



2018

UN Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index for Eastern Ukraine

Active and tolerant citizenship: revealing drivers and barriers of participation

About USE

The UN Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index for Eastern Ukraine (USE) is an analytical tool designed to improve the understanding of societal dynamics in government-controlled areas (GCA) of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, and neighboring Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia oblasts. This helps to identify strategic entry points for policies and programs that contribute to strengthening social cohesion.

USE is based on Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) Index methodology originally developed in Cyprus by the Center for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development, and UNDP. The initiative in Ukraine is jointly implemented by three UN entities, UNDP, UNICEF and IOM, under the overall direction of the Office of the United Nations Resident Coordinator, and is one of the UN's evidence-based knowledge products for joint analysis and programming in Ukraine.

USE is implemented on an annual basis and consists of two components: one component captures the views of 6,000 adults residing in the five oblasts in eastern Ukraine, including along the government controlled areas of the contact line; the other component captures the views of adolescents in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (GCAs). The USE conceptual model consists of more than 70 indicators, each measured through multiple questionnaire items.

Conceptualization and analysis of data has been done in consultations with government and civil society representatives in Kyiv and in each of the five oblasts. For more information on USE and to see the results of the first (2017) and second (2018) waves please visit use.scoreforpeace.org.

Introduction

Civic participation is at the core of a cohesive, vibrant and democratic society. The extent and form of civic engagement, however, differs between regions and countries depending on factors such as the community's culture and history of participation, and the nature of its political leadership. Moreover, not all types of civic participation contribute positively to cohesion and development: activities of radical groups on all sides of the political spectrum can have a detrimental effect on democratization and the promotion of equality and human rights. The challenge thus lies in promoting citizenship that is both active and tolerant.

This brief defines civic engagement and tolerance in the context of eastern Ukraine by identifying different citizenship types, from active to passive and from tolerant or intolerant. It then unpacks the characteristics and incentives of each of these groups in order to identify entry points for increasing the level of both active and tolerant engagement.

Summary of key findings

- The overall score for social tolerance in eastern Ukraine is higher than the score for civic engagement. Although overall levels remained unchanged from 2017 to 2018, they improved significantly in Kharkiv oblast. There are few regional differences in tolerance scores, with the exception of the contact line, especially in Donetsk oblast, where people report higher levels of tolerance. Residents in eastern Ukraine tend to be more tolerant toward ethnic and religious minorities than toward groups such as sexual minorities and drug users.
- Civic engagement is low in eastern Ukraine, especially when it comes to activities that involve interacting with authorities. Scores for civic engagement are lowest along the contact line, where there are also the fewest opportunities for engagement.
- Using the dual lens of social tolerance and civic engagement, four distinct groups can be identified, ranging from socially tolerant to intolerant, and from active to passive in terms of civic participation:
 - ▶ The *tolerant active* group represents those who are likely to promote positive change in society, while people in the *intolerant active* group are usually spoilers of social cohesion.
 - ▶ The largest share of tolerant and active residents is in Zaporizhzhia and Kharkiv oblasts, while the smallest is along the contact line and in Donetsk oblast.
- By increasing intergroup contact and interaction while also empowering people and encouraging cooperation, members of both the intolerant and passive groups can be 'moved' toward the more active and tolerant side of the scale.

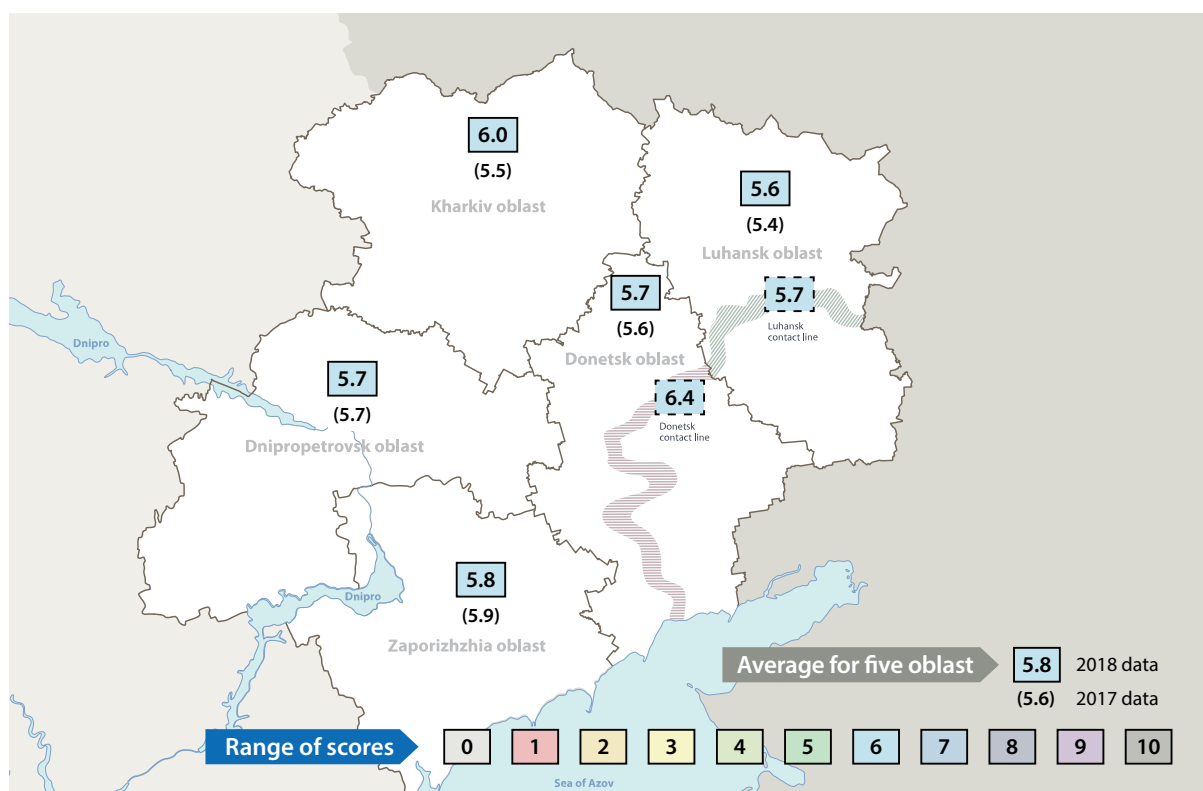


Social tolerance and civic engagement

Social tolerance

The overall regional score for social tolerance in eastern Ukraine is 5.8, compared to 5.6 in 2017, where 0 indicates high intolerance toward minority and marginalized groups, and 10 indicates full acceptance of minority and marginalized groups by all members of society.¹ The improvement in the overall regional score from 2017 is insignificant,² although Kharkiv oblast demonstrated significant improvements in its tolerance scores (see Figure 1). None of the five oblasts experienced a noticeable decline in scores. Social tolerance along the contact line in Donetsk oblast is the highest in eastern Ukraine with a score of 6.3.³ Tolerance is the highest toward religious and ethnic groups such as Muslims and Jews, and much lower toward sexual minorities and drug users.

■ **Figure 1. Social tolerance in 2017 and 2018**



A demographic breakdown shows that older individuals are less tolerant than the younger ones (see Table 1). People living in rural areas are also less tolerant than those in urban areas, which could be connected to lower levels of mobility and subsequently less contact with and exposure to different social groups. There is, however, no significant difference in the scores for social tolerance between women and men.

■ **Table 1. Social tolerance by demographic group**

Age group			Sex		Settlement type	
18–35	36–60	61+	Women	Men	Urban	Rural
6.2	6.0	5.1	5.7	6.0	6.0	5.5

¹ Social tolerance relates to the degree to which the individual is tolerant toward minorities or marginalized groups such as Muslims, Jews, Roma, people with a different color of skin, drug users, and sexual minorities in terms of personal interaction and acceptance within the community.

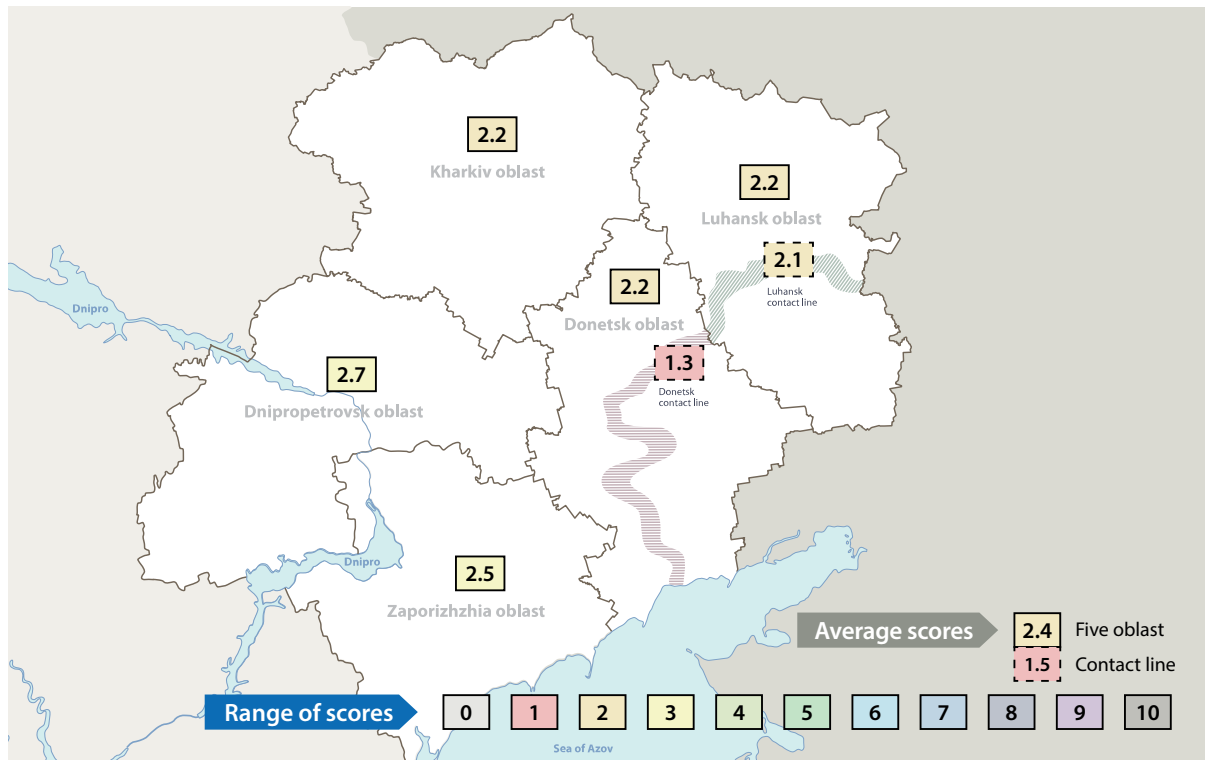
² A 0.5 difference or more in scores indicates a significant change.

³ The higher scores for social tolerance along the contact line may be explained by overall lower levels of human security at the contact line: the more vulnerable and exposed a person is, the greater their sense of tolerance and empathy toward other groups in a difficult situation. See e.g., USE 2018 brief *Frontier communities of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts: a neglected resource*, and USE 2017 brief *Social connectedness and belonging*.

Civic engagement

The overall regional score for civic engagement in eastern Ukraine is relatively low at 2.4, where 0 means that people do not participate in civic activities at all, and 10 means everyone participates frequently (see Figure 2).⁴ The scores for civic engagement are similar across the five oblasts, but significantly lower along the contact line in Donetsk oblast.

■ Figure 2. Civic engagement



The lowest civic engagement was reported for activities involving the authorities, for example participating in local council meetings. The notable exception is voting in elections, where participation is much higher than for other types of political activities. However, participation in elections is much lower among young people aged 18 to 35, who are half as likely to cast their ballot as older people, possibly indicating a lack of trust in the election process or political apathy and insecurity.

Levels of engagement are much higher for activities of a horizontal nature (i.e., not involving authorities), for example through NGOs or informal collaboration with fellow residents. People are more inclined to work with their neighbors to improve common residential areas, both indoors and outdoors, with almost half of all residents in eastern Ukraine participating in such activities regularly. In other words, people frequently collaborate with neighbors and other people close to them to improve their immediate environment. Organized forms of joint house management are less common, despite the fact that the actual outcome of engagement in a housing association is likely to be similar. *Ad hoc* and informal neighborhood initiatives are thus more common than formal engagement or participation in some form of structured organization.

While there are essentially no differences in scores for civic engagement across different demographic groups, the older generation is slightly more active than young people (see Table 2), indicating that there may be underutilized potential for fostering greater civic participation.

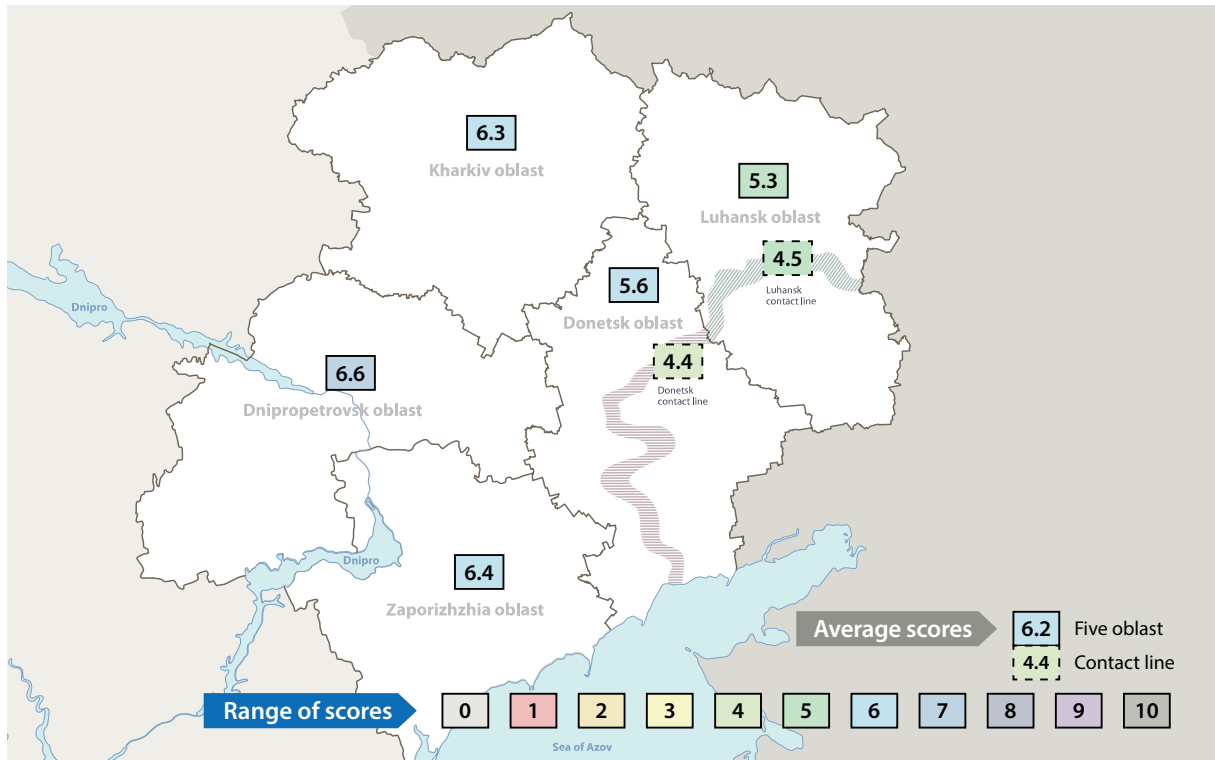
■ Table 2. Civic engagement by demographic group

Age			Sex		Settlement type	
18–35	36–60	61+	Women	Men	Urban	Rural
2.1	2.5	2.6	2.6	2.2	2.4	2.4

⁴ Civic engagement refers to participation in various social and political activities, such as attending local council meetings, making improvements to common housing territory, or voting in elections. Civic engagement was included as an indicator in 2017 as well, but following consultations with stakeholders, it was refined in 2018. The scores for this indicator are thus not directly comparable over time.

Although scores for participation in civic activities are generally low throughout eastern Ukraine, people provide a fairly positive view of the availability of civic engagement opportunities (see Figure 3). The low level of civic engagement cannot, therefore, be explained solely by the lack of opportunities. At the same time, opportunities for engagement matter: e.g., people at the contact line have the fewest opportunities for civic engagement, and this could be one of the reasons why this part of the region has the lowest level of actual engagement.

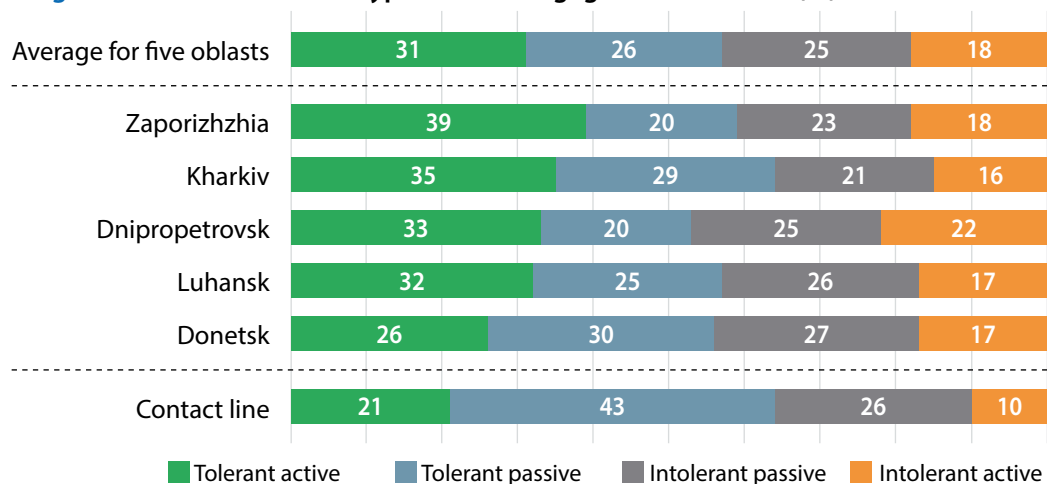
■ **Figure 3. Availability of civic engagement opportunities**



Civic engagement: passive or active, tolerant or intolerant?

As in all societies, eastern Ukraine is home to both active and passive individuals, with both groups including people who are more and less tolerant. Thus, residents can be divided into four broad categories: tolerant-active, intolerant-active, intolerant-passive and tolerant-passive. Zaporizhzhia oblast has the largest share of citizens in the *tolerant active* group, while Dnipropetrovsk oblast has the largest share in the *intolerant active* group (see Figure 4). Residents along the contact line demonstrate high levels of tolerance, but a large proportion of these people are not actively engaged in civic activities. It thus appears that in eastern Ukraine, the hardship of living in the direct vicinity of armed conflict tends to have a positive effect on tolerance, but at the same time the relative lack of civic engagement opportunities in these communities limits actual civic engagement.

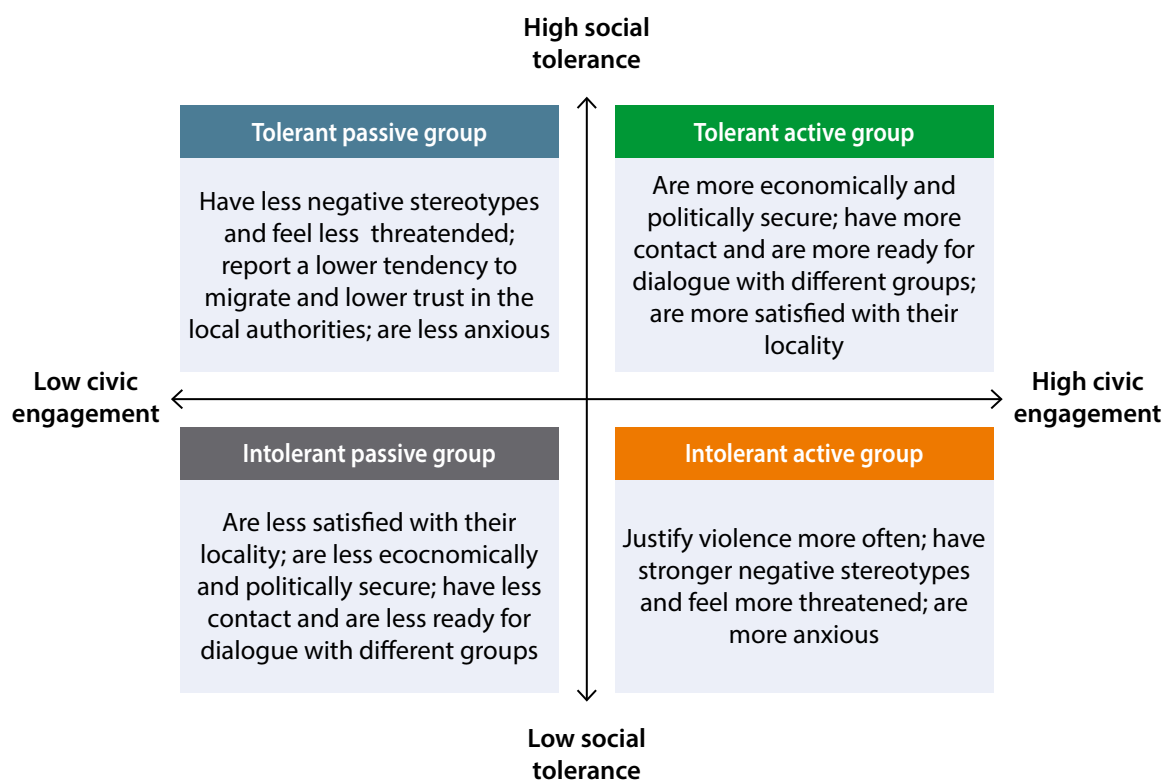
■ **Figure 4. Shares of the four types of civic engagement behavior (%)**



Civic engagement characteristics

In order to develop programmatic interventions specific to each of the four groups, it is important to understand the characteristics of each group (see Figure 5).

■ **Figure 5. Four groups of civic engagement behavior***



* The figure presents the indicators that are characteristic for people in each group, that is, having lowest or highest scores relative to other groups.

Each of the four groups demonstrates different demographic characteristics (see Table 3). The *intolerant active* group is made up of more women than men, more people above the age of 61, and predominantly residents of rural areas. The *intolerant passive* group is made up mostly by people between the age of 36-60. The *tolerant passive* group is also predominantly made up by rural residents and those aged 36-60, although it also has the highest share of those aged 18-35. This group also comprises more men than women. Finally, the *tolerant active* group comprises mainly of people in the age group 36-60, and there are relatively more urban residents.

■ **Table 3. Group types by demographic characteristics, %**

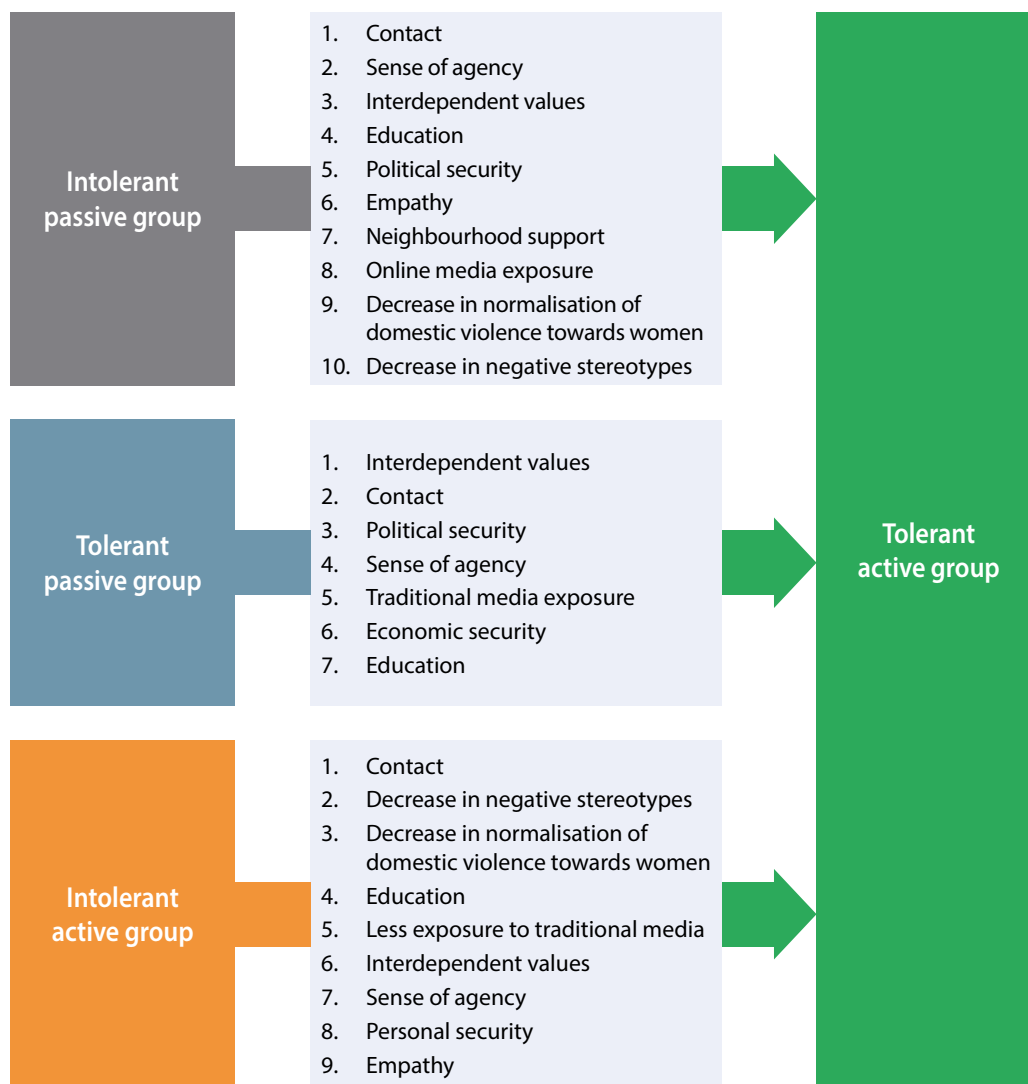
Groups	Age			Sex		Settlement type	
	18-35	36-60	61+	Women	Men	Urban	Rural
Tolerant active	26	51	23	57	43	42	58
Tolerant passive	36	43	21	47	53	35	65
Intolerant passive	29	39	33	56	44	36	64
Intolerant active	23	42	35	64	36	35	65
Average for five oblasts and contact line	29	44	27	55	45	38	63

Higher intensity of color signifies higher share of a certain demographic group.

What could motivate people to become more tolerant and more active?

The group that is likely to have the most positive impact on strengthening social cohesion is the *tolerant active* group. In order to design activities that promote both active and tolerant citizenship, it is important to understand what motivates people to become more active and, at the same time, more tolerant. This section identifies specific indicators (based on modelling results) that can help to 'move' those who are passive and/or intolerant towards the *tolerant active* group (see Figure 6).

■ **Figure 6. Pathways for transitioning to the tolerant active group***



* The figure presents the factors that can contribute to 'moving' those in the passive and/or intolerant groups toward the tolerant and active group.

Common drivers

Three drivers – awareness, empowerment and cooperation – are particularly likely to have a positive impact on members of both the intolerant groups (active and passive), as well as the tolerant passive group.

Awareness

- **Personal contact with different groups:** Being in contact with groups in society that are different from a person's own, whether for political, geographical or identity reasons, is the main factor likely to have a positive impact on all intolerant and passive groups.
- **Education:** Greater knowledge and understanding has a positive effect on all groups by reducing prejudice and fear, thus lowering levels of intolerance. This is particularly relevant for the two intolerant groups, because education contributes to greater appreciation of others and to enhancing the sense of social responsibility. Although education scores are relatively high in eastern Ukraine, with most people having completed secondary and higher education (see Table 4), this emerged as an important driver for increasing tolerance and is worth noting.

Empowerment

- **Sense of agency:** For the two passive groups, it is important to increase their sense of agency. More than half of the population in eastern Ukraine believes they cannot make a difference if they remain in their community—this is particularly the case for women aged 36-60. People in rural areas have a lower sense of agency, as do those who are struggling financially.
- **Political security:** For the two passive groups, it is important to increase their sense of political security if they are to become more active. Most people in the region, and especially in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, report being afraid to express their political views for fear of repercussions. Lack of political security undermines political activism and engagement with authorities.

Cooperation

- **Interdependent/cooperative values:** Scores for interdependent or cooperative values, meaning that the person wants everyone to be treated equally and cares for the well-being of others, are relatively high for most people in eastern Ukraine, though more characteristic of women. This indicator is one of the strengths of the region's residents in terms of social cohesion, with a score of 7.8, but it is important to understand the significance of this driver in order to reinforce such values in activities designed to enhance tolerance.
- **Minimizing negative stereotypes:** Negative stereotypes toward different political, social and geographical groups received an average score of 2.8 (where 0 means there are no negative stereotypes present in the community, while 10 indicates a strong prevalence of negative stereotypes), with younger residents being more likely to hold negatively stereotypical views of other social groups. The presence of a negative perception of certain groups in society contributes to intergroup hostility. Minimizing negative stereotypes is particularly important for moving the two intolerant groups toward the tolerant side of the spectrum.
- **Neighborhood support:** Women and rural people report significantly higher levels of reliance on their neighbors, which may reflect a higher frequency of contact with neighbors. As with sense of agency, it is predominantly the two passive groups that would benefit from building trustful relations with their neighbors (see Figure 6).
- **Combating normalization of domestic violence:** Normalization or acceptance of physical violence against women has a score of 0.9 (where 0 means people do not think it is acceptable to exert violence against women, while 10 means people fully justify it). The score is twice as high among men and significantly higher in rural areas. Normalization of domestic violence is strongly linked with traditional stereotypes and the social roles of women and men. Combating the normalization of domestic violence is important for society overall, and especially for the two intolerant groups, if they are to become more tolerant and responsible citizens.

Other drivers include (although less significant) empathy and media consumption. Being empathetic and conscious of the needs of others contribute to tolerance and active social behavior. The use of online and traditional media tends to increase tolerant attitudes.

■ **Table 4. Major drivers common to two or more groups**

Indicator	Age group			Sex		Settlement size	
	18-35	36-60	61+	Women	Men	Urban	Rural
Education	6.6	6.4	6.1	6.4	6.3	6.8	5.8
Contact with different social groups	2.8	2.5	1.9	2.3	2.7	2.6	2.3
Interdependent or cooperative values	7.6	7.8	8.2	8.1	7.5	7.7	8.1
Sense of agency	4.9	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.8	4.9	4.4
Political security	4.1	3.9	3.7	3.8	4.1	4.0	3.8
Neighborhood support	4.2	4.7	5.4	5.0	4.5	4.4	5.2
Negative group stereotypes	3.1	2.7	2.6	2.8	2.8	2.9	2.7
Normalization of domestic violence	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.6	1.3	0.8	1.1

Conclusions and recommendations

Zaporizhzhia and Dnipropetrovsk are the two oblasts with the highest scores for civic engagement. Being an active citizen is, however, sometimes linked with a lack of social tolerance, especially in Dnipropetrovsk oblast. On the other hand, residents of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, including the areas along the contact line, demonstrate the highest levels of tolerance, but are also characterized by passive behavior.

Programmatic and policy strategies to promote tolerant and active citizenship must be tailored to each specific group, recognizing both their demographic characteristics and specific incentives (see Table 5).

■ **Table 5. Group-specific strategies**

Group	Strategy/action	Implication for social cohesion
Tolerant active	Support with visibility and impact, amplify outreach, connect networks	These are the change-makers in society.
Tolerant passive	Empower, show value/impact using the tolerant active group as a model, connect, especially for communities along the contact line	People in this group are potential change-makers waiting to be mobilized.
Intolerant active	Foster tolerance, intergroup understanding, provide with settings of positive influence	This group presents a major risk to social cohesion and could spoil dialogue between different groups in society. A sensitive approach to gradual re-engagement is vital.
Intolerant passive	First, foster tolerance, moving them to tolerant passive category. Second, capacitate and empower.	People in this group are the hardest to reach and hardest to change. Also, engaging them before or without targeted tolerance exposure could add these people to the risk group of <i>intolerant active</i> .

The *tolerant active* group is the group most likely to contribute positively to society. This group is made up mostly of women and of people aged 36-60, with both young people and pensioners being strongly under-represented. Residents of Donetsk oblast and people living along the contact line are also under-represented in this group. It is important to continue supporting this group so that their members do not fall into one of the passive groups. Such support can include activities that promote an individual's sense of agency, amplify the reach of their activities, and recognize their contribution to the development of society.

The *tolerant passive* group has great potential for transformation. This group is made up predominantly by people aged 36-60 living in rural areas, with men being over-represented. In order to incentivize them to become more active, it is crucial to share stories of where civic engagement contributed positively to change. In other words, for this group to meaningfully engage in civic activities, there must be prior understanding and belief that their actions will contribute to actual change. Equally important, activities aimed at motivating these people must stem from a clear understanding of what types of activities would be of interest to them and of tangible value to their community. As evidenced by the types of activities that residents in eastern Ukraine are predominantly engaged in, the preference is for participating in informal community groups rather than formalized initiatives.

For the two *intolerant groups*, the main factor predicting tolerant and active civic engagement is contact with different groups in society. Being in direct contact with people from different backgrounds and learning about people different from themselves increases the likelihood of understanding and acceptance, and will help overcome prejudice and ignorance. Contact-promoting activities can be organized within the context of joint community projects. Media can also play a role as a connector, especially in contexts where physical contact between different groups in society is not easily possible due to geographical distance. Media and law enforcement authorities have an important role to play in promoting greater contact between groups as a violence reduction strategy, in particular between different social and political groups that may be in open or latent conflict.

Political security is vitally significant for the two *passive groups*. Levels of political security are low in eastern Ukraine, and this likely explains the low levels of participation in civic activities that involve the authorities. While house improvements and donations to charities are very important and should be recognized, it is crucial to increase engagement in activities that also promote the vertical aspect of social cohesion, that is, relations between citizens and the institutions that serve them. This can be done through the establishment of environments where residents can express their views without fear of repercussions, through positive fostering of cooperation with institutions, contributing to accountability and trust, increasing the credibility and transparency of the election process, and public awareness campaigns on voting procedures and citizen's rights.