



UN SCORE for Eastern Ukraine

Social connectedness and belonging

The UN SCORE for Eastern Ukraine (USE) is a sophisticated analytical tool designed to improve the understanding of societal dynamics in the five eastern oblasts of Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Kharkiv, Luhansk, and Zaporizhzhia. USE helps to identify strategic entry points for policies and programs that contribute to strengthening social cohesion.

USE is based on the Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) Index methodology, originally developed in Cyprus by the Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development and UNDP. The SCORE Index has since been implemented across several countries in Europe and elsewhere to assist international and national stakeholders in the design of evidence-based solutions that can strengthen social cohesion and reconciliation efforts.

USE is jointly implemented by three UN entities – UNDP, UNICEF, and IOM. The first USE wave was conducted in 2017 and was funded by the UN, with a major contribution from the EU.

The USE process began with a series of consultations with authorities and civil society representatives in Kyiv and in each of the five oblasts in order to develop a conceptual model of what constitutes social cohesion in eastern Ukraine (Figure 1).

The first USE wave, which was completed in October 2017, captured the views of some 10,000 people residing in the five oblasts in the east of Ukraine. Specifically, it comprised a face-to-face general population survey of 5,300 respondents; a school survey of 3,300 pupils in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts; 72 in-depth interviews; and a face-to-face survey of 1,500 people residing in the non-government controlled areas who commute to the government-controlled areas across the five checkpoints in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The results presented in this brief are shown at the oblast level in Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, and Zaporizhzhia oblasts, and at the sub-oblast level in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts to allow for a more granular analysis. For more information on USE and the results of the first wave please visit use.scoreforpeace.org

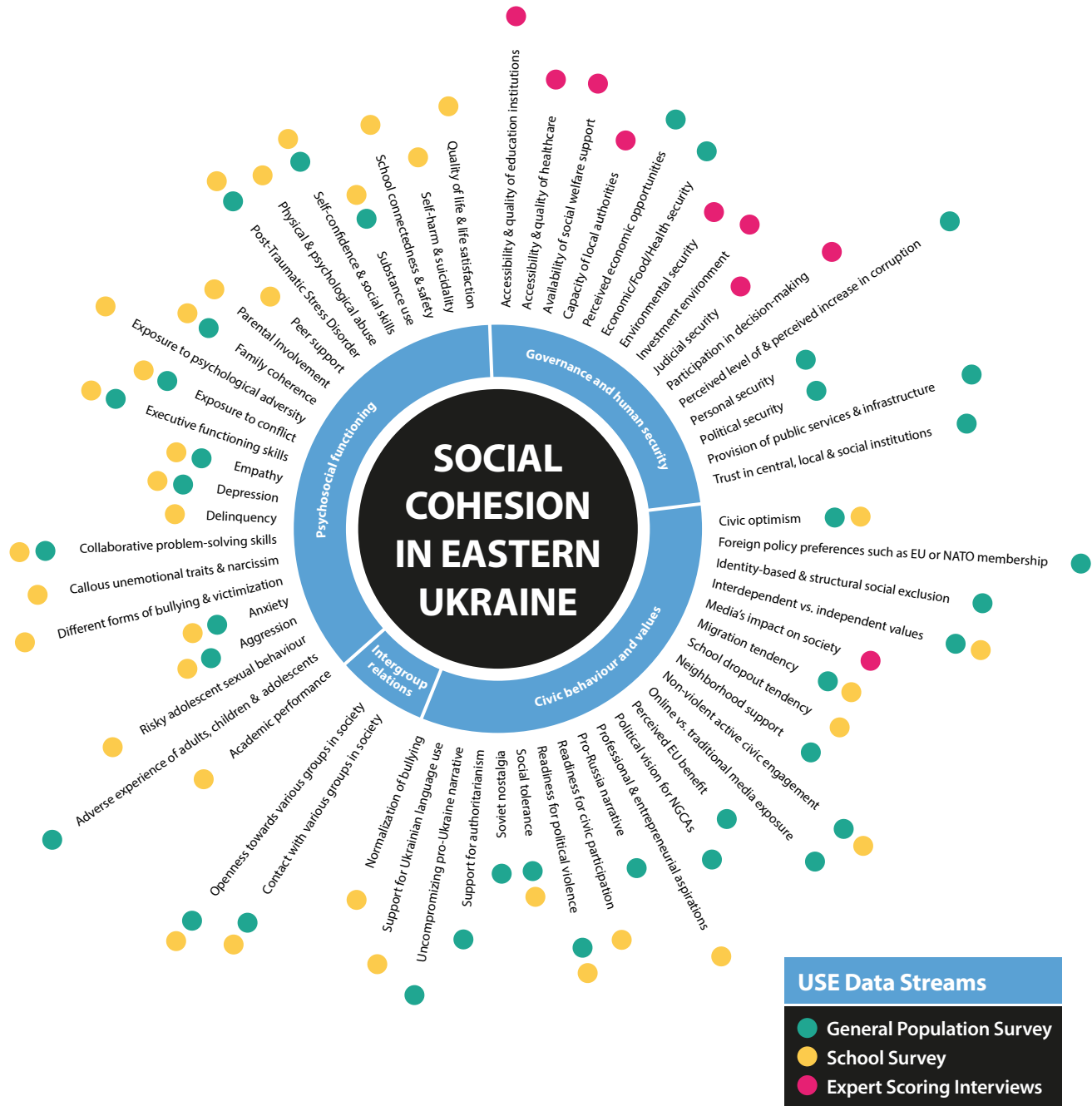


Figure 1. USE conceptual model for social cohesion in eastern Ukraine

USE Outcome 3: Social connectedness and belonging

This brief outlines the key findings from USE Outcome 3: Social connectedness and belonging (Figure 2).

Across the eastern part of Ukraine, the average score is 6.6 – with 0 indicating that people have no sense of connectedness and belonging at all, and 10 indicating that people feel fully connected to and have a complete sense of belonging in their community. While northern Luhansk oblast shows a stronger level of connectedness and belonging than other parts of eastern Ukraine, there is no significant difference in the scores for the five oblasts. Although demographic analysis of the data shows no relevant difference in the scores with regards to gender, income, education or employment status, it reveals that older respondents (60 and above) and those from rural settlements have a stronger sense of social connectedness and belonging.

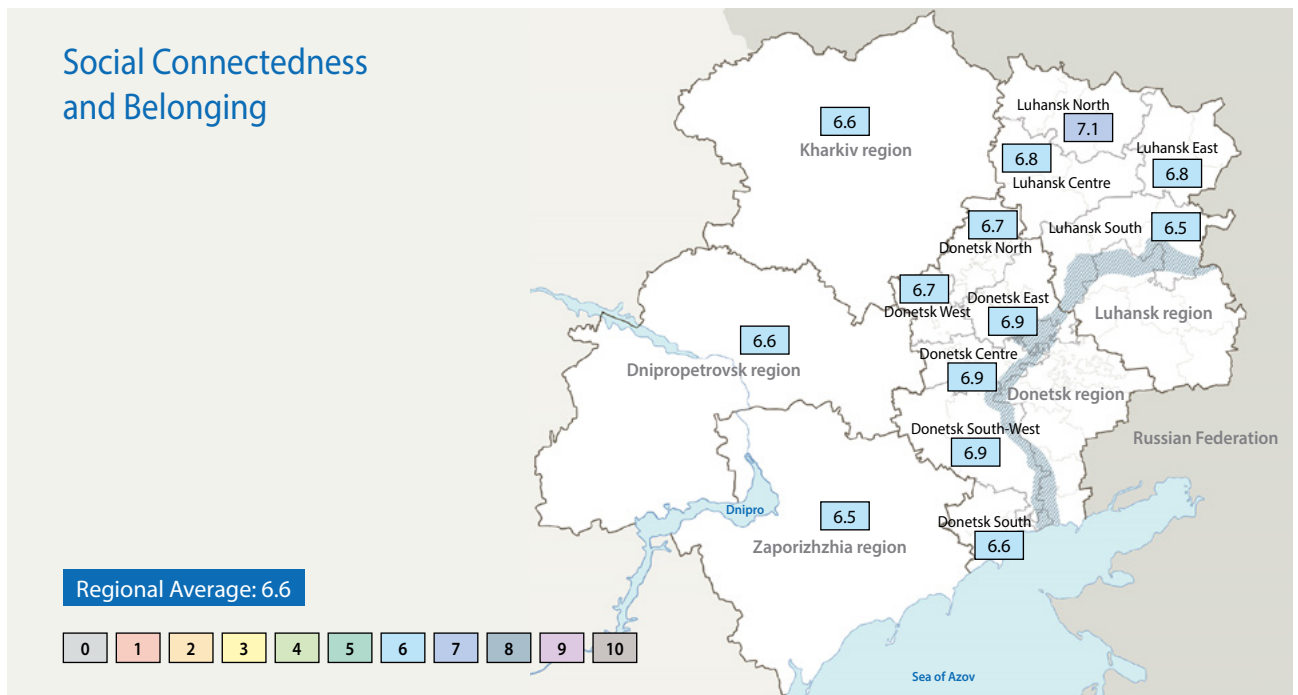


Figure 2: Scores for social connectedness and belonging

Understanding social connectedness and belonging

This outcome is comprised of three components: neighborhood support, social exclusion, and openness towards various groups in society.¹

¹ Neighborhood support relates to the extent to which one feels supported by and can rely on neighbors for support. Social exclusion relates to feeling excluded or isolated because of one's identity and or position in society (e.g. gender, religion, sexual orientation, level of income and education). Openness relates to the willingness to engage in dialogue with various groups in society, and feelings towards them. This was assessed through a series of questions covering positive feelings towards other groups, negative stereotypes, perception of other groups as potential social threats, readiness to engage in dialogue with representatives of other groups, and perceived improvement/deterioration of relations with other groups.

A demographic breakdown of the data shows that the highest levels of **neighborhood support** are found among the older population (i.e., 60 years of age and above) and that part of the population that is struggling the most financially (i.e., those who do not have enough money even for food). Geographically, the highest scores are found in the northern and eastern parts of Luhansk oblast, as well as in the east of Donetsk oblast (Figure 3), which are generally rural areas.

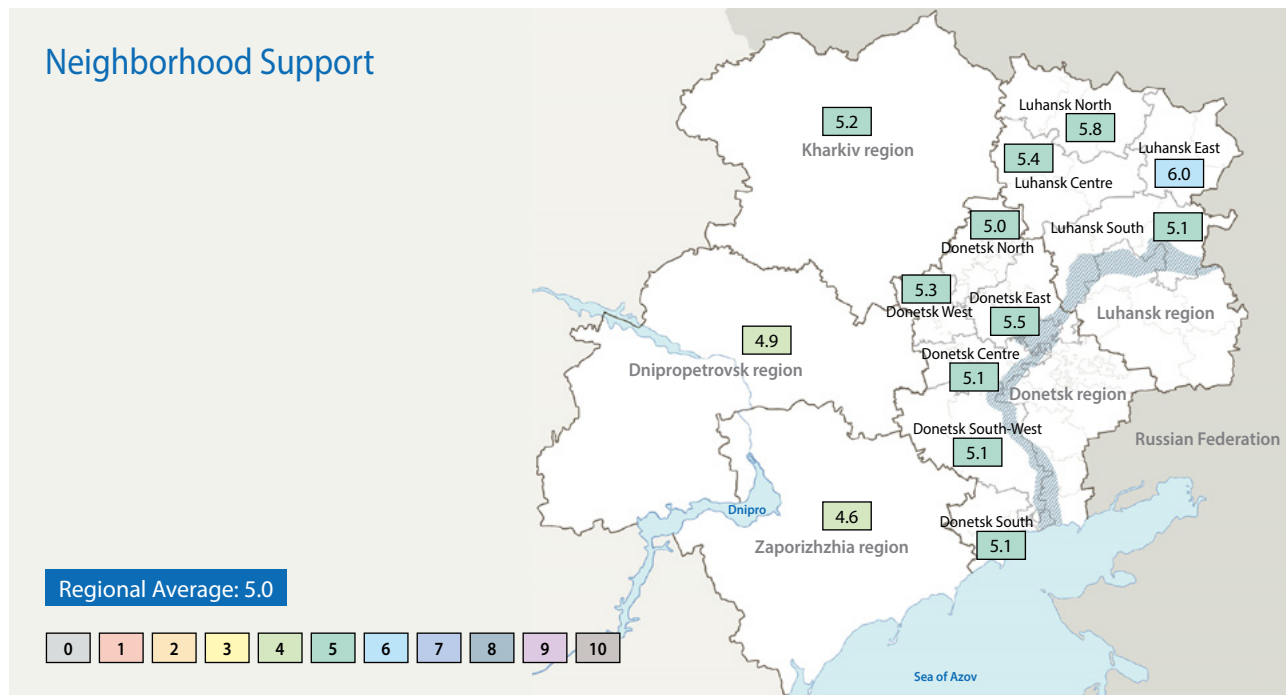


Figure 3: Scores for neighborhood support

Levels of **social exclusion**, where a score of 0 indicates that people do not feel socially excluded at all and a score of 10 indicates that everyone is experiencing some form of social exclusion, appear to be consistently low throughout the region (see Figure 4). It is important to note that USE does not specifically seek the views of minority and/or marginalized groups.

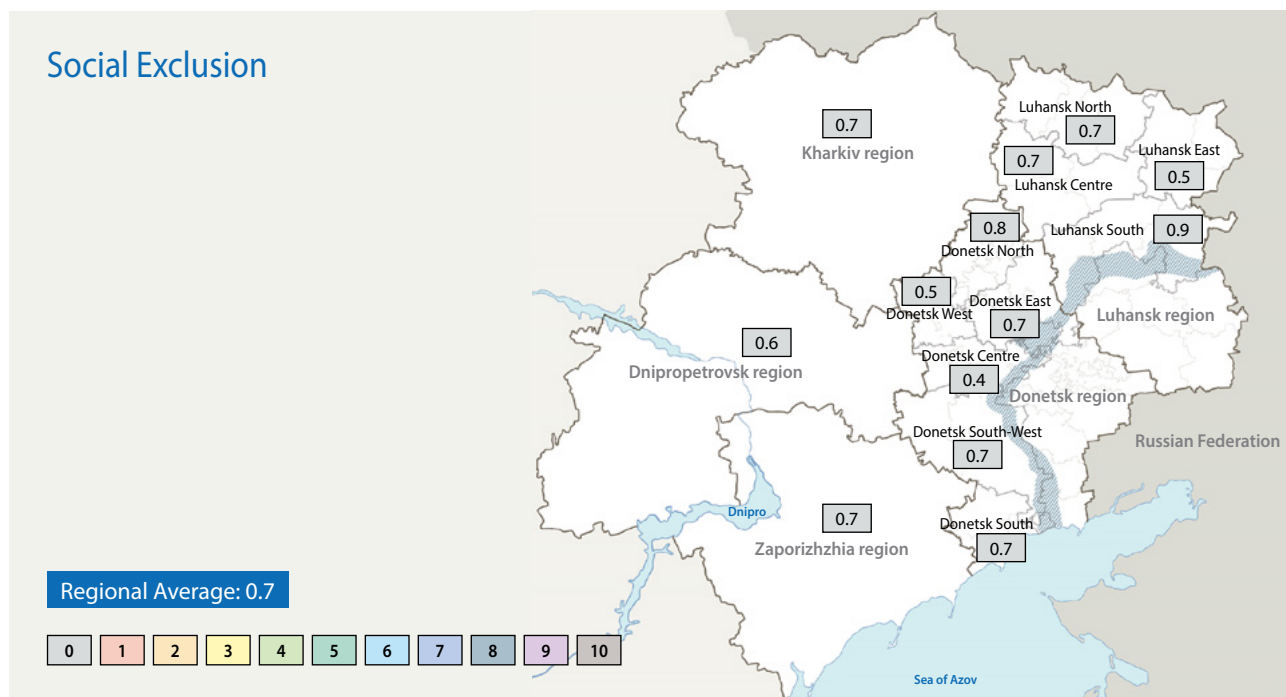


Figure 4: Scores for social exclusion

However, when this score is examined further, there is a difference between the levels of identity-based social exclusion (Figure 5), which scored 0.1, and structural social exclusion (Figure 6), which scored 1.5. The three main reasons why some people in the five eastern oblasts may experience social exclusion are of a structural character (i.e., level of income, level of education, and employment status), rather than identity-based (e.g., gender and sexual orientation are the least mentioned reasons for exclusion). While the overall score for social exclusion reflects the response gathered during the first USE wave, it should be noted that minority and/or marginalized groups were not specifically targeted. It may be presumed, therefore, that the overall score for exclusion may not necessarily accurately reflect the perceptions and views of minority and/or marginalized groups.

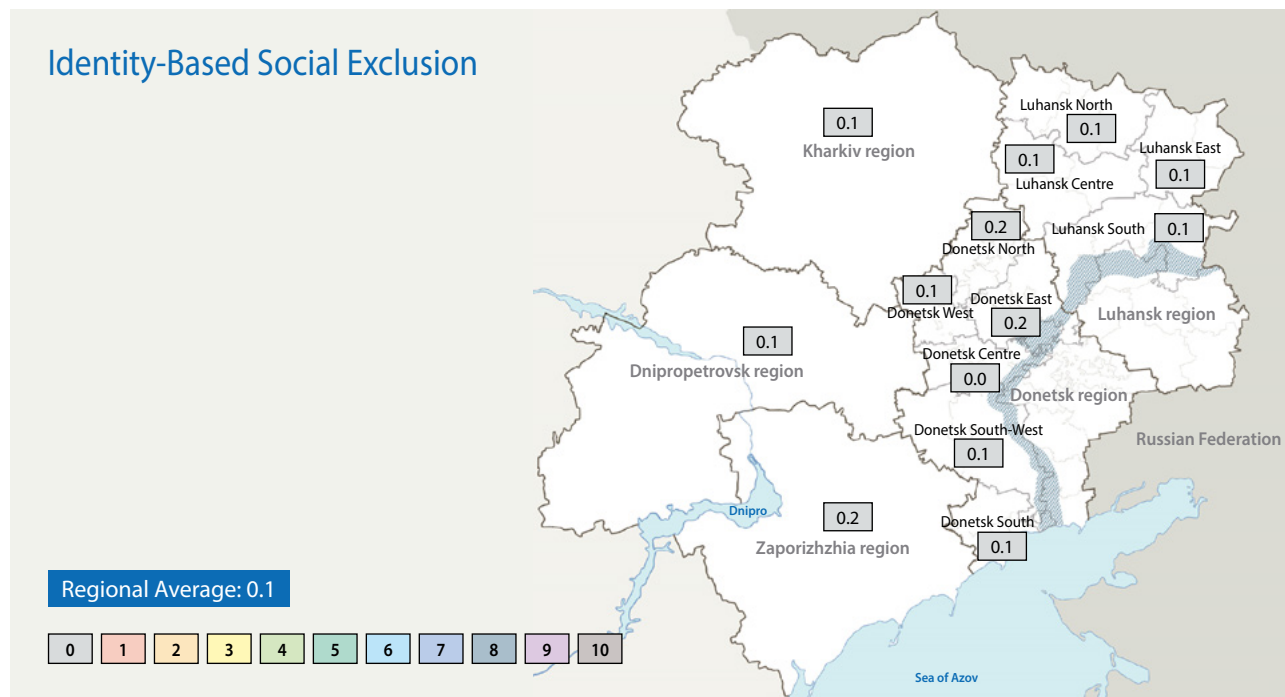


Figure 5: Scores for identity-based social exclusion

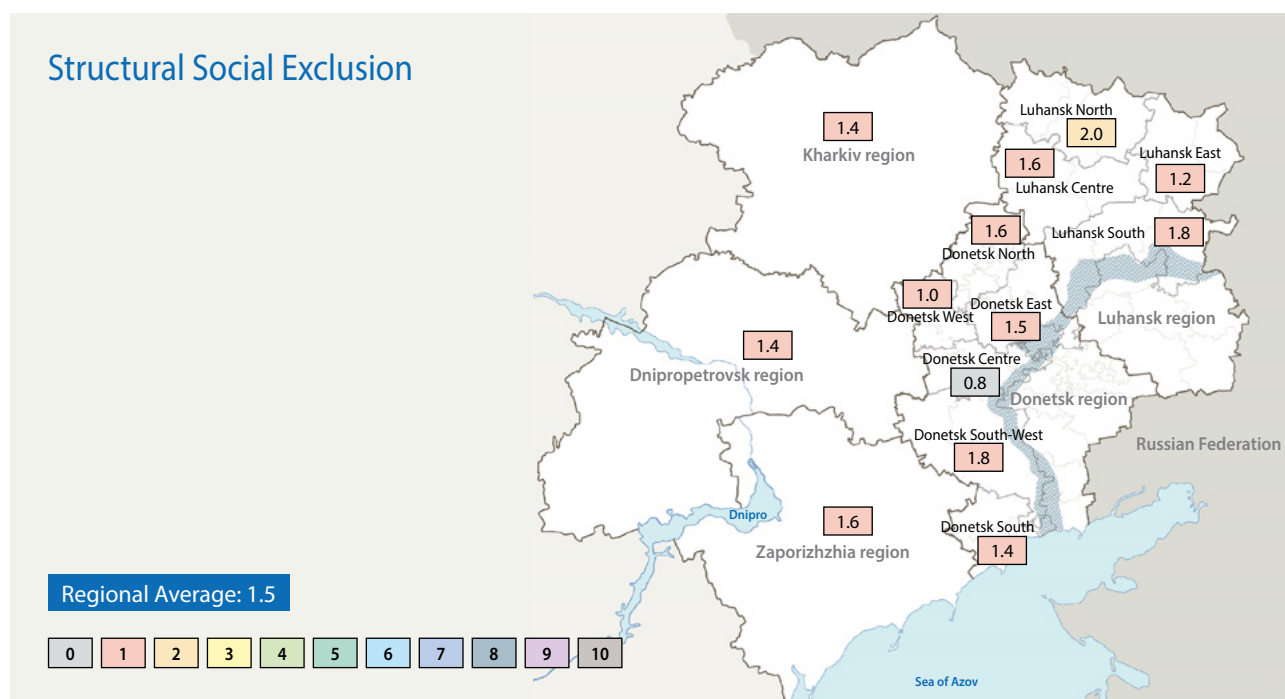


Figure 6: Scores for structural social exclusion

The average score for **openness toward various groups in society** (e.g. IDPs, people living in non-government controlled areas, ATO veterans, etc.) is 6.1 (Figure 7), where 0 indicates that people are not at all open to other/different groups, and 10 indicates that everyone is completely open to and accepting of other/different groups.

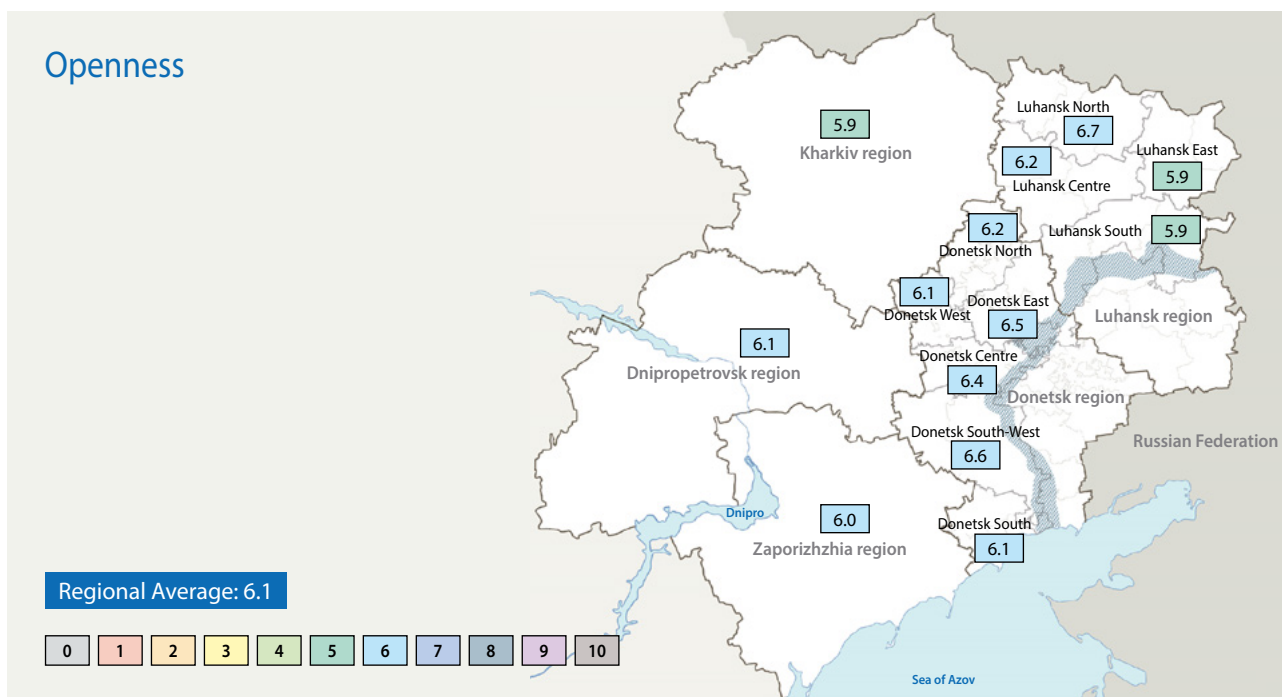


Figure 7: Scores for openness.

The highest levels of openness recorded are towards residents of eastern Ukraine in government-controlled areas and towards IDPs, with both groups scoring 6.7, followed by people from western Ukraine (6.6). On the other side of the spectrum, the lowest levels of openness recorded are towards Ukrainian nationalists (4.8) and people who support separatism (5.3). These scores indicate that people living in eastern Ukraine do not differentiate between Ukrainian citizens from different parts of the country, but appear to be less open towards groups identified by political preferences.

What impacts social connectedness and belonging?

An in-depth analysis reveals that the most significant factors positively impacting people's overall feelings of connectedness and belonging are: i) a high level of social tolerance; ii) a low inclination to migrate; and iii) a high sense of personal security.² The average score for **social tolerance**, the indicator with the strongest impact on social connectedness and belonging, is 5.5 (Figure 8), where 0 indicates high intolerance towards minority and marginalized groups, and 10 indicates full acceptance of minority and marginalized groups by all members of society.

² Social tolerance refers to the degree to which one is tolerant towards minority or marginalized groups, such as Muslims, Jews, Roma, drug addicts, etc., in terms of personal interaction and accepting them within the community. Migration tendency refers to the extent to which one is inclined to leave one's region in search of more or better opportunities. Personal security refers to the degree to which one feels safe from violence in daily life.

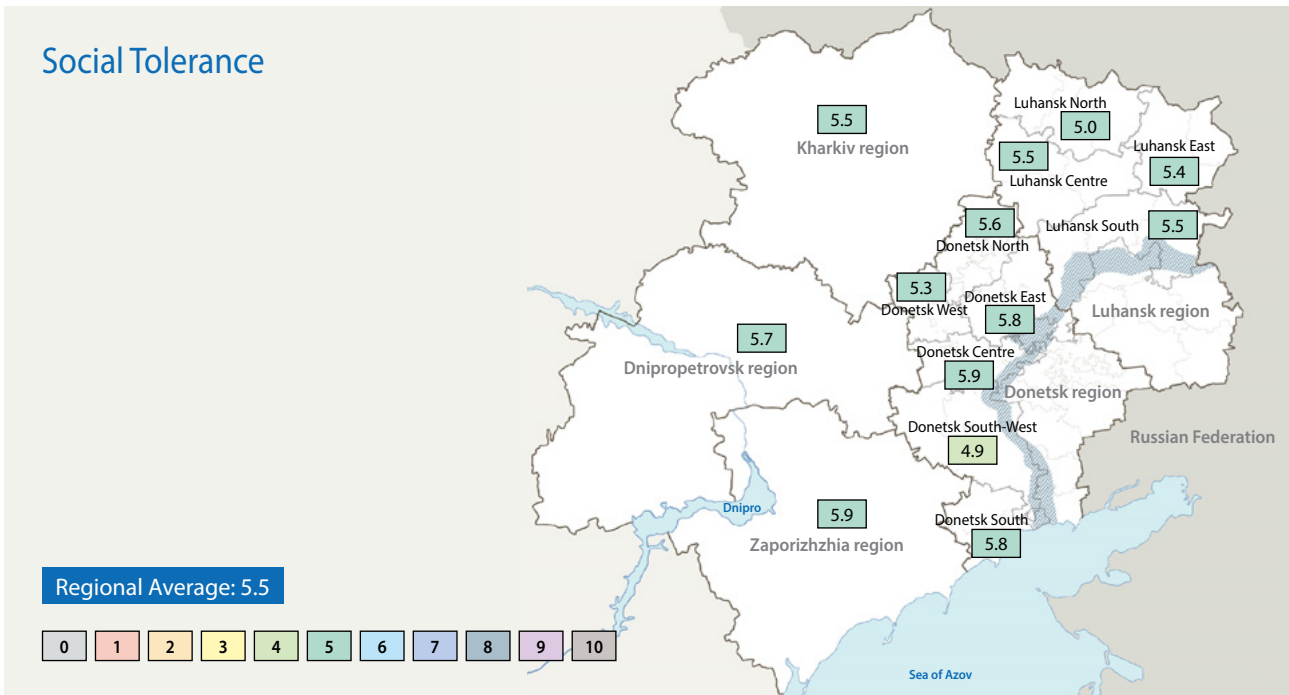


Figure 8: Scores for social tolerance

A deeper analysis of social tolerance (Figure 9) shows that people living in rural settlements and people aged 60 or above display lower levels of social tolerance. In other words, they are less likely to be tolerant of minority and marginalized groups than younger people and those living in urban areas. The analysis also reveals that the five factors with the most significant positive impact on levels of social tolerance are:

- Economic, food and health security: The more secure people feel that their basic needs are met, the more likely they are to be tolerant towards others, perhaps because they do not have to compete over limited resources;
- Contact with people who support close ties with Russia: Individuals who have meaningful contact with those who support economic, cultural or familial ties with Russia are more likely to be tolerant towards others, possibly because they are exposed to diverse points of view;
- Adverse experiences: Individuals who know someone who has experienced an adverse or traumatic life experience, such as a violent death, are more likely to have a greater sense of empathy and tolerance towards others; and
- Social skills: Those who possess strong skills that facilitate social interaction and communication with other people are more likely to be tolerant of different groups, perhaps because they are more likely to engage in dialogue and form a relationship with them.

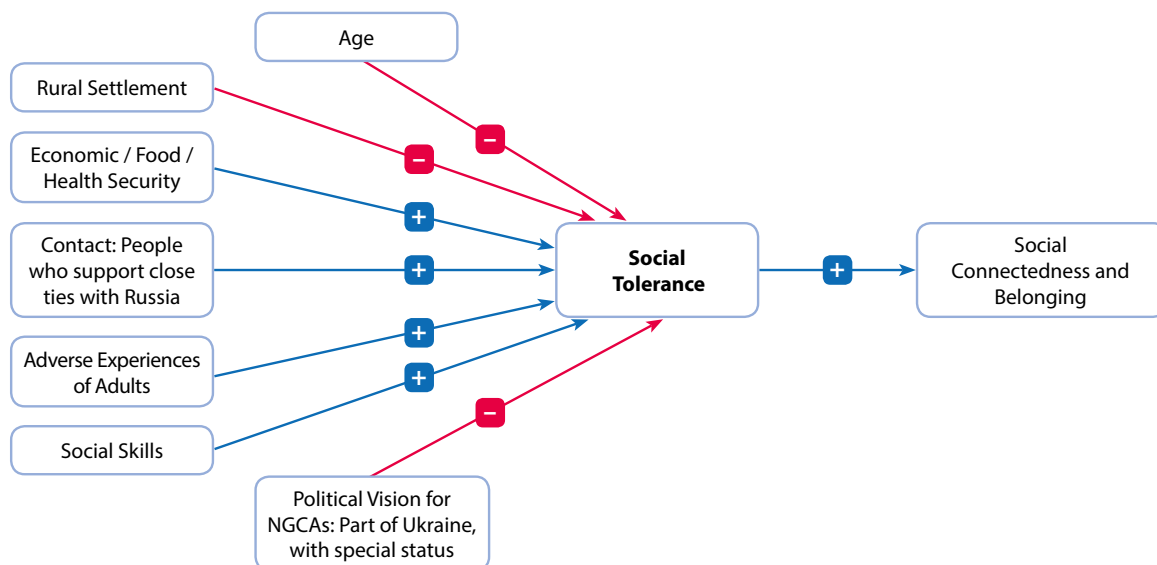


Figure 9: Factors impacting on social tolerance.

Red arrows indicate a negative association, and blue arrows a positive association

Conclusion

Combining the diagnostic data (i.e., heat maps) with the predictive data (i.e., Figure 9) shows how overall social cohesion could be strengthened by increasing social connectedness and belonging. In this particular case, the main factor affecting this outcome was revealed to be social tolerance. The analysis has uncovered specific entry points that can help to increase social tolerance which, together with the geographic and demographic analysis, indicate where the greatest and most resource-effective impact is likely to be. On the basis of this analysis, we can conclude that in order to improve social tolerance, and thereby contribute to strengthening social cohesion, interventions could:

- i) geographically, prioritize south-western Donetsk oblast and northern Luhansk oblast;
- ii) demographically, depending on the type of intervention, target the younger population in order to further increase the levels of social tolerance and/or the segment of society that demonstrates lower levels of social tolerance (e.g., rural communities and/or older people); and
- iii) seek to address the five factors (entry points) that have the greatest impact on social tolerance, for example:
 - a. create spaces that encourage contact with and dialogue among different groups;
 - b. develop social skills through life skills education among children and youth;
 - c. support the development of businesses, including through a grants scheme, and prioritize joint proposals between different groups, e.g., IDP and host community members; and
 - d. support activities that foster closer linkages and exchanges between communities in the five oblasts of eastern Ukraine and other parts of the country (e.g., exchange visits, youth/study events, sporting and cultural exchanges).