution. Life expectancy is high in Mauritius and even higher in Rodrigues but this does not mean that the quality of life is of an equally high standard for all. There is not a fully equitable split of opportunity in the country, and when looking at the poverty figures it is necessary to keep this in mind. Some would argue that as the country operates as a meritocracy this will always be so, but others will point to built-in ethnic bias in the system. For a meritocratic system to work the opportunities and resources must be fairly distributed. It is clear that in contemporary Mauritius this is not the case, and the Creole community in particular does not have a fair share of educational opportunities.⁴ However, these issues are debated publicly and freely in the press and other public forums, and this visible dialogue on such volatile issues helps maintain the political and social harmony of the country. The free and affordable press in Mauritius and the high level of literacy means that information from all sources on all topics is widely circulated and debated.

In Mauritius it is a legal requirement for all children aged 5 to 16 years to attend school, which is free, and there is also a thriving pre-primary school sector, essential in a country where up until recently there had been full employment. Tertiary education is heavily subsidized. There is also a private school sector where fee-paying students can enjoy a different form of education including international schools and locally-founded institutes. Up until recently the Catholic Church had a large role in education, reserving a quota of places for non-Catholic students. In the education system the provision of Asian Languages as a subject counting towards the Certificate of Primary Education has caused some controversy.

Although several studies in the 1960s predicted a gloomy future for Mauritius⁵ the efforts made in birth control

slowed population growth, which has hovered around, and sometimes fallen below, replacement levels. The relatively high standard of living in Mauritius has contributed to the harmonious development of the country. Almost all households have access to clean and running water and electricity regardless of location or the socio-cultural or economic standing of the residents. Televisions and radios are prevalent in almost all homes, mobile telephones have a very high degree of penetration, and there is Internet connectivity almost everywhere, including access to broadband for those who can afford it.

Coexistence in Mauritius

Mauritius has a history of positive coexistence. Although there was some civil unrest, particularly in the build-up to independence, there has never been civil war or armed conflict between political parties or ethnically-based groups or organizations. The country has remained politically and socially stable, and this has been reflected in the development of a strong movement to promote "Mauritianism." Many people in the country feel that citizens should regard themselves as Mauritian and not as a member of any particular community, and the promotion of Mauritius as a "rainbow nation" has been adopted at all levels of society. The idea is to recognize and celebrate the diversity of the origins and cultures of the contemporary Mauritian population while developing a unique Mauritian identity. The creation of a universal cultural identity is a high priority for many from the government, community-based and non-governmental organizations, and the general public. National celebrations are designed to be culturally inclusive (though there's risk that traditional and historical cultural ties will in the process be downplayed). The government has also funded cultural centers for each ethnic group to record, promote, and celebrate its own history and role in the development of the country while contributing to the Mauritian heritage. While the main civil categories used by the Central Statistical Office in Mauritius are Hindu, Muslim, Sino-Mauritian, and General Population, as part of the move for creating a single Mauritian identity some people argue that all the population should fall under the banner of General Population. There's a growing recognition that perhaps the biggest threat to local identity at all levels is the effect of the globalization of culture, given that Mauritius is highly developed with regard to satellite television, cinema, and Internet penetration.

In many ways, national unity in Mauritius has never been fully tested, since there has not been a civil war or an internal struggle of sufficient intensity to polarize communities. Nevertheless, there is a strong element of Mauritian identity-building that cuts across political, ethnic,

and religious divides. In addition, the orderly transition of government has meant that some individuals have had the opportunity to progress from activist to governmental representative with the opportunity to legislate for their particular issue.

Language is one area where community divisions are identifiable, and also where oneness can be observed. The official language of Mauritius is English, the press and television are predominantly in French, but the lingua franca that unites all is Kreol. (Just about all Mauritians are trilingual, at least to some degree, in French, English, and Kreol; Hindi, Hakka, and Bhojpuri are among the other languages spoken.) The promotion of the Kreol language is a key issue in the creation of a Mauritian identity, and recently a multi-community endeavor has succeeded in giving Kreol a new level of acceptance by creating an "official" orthography called "Kreol Larmoni," which attempts to legitimize spoken and written Kreol as an official language and as a medium of instruction.

The current distribution of wealth has its roots in the way the population of the country developed. The descendants of the slave population tended to gravitate to the coastal areas while those of the indentured laborers moved up the economic scale, buying land and developing businesses. The descendants of the Chinese immigrants who had come to open shops serving the growing urban areas of the late 19th and early 20th centuries developed, in some instances, large commercial concerns. At the same time the Franco-Mauritian community built on the wealth that it had amassed during the slavery period to branch out into all areas of economic activity and continues to control most of the private wealth of the country.

The way this historical development played out has sowed seeds of discontent about a socio-economic divide: the coastal regions have remained poorer and with a greater concentration of Creole people living there, notwithstanding the development of tourist hotels there, while the urban areas have become more developed socially and economically. In 1999, Mauritius witnessed major rioting by Creole demonstrators where anger was directed against the police following the death in custody of a popular local musician. This was in many ways indicative of the underlying tension that is perhaps more targeted against the state than other ethnic or religious groups. Nevertheless, there were some elements that did, while the riots were raging, try to capitalize on the unrest by attempting to make the issue communalist.

The inability of a group within a population to develop socially or economically because of the lack of adequate resources at their disposal can sometimes become viewed

by others as the lack of desire by members of that group to develop. In Mauritius this is referred to as the "Malaise Creole," whereby some people promote the idea that members of the Creole population are somehow sociologically and genetically pre-programmed to enjoy a less developed lifestyle, and that the situation they are in is one that they have created through choice, preferring a fun-loving and relaxed lifestyle above one of endeavor. Similarly, members of other communities are stereotyped as well, with those of Indian descent being portrayed as industrious and pre-disposed to thrift, those of Chinese descent as somehow having a preternatural ability for commerce, and Franco-Mauritians as the wealthy elite. These stereotypes have not led to a boiling over of tension between sections of the community but have come to the fore in debates on the role of ethnic discrimination in recruitment for employment, for example. Still, there is no apparatus in place that specifically deals with the possibility of ethnically-based conflict, since that possibility is viewed as remote.

The economy and coexistence

Since the early 1970s the economy of Mauritius has been dominated by three key pillars: sugar production, the textile industries, and tourism. These, together with the public sector, account for the main body of employment. These industries have led to an estimated GDP per capita in 2006 of \$13,500 (in U.S. dollars) compared to near geographical neighbors Madagascar (\$857), the Comoros (\$1,943), and the Seychelles (\$16,652).⁶ Due to this economic strength, Mauritius has been called "an island of success."⁷

The Export Processing Zone (EPZ),⁸ which focused on the production of garments, was crucial to the success of Mauritius as a nation — opening up working opportunities for women, challenging and overtaking sugar as the main pillar of the economy, and providing full employment for the last quarter of the 20th century. It is perhaps this aspect of full employment and prosperity that has played such a key role in stabilizing community relations in Mauritius. The success of developing these new industries, the shift from almost total dependence on sugar cultivation, the seemingly democratic process of government and the relative social harmony of the population has led to Mauritius being seen as a good example of how post-colonial development can work.

However, in the last decade or so Mauritius has experienced a reversal in its economic conditions, with a rising rate of unemployment due to the closing of many of the textile factories in the EPZ, the scaling down of employment in the local sugar industry following the

removal of preferential price agreements from the European Union and increased mechanization, and a general downturn in the economy due to the impact of international events. This has brought with it some difficult times for many people. In Mauritius a high number of households are heavily indebted. Lease and credit facilities are easily come by and the poorer members of the population are targeted. Due to the high rates of interest charged for credit facilities, their users are penalized financially for being poor, while the wealthier can enjoy discounts for paying cash. In many ways it could be argued that the image of the high quality of life enjoyed by many Mauritians is a façade that could easily crumble in the current economic climate. As yet, this has not transferred into social unrest, but there are some cracks developing in the veneer of harmony. Certain ethnic groups see their already fragile position being eroded while perceiving that the gap between the “haves” and “have nots” is widening along social and community lines. For example, following recent severe cyclone activity certain groups demonstrated their anger at being, as they saw it, last in the queue for reconnection to public services, a situation that they saw as being related to the general Creole make-up of their community. Although the wealth gap is not generally based on ethnicity other than the wealth heritage of the Franco-Mauritians in the population, it is easy for some groups to portray it as such.

Governance and coexistence

The lead up to independence in 1968 was key in determining the current socio-political situation in Mauritius. At that time some members of the population developed the idea, fanned by some political figures, that independence would bring with it domination by the local majority community, who would then subjugate the minority communities. Accordingly, the post-independence electoral system was designed to ensure inclusion. Called the “Best Loser System,” it is intended to guarantee that all communities are represented, to some extent, in parliament. Under this system, a proportion of the deputies sitting in the National Assembly are selected by quota, based on ethnicity, from those candidates recording the highest number of votes but who failed to secure victory in the national elections. However, the Best Loser System is itself now under attack by disparate members of the political spectrum. They see it as a poor way to select a government and as a hangover from colonial times that perpetuates ethnicity as a key variable in Mauritian life. Several types of proportional-representation systems have been proposed to replace the Best Loser System but none have been adopted. In 2002, the Sachs Commission, set up by the Mauritian Government and chaired by the South

African judge Albie Sachs, recommended retaining this electoral system in Mauritius, with some minor changes.

Governance in Mauritius is seen by international organizations as being fair, transparent and based on democratic principles. According to the 2006 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, Mauritius ranked 42nd out of 163 countries based on perceived levels of corruption. Mauritius scored 5.1 out of a total possible 6.3 points (with more points being the goal). After Botswana, Mauritius is the highest ranking, or least corrupt, African country in the index. In terms of the quality of political institutions, Mauritius is at the higher end of indicators for property rights, democracy, and participation when measured among all developing countries. In 2005, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported, “Strong domestic institutions have contributed substantially to Mauritian success. In contrast to many developing countries, Mauritius has, since independence, been a vibrant democracy and has developed strong participatory institutions, to promote inclusion rather than division among its ethnically diverse population. Indeed Mauritius has succeeded in reaping the benefits of diversity, including strong ties between local Indian and Chinese communities with their ethnic counterparts in the world.”⁹ Many Mauritians or those of Mauritian descent living in the Mauritian diaspora have maintained their ties with the homeland and act as commercial intermediaries. In this way links with members of the wider ethnic diasporas reflected in the Mauritian population are promoted. This gives Mauritius an advantage in its dealings with the wider world both socially and economically.

Following independence, Mauritius became a highly politicized nation keen to exercise its democratic principles and to recognize the constitutional rights of the people. This led to the creation of several political parties that, over the years, developed into the main political forces in the country. These parties appealed to cross-sections of the population and while they have changed in ethos, they remain multi-ethnic in support. In part this is due to the fact that all the political parties emanating out of post-independence Mauritius were socialist. Pre-independence political parties had been linked to the needs of the various ethnic groups but new parties were inclusive in nature and looking forward to a new and unified Mauritius. (Perhaps coincidentally, the people forming the new parties in the late 1960s had generally studied abroad, mainly in the UK and France, and were imbued with the spirit of the times.) The founding members came from all sections of Mauritian society generating multi-ethnic support that has remained despite a shift from the initial surge of socialist enthusiasm.

Policy approaches

The Constitution of Mauritius is a strong document that enshrines the rights of the people to diversity in religion, culture, and politics, while preventing any erosion of those rights that could lead to conflict.¹⁰ There is legislation in place that protects the rights of the individual and prohibits racism and sexism. Laws pertaining specifically to the protection of minors are in place as well, and there is an Ombudsperson for Children. NGOs are monitoring how well the legislation translates into practice and whether there is proper and just policing when it comes to such issues as domestic violence.

The judiciary system is seen by most as operating independently and in a fair and impartial manner.¹¹ However, it has been criticized for being prone to procedural delays. Unfortunately, there is not the same degree of faith in the independence and integrity of the police force. The police force has been accused of not being inclusive of all minorities and of recruiting more than a proportional share of those of Indian descent. Currently, though, steps are being taken to actively recruit members of other communities.

In 2002 the World Economic Forum reported that Mauritius “has a reputation for some of the most efficient government institutions in Africa, and is ranked very high on property rights protection and judicial efficiency.”¹² The country has signed and ratified many international conventions, including the 1972 International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. However, in practice there may be some weaknesses in the monitoring and application of some of the conventions.¹³

Politics is a major factor in Mauritius, and many would argue that political interference permeates all levels of life.¹⁴ Many of the public appointments and some of the private ones, at all levels, are based on political backing. Because of this, some worry that functionaries in political parties will appoint people according to cronyism, and that they will tend to appoint those of their own ethnicity.

Nevertheless, a certain degree of meritocracy has developed wherein ethnicity is not felt to be acceptable or useful as a criterion for recruitment or promotion. One of the side effects of the widening of employment opportunities following the development of the EPZ was that workers have widened contacts and social networks by being exposed to multi-ethnic workplaces and inter-ethnic relations among colleagues. This unexpected side effect of full employment has empowered some of the previously less powerful groups and individuals; and the

social experiences they have gained have broadened their horizons and their expectations.

Although no one government department is dedicated to coexistence most of the ministries work in an inclusive manner. If an individual or organization feels they've experienced illegal discrimination, they can file complaints with the Ombudsman or instigate legal proceedings. In particular, the Ministry of Arts and Culture ensures that all elements of society are represented in cultural activities in which the Ministry is involved. This has led to a cross-cutting culture where, for example, artists of Indian descent are very prominent in Sega music which is traditionally African; or many local writers are creative in various languages that are not necessarily ancestral. The media generally reflects the diversity of the population, and all aspects of culturally relevant information and entertainment are broadcast.

Recommendations

Mauritius is a country with an active interest in understanding its own social and economic development. Research in many relevant areas is constantly undertaken and, perhaps significantly, Mauritius has voluntarily put itself under the local, regional, and international spotlight by implementing the African Peer Review Mechanism.¹⁵

With the downturn in the economy the country is experiencing rising levels of unemployment and a widening gap between the haves and the have-nots. The figures show that certain communities may be under or over-represented in certain occupations.¹⁶ The situation of women is one area that needs observation; the downturn in the textile manufacturing sector means that they have been the hardest hit by recent unemployment. This may lead to the reintroduction of more traditional attitudes to women's roles in society—attitudes that so much has been done to combat over the last 40 years. The engendering of employment has also led to the engendering of unemployment, and this, along with ethnicity, religion, and political allegiance, will be a factor that will have to be considered when promoting new opportunities, in order that individuals do not feel discriminated against.

Nevertheless, Mauritius has worked hard to be regarded as a country with high standards in governance and human development among its peers as a developing country, as a Small Island Developing State, and as an African nation. It can also compare itself favorably with some of the best in the developed world. What remains is to continue with this proud record, while being aware of

new challenges and continuing to work for the social and economic betterment of all Mauritians. At the time of this writing great efforts are being made by the government and non-governmental bodies to find a way to continue the social and economic development of the country, especially through studies of what has and hasn't worked, and new legislation to enhance the previous advancements. Great attention is being paid to the need to find new areas of employment that are matched to the skills of the local labor force. Failing that, the country will no longer be able to maintain its relatively high standard of living; which could either provide a catalyst for social unrest or further unify individuals with different community profiles in the struggle against hard times equally experienced.

The main issue is to ensure that the historical and contemporary freedoms and quality of life enjoyed by Mauritians are not jeopardized by political and economic expediency. Perhaps the key to this is the ordered change of government based on constitutionally-derived democratic principles, which means that long-term plans can be implemented even if governments should change, and that the social development of the country is the agreed goal of whoever is in government, even though ideas on how this should be achieved may differ. The very recognition that there is potential for discrimination—and the desire to prevent it from damaging the social fabric of the nation—also provides a strong base on which national unity can be built. Honest recognition of weaknesses permits action to be taken. The democratic will of the people, displayed through the ballot box and unconditionally accepted by the political parties of the country, is essential to the peaceful implementation of social-development programs. National unity needs to be a part of all aspects of life from the top down. In 2006, the President of the Republic of Mauritius urged the people to remember that, "It is the duty of every one of us to do our part to ensure that progress continues, so that everyone lives a decent peaceful life and that harmony reigns in our country."¹⁷ The Prime Minister, for his part, called for "national unity and sacrifice in the face of the different challenges affecting the economy" and appealed to all Mauritians to "act as responsible citizens and keep working for the betterment of the country."¹⁸ If such words are translated into action then the progress of Mauritius as an island of success can continue.

Endnotes

- 1 Centre for Applied Social Research, Discriminatory Practices in Recruitment in Mauritius (ILO/UNDP Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations & Employment, Mauritius, forthcoming, 2007).
- 2 National Human Rights Commission, Annual Report

- (2005).
- 3 UNDP, Human Development Report (2006).
- 4 Center for Applied Research (2007).
- 5 Titmuss, R., Social Policies and Population Growth in Mauritius (reprinted. Cass, 1968).
- 6 UNDP, Human Development Report (2006).
- 7 Edward and Bridget Donmen, Mauritius: An Island of Success (NZ, UK: James Currey Publishers, 1999).
- 8 The International Labour Organization defines Export Processing Zones as "industrial zones with special incentives set up to attract foreign investors, in which imported materials undergo some degree of processing before being re-exported" (<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/dialogue/sector/themes/epz/epzs.htm>)
- 9 Sacerdoti, E. et al. Mauritius: Challenge of Sustained Growth (IMF, 2005) pp 96-97.
- 10 Chapter 2 Clause 11 of the Constitution of Mauritius protects Freedom of Conscience, Clause 12 protects Freedom of Expression, Clause 13 Freedom of Assembly and Association, Clause 15 Freedom of Movement and Clause 16 Protection from Discrimination see <http://www.gov.mu> for more details on the Constitution of Mauritius.
- 11 New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad) – Peer Review Mechanism
- 12 World Economic Forum. Competitiveness Report (2002).
- 13 Centre for Applied Social Research. Discrimination in Recruitment in Mauritius (forthcoming).
- 14 Centre for Applied Social Research/UNDP ILO Ministry of Labour. Discrimination in the Labour Market in Mauritius (University of Mauritius Press, forthcoming in 2007).
- 15 The APRM is a system introduced by the African Union to help countries improve their governance. It is a way of looking forward while taking account of where we are today. Participation in the system is voluntary. A Panel of Eminent Persons appointed by the APRM Secretariat oversees its implementation throughout Africa. For further information go to: <http://www.nepad.org/2005/files/aprm.php>
- 16 Centre for Applied Social Research. Discrimination in the Labour Market in Mauritius.
- 17 National Day Address of the President of the Republic of Mauritius 2005. Date TK
- 18 National Day Address, March 12, 2006

About Coexistence International

Based at Brandeis University since 2005, Coexistence International (CI) is an initiative committed to strengthening the resources available to policymakers, practitioners, researchers, advocates, organizations, and networks promoting coexistence at local, national, and international levels. CI advocates a complementary approach to coexistence work through facilitating connections, learning, reflection, and strategic thinking between those in the coexistence field and those in related areas.

What is Coexistence?

Coexistence describes societies in which diversity is embraced for its positive potential, equality is actively pursued, interdependence between different groups is recognized, and the use of weapons to address conflicts is increasingly obsolete. Coexistence work covers the range of initiatives necessary to ensure that communities and societies can live more equitably and peacefully together.

About the Series

In 2006, more than ninety percent of countries have populations made up of multiple identity groups. This rich diversity, full of promise and possibilities, also presents some of the most common and difficult challenges facing states today. Governments continue to wrestle with coexistence issues such as the dimensions of citizenship, constitutional and political designs that reflect the diversity within state borders, language and minority rights, land management, equality and cultural issues, and democratic participation. Understanding how diverse communities get along peacefully and equitably within a State is critical. If we can understand how some societies address issues of difference in constructive ways, then we might develop a repertoire of policy and programmatic options for countries experiencing inter-group violence or growing tensions.

With this publication series, CI seeks to describe the state of coexistence within different countries, and compare diversity and coexistence policies from countries around the world. CI has made no attempt to assess the implementation or success of such processes, or to endorse any of the initiatives mentioned in the report. We believe, however, that the documentation of the existence and scope of such efforts can contribute to a wider understanding of the variety of approaches for addressing issues of coexistence and intergroup conflict.

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With this publication series, CI examines where and how certain fields intersect with coexistence work. What challenges and opportunities exist when disciplines work together toward the common goal of a more peaceful, just world? This series illustrates the possibilities of effecting positive coexistence through cooperation among related fields.

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