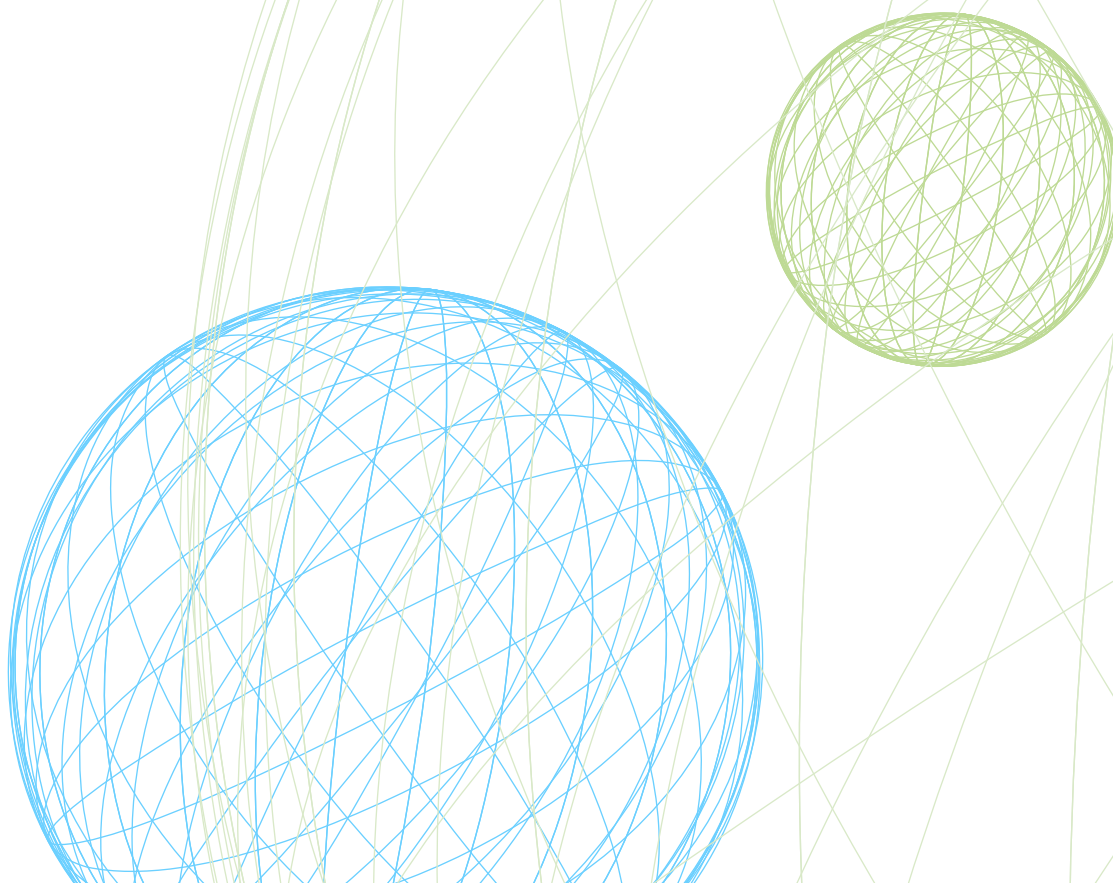


# SCORE

The Social Cohesion and  
Reconciliation Index as a tool  
for Conflict Transformation



CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT

DECEMBER 2016

**T**oday the world is coalescing into stable and unstable regions. On the one hand there has been a decline in the number and severity of internal armed conflicts worldwide over the past 20 years. However, the evidence of chronic political instability, social volatility, proliferation of non-state armed groups, weak governance systems, and toxic disputes over land and natural resources in many countries is clear, with many scholars believing that by 2050 lethal armed conflicts will be largely concentrated in Africa and South Asia. Critically, bringing stability to the estimated 1.2 billion people living in fragile and conflict affected countries and territories requires a new set of approaches and tools which better navigate routes to sustainable conflict transformation. The task necessitates a deep grasp of conflict drivers, as they manifest in each specific context, in order to design appropriately targeted and cost-effective programmatic interventions. Achieving precision in this endeavour has become ever more challenging as the nature of socio-political violence diversifies and mutates across the modern global polity.

And yet, all too often, peacebuilding and development programmes are designed on the basis of limited inputs from a small number of in-country experts or conflict analysis consultants, which provide insufficient data-driven insights to resolve strategic design dilemmas. Is more intergroup dialogue called for? Should the high-level peace process be opened up to a broader range of stakeholders? What role does reconciliation play in facilitating high level political negotiations? How should gender and youth dimensions be engineered into the peace process? How should development incentives be incorporated into the process for sustaining peace? Existing assessment approaches are often challenged when it comes to empirically linking potential drivers of conflict with desired peace outcomes, in a way that can help resolve programmatic dilemmas such as those mentioned above. While conceptual linkages between conflict drivers, programmatic activities and desired outcomes are routinely proposed in everyday peacebuilding practice, these rarely amount to more than untested working hypotheses.

The Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) index was designed to address the abovementioned deficits in designing sustainable processes of conflict transformation. As a customisable, flexible and evidence-based predictive instrument, the SCORE index can be utilized to identify programmatic entry points which are most likely to have a positive impact on peacebuilding outcomes. From this perspective the SCORE index speaks to the concerns of the donor community which fund post-conflict peacebuilding projects but are still uncertain about the real efficacy of their investments. The SCORE index offers governments, donors and peacebuilding organisations the opportunity to systematically design and test conflict transformation theories of change before sponsoring and endorsing new peace-building programmes.

## Leveraging the SCORE Index as a tool for conflict transformation

The SCORE Index is a customisable and flexible predictive instrument, that can be utilized to identify programmatic entry points with high likelihood of impact on relevant peacebuilding outcomes, including:

### *Developing Shared Visions for the Future*

The SCORE can be utilized to understand factors which underlie diverse visions of a country's future, and use this knowledge to help different constituencies build the most viable societal consensus.

### *Preparing for a Peace Referendum*

The SCORE analyses the formal content of a peace plan in the context of prevailing societal and intergroup dynamics to construct different scenarios which can predict possible outcomes of a peace referendum vote.

### *Building Community Cohesion*

The SCORE can identify factors that motivate citizens to invest in their communities and assess the quality of the social, political and economic institutions which govern the relationships between an individual and the state.

### *Security Sector Reform*

The SCORE can be used to detect security threats that different communities are experiencing, and investigate how alternative security policies would enhance or undermine their sense of security.

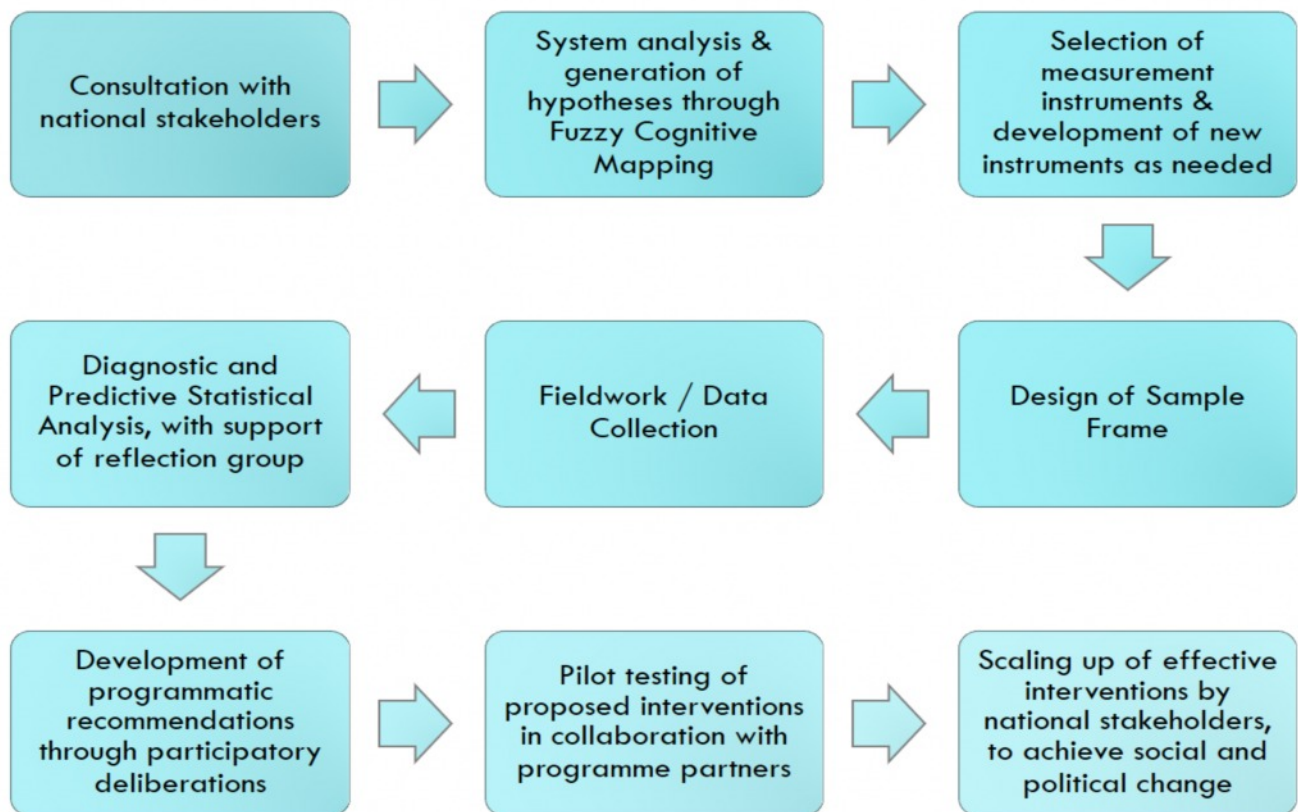
### *Gender and Youth Mainstreaming*

The SCORE can be customized to identify needs, challenges and opportunities for the empowerment and inclusion of young people and women.

### *Countering Violent Extremism*

The SCORE can identify risk factors which underlie an individual's decision to join violent extremist groups, alongside protective factors that inhibit such actions and instead promote constructive civic engagement.

# The SCORE process

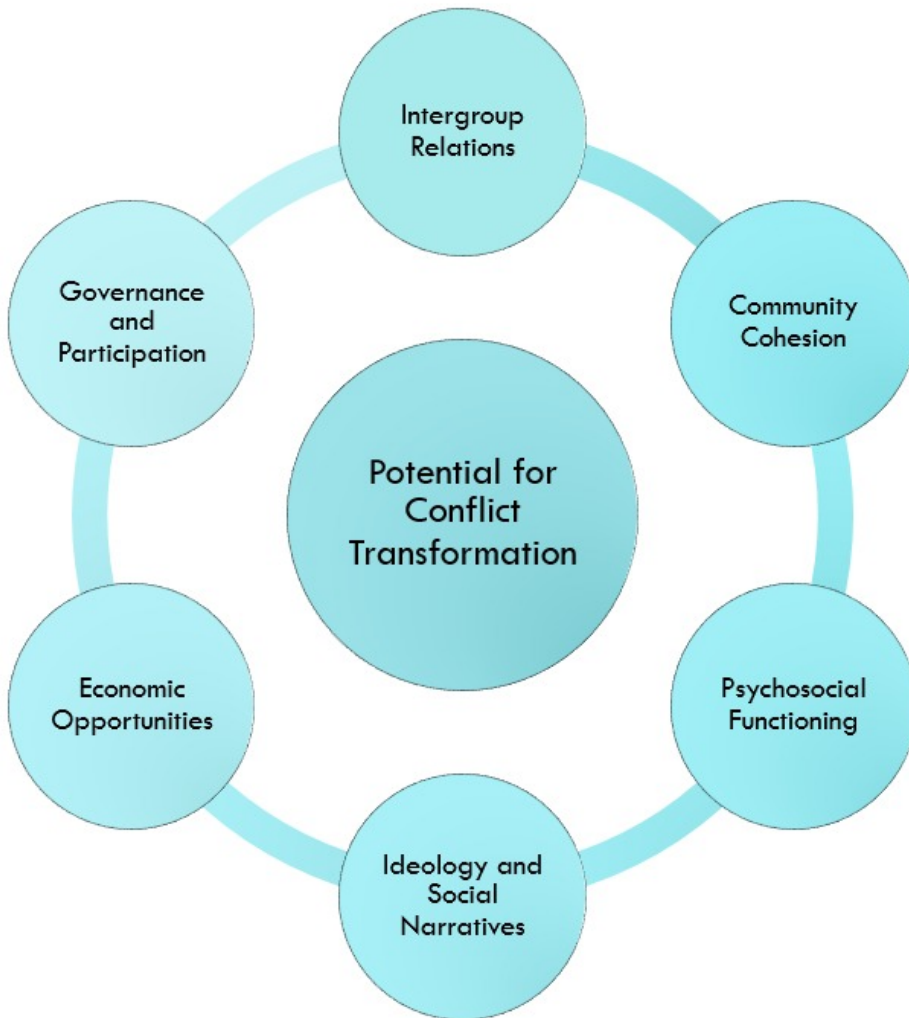


The SCORE index eschews the one-size-fits-all approach that often characterizes cross-national indices. To ensure that each SCORE index reliably captures the societal dynamics of the specific country where it is being implemented, the process typically begins with inclusive consultations with a broad cross-section of national stakeholders - civil society, academia, government, business leadership and grassroots communities. These contribute to an initial in-depth understanding of societal dynamics in relation to outcomes of interest, while the technique of *Fuzzy Cognitive Mapping* is utilized to capture and validate complex inter-relations between different system components. With such a conceptual framework in place, appropriate measurement instruments are then selected - either from the existing library of SCORE instruments or custom-made for the specific country. The SCORE index can flexibly integrate different modalities of data collection as

needed, including surveys, text mining, expert assessments, and secondary analysis of published national statistics. The sample frame is then designed in such a way as to ensure that results can be reported with a high level of confidence for different sub-regions within the country, but also for distinct societal groups of interest (e.g. specific ethnic communities or social demographics). Actual fieldwork is usually conducted in collaboration with established national researchers or research agencies, who can display the needed level of cultural awareness and sensitivity to assure a reliable data collection process. Results are then processed using advanced data analysis techniques (See SCORE Concepts and Methods) with a view to developing robust and valid metrics for multiple indicators of interest, but also feeding into predictive models that can suggest effective entry points to impact outcomes of interest. Data analysis is conducted with the support of a *National Reflection*

*Group*, which provides strategic direction to the SCORE data management team - thus maximizing the useful, policy-oriented insight that can be gleaned from the research process. Finalized results are then discussed with relevant stakeholders with a view to generating specific programmatic recommendations that will most effectively address identified challenges. These can then be converted into specific intervention protocols (e.g. specific programmes which support dialogue and healing; a civic participation and advocacy initiative) which are pilot tested in appropriate areas of the country while being monitored and evaluated for impact and cost-effectiveness through selected components of the SCORE index. The final step in the process is to turn over accumulated know-how to appropriate national or international stakeholders (e.g. the government; the United Nations; international development organizations) to scale up effective interventions with a view to achieving nation-wide social and political change.

# SCORE Concepts and Methods



The SCORE Index adheres to a multi-dimensional conceptualisation of conflict dynamics and conflict transformation. It is a fundamental axiom of the SCORE that no single discipline, by itself, provides adequate explanatory power to guide the design of peacebuilding interventions. For instance, the study of intergroup relations is critical to the understanding of any societal conflict, especially when it comes to delineating the dynamics of social threats, negative stereotypes, discrimination and dehumanisation. It is, however, essential to contextualize such an understanding by looking into ideological narratives, institutional fragilities, and lack of economic opportunities, which can all drive the evolution of polarized group identities. Even where such risk factors predominate, psychological and community resilience might help to interrupt the downward spiral from sociopolitical tension into violent conflict. In any given country where the SCORE is implemented, all the above potential conflict drivers and resilience buffers are considered during the calibration and model design phase - alongside other, context-unique parameters.

## Analytic strategies

The SCORE Index utilizes several qualitative and quantitative analytic approaches to convert field data into actionable insights. Such methods include:

**Thematic Analysis and Grounded Theory**, to develop novel, evidence-based conceptualisations of societal dynamics.

**Exploratory and Confirmatory Factor Analysis**, to develop measurement scales that can reliably assess a characteristic or attitude of interest.

**Linear and Logistic Regression**, to develop a baseline understanding of main drivers for outcomes of interest.

**Mediation Analysis**, to investigate whether the influence of specific factors is proximal or distal.

**Moderation Analysis**, to investigate how exactly pairs or trios of factors co-act to enhance or inhibit each other's influence.

**Structural Equation Modelling**, to simultaneously model systems which include multiple predictors and outcomes.

**Multilevel Analysis**, to investigate the impact of factors at different levels, such as individual, family and community.

**Latent Growth Modelling**, to identify factors which predict change over time in the desired trait or attitude.

**Cluster Analysis**, to discern groups of individuals with similar characteristics or trajectories.

**Between-Groups Analysis**, to compare and contrast individuals belonging to diverse groups.

**Within-Groups Analysis**, to assess whether an intervention has been successful in changing participant attitudes or characteristics.

# SCORE Case Study: Cyprus

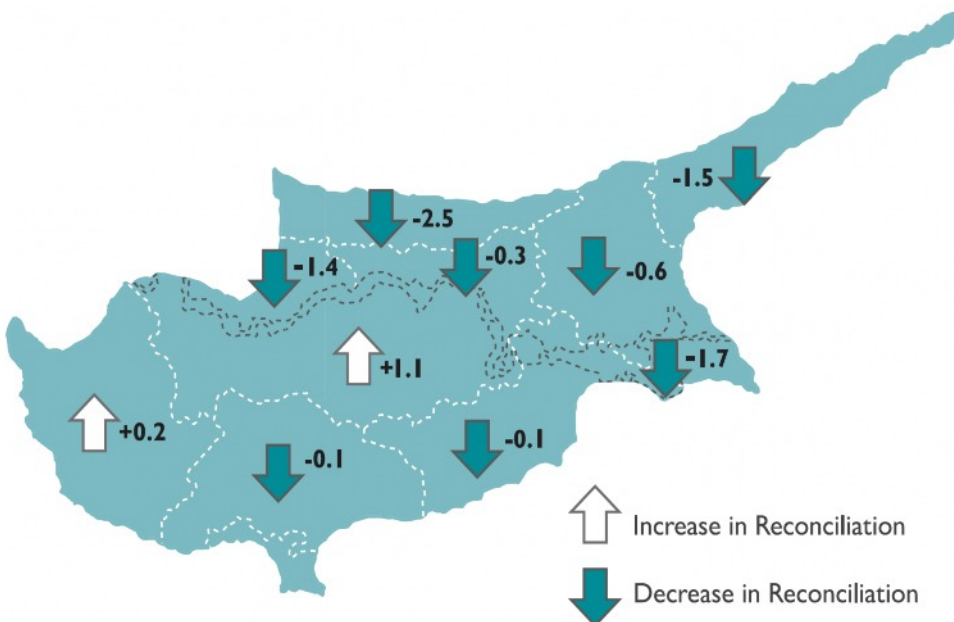
Cyprus was the first country where the SCORE index was implemented. Cyprus is also an example where the SCORE has been implemented over subsequent years providing a time series for SCORE results – 2013, 2014 and 2015. This has provided a test case of how the SCORE index can be used as a monitoring tool as well as a diagnostic and predictive instrument. In particular the changes in the SCORE findings over a three year period provided a unique understanding of the public mind in the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities.

The focus of the Cyprus SCORE was on the two communities' readiness for a political compromise to end the island's de facto division. One of the most significant findings was that the index for political compromise among Turkish Cypriots fell over the course of one year between 2014-2015. This was attributed to Government of Cyprus policies which denied Turkish Cypriots access to state benefits during this period. On the other hand Greek Cypriots disposition towards a political compromise strengthened over the same period. The analysis offered through the lens of the SCORE identified critical factors underpinning the failure of the two communities to move along parallel tracks towards a solution.

For example, feeling represented by institutions was positively associated with support for a political compromise. This finding shed light on the nature of the peace process and whether citizens felt adequately represented in the institutions responsible for peacemaking. Other data had shown conclusively that the majority of Cypriots did not feel they were represented in the negotiation process and this was a key factor in determining whether people were ready to accept compromises made at the negotiation table. One response

was the creation of the Cyprus Dialogue Forum, which for the first time created a political space for political parties to discuss the future of the island with leaders from civil society, business and the labour movement from both communities. The Cyprus Dialogue Forum represented the type of inclusive institutional framework which the SCORE index demonstrated would be accepted as representing the opinions of citizens in the formal peace talks.

The Cyprus SCORE also identified cultural distance as being a very significant obstacle to a political compromise, with citizens in each community viewing people in the other community as being foreign. The degree of cultural distance was surprising given that for many years numerous projects had focused on demonstrating the cultural commonalities between the two communities. The SCORE data identified very specific factors governing levels of cultural distance in the two communities. In the Greek Cypriot community cultural distance was highest among women, young people, the religiously devout and people who voted for right-wing political parties, while in the Turkish Cypriot community people with low levels of education and right wing political party supporters were most likely to be culturally distant from Greek Cypriots. This finding connecting cultural distance, education and readiness for a political compromise was quickly adopted by the Leaders of the two communities who were eager to find ways to encourage inter-communal relations as a way to improve the social climate for the negotiation process. The result was the creation of inter-communal Technical Committees on Culture and Education, led by prominent political figures from the two communities, and designed to support the formal negotiations.

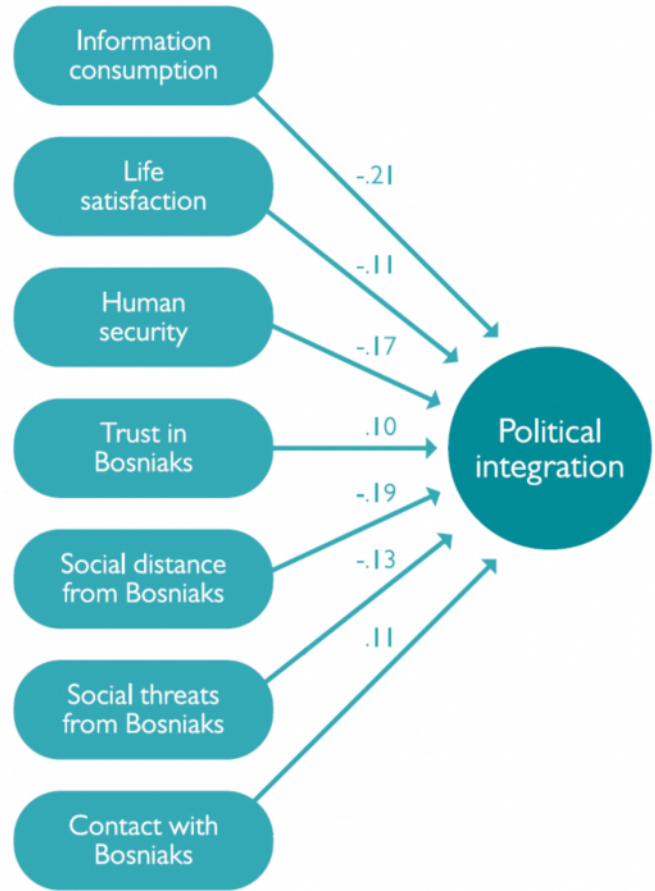


*The Cyprus SCORE has helped to identify specific regions of the country where readiness for reconciliation with the other community displayed significant change over time. This information has contributed to a re-appraisal of peacebuilding priorities by development agencies and national stakeholders.*

# SCORE Case Study: Bosnia and Hercegovina

Bosnia and Hercegovina (BiH) was the first country where the SCORE was rolled out outside of Cyprus. This provided an important test for the SCORE: how could it be re-contextualised to suit a different post-conflict situation whilst at the same time allowing comparisons to be made between countries, and retaining the essence of the methodology. The development of a SCORE for BiH was funded by USAID and the data collection on the ground was by the local partner, PRISM Research.

First, a series of validation and calibration focus group discussions towards SCORE's roll out in Bosnia and Hercegovina took place throughout 2013, along with training in the SCORE methodology for PRISM research. The calibration workshops took place in four different areas of the country (Brčko, Banja Luka, Mostar, and Sarajevo). These aimed at determining the role of SCORE in BiH and at adjusting the tool to the Bosnian context. The calibration process culminated at the construction of the main SCORE questionnaire for BiH which was administered to a representative sample of BiH's voting population as well as the creation of three auxiliary questionnaires that were used to interview representatives of CSOs, Municipalities, and Political Leaders. The administration of both the questionnaires and the interviews were done in a face-to-face manner. All data was collected between April and May 2014. The data comprised of 2000 grassroots interviews, in households across the country (FBiH, RS, Brčko District), 37 interviews with NGOs, 37 interviews with Municipal authority representatives, 47 interviews with political leaders from across the political spectrum. The Bosnia situation was slightly more complex than Cyprus in the sense that there were three major ethnic groups (Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks) interacting, rather than two.

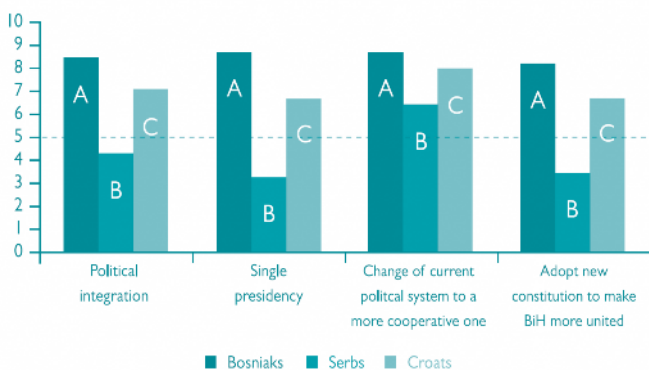


Predictors of Serb readiness for greater political integration, as identified through the SCORE Index

Some key findings included:

- Both Serb and Bosniak citizens residing in the Republika Sprska (RS) report higher social cohesion than residents of the Federation of Bosnia – Hercegovina (FBiH). This reflects underlying mistrust of the complex and multi-layered institutions of the FBiH which are perceived to be less efficient.
- This compounds the intergroup mistrust towards Bosniaks already displayed by Serb citizens of RS, and increases their reluctance to move forward towards support of federalism and greater political integration.

To address Serb reluctance in moving towards greater integration, a multi-level strategy is called for: On the one hand, developing opportunities for contact between Serbs, Bosniaks and Croats in daily life, to dismantle intergroup prejudice; and on the other hand, conducting national dialogue about the comparative efficacy of FBiH and RS institutions, so that the entities can learn from each other, implement reforms to harmonize their practices, and pave the way for a stronger core of shared institutions that all citizens can benefit from.



Readiness for greater integration was found to be significantly lower among Serb citizens

## SCORE Case Study: Nepal

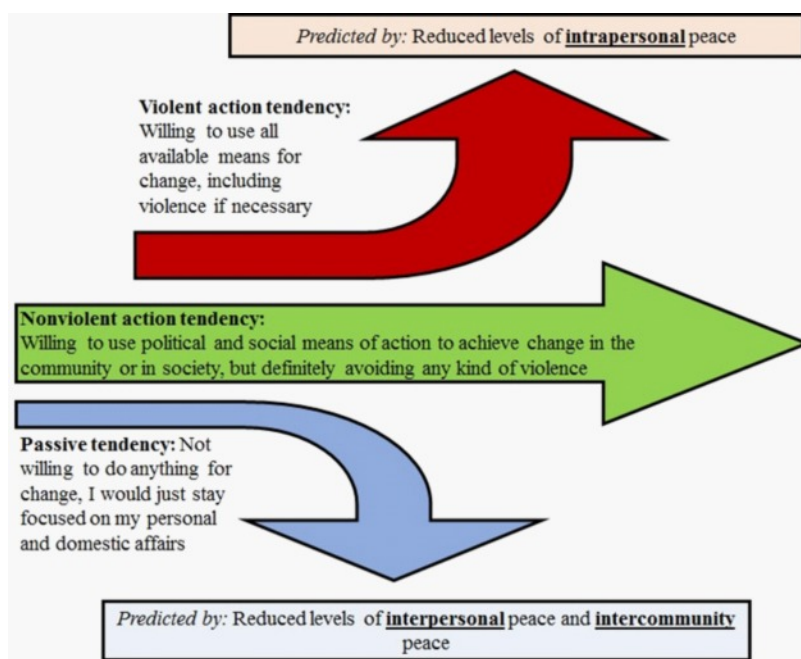
Nepal is the first Asian country where the SCORE Index was implemented in 2014-2015. The country is a kaleidoscope of social groups, home to 125 ethnicities and castes and 123 different languages. In 2013, the National Planning Commission of Nepal included Infrastructure for Peace as a national development goal in its 13th Approach Paper 2013-2016. To support the government and other stakeholders to develop policies and plans accordingly, the NGO Pro Public, Forum for the Protection of Public Interest, with the support of ZFD/GIZ, invited SeeD to implement the SCORE in Nepal.

In Nepal, there are a variety of infrastructures for peace at different levels of society: the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction (MoPR) and its Peace Focal Points and Conflict Management Division; the Local Peace Committees (LPCs), Community Mediation Committees, Dialogue Facilitator Pools in the communities, and informal infrastructures for peace like the traditional Badghar and Panchyat dispute resolution mechanisms. Although some evaluations of these respective infrastructures for peace exist, the perspective of the people who suffer from conflict remains largely undocumented.

In order to capture people's experience of peace and conflict in multiple dimensions of their lives, the SCORE Index was calibrated and expanded. In this study, the index' components 'social cohesion' and 'reconciliation' were used to measure 'citizen-state peace' and 'inter-community peace' respectively. In addition, three other dimensions were assessed: Intra-personal peace, interpersonal peace, and material peace. Indicators for these three dimensions ranged from anxiety, depression, and emotion regulation to empathy, social support, and conflict style, and economic and food security. To examine the areas with highest conflict potential in the flatlands and the hills, the SCORE Index in Nepal comprised more than 30 different groups, including political, ethnic, religious, and caste identities.



Researcher interviewing a respondent in Saptari district



### Peace dimensions and Collective Action Tendency in Nepal, as revealed by the SCORE Index

A key finding was that the respondents in this sample (N=1177) scored relatively high on intra-personal and inter-community peace, while low scores were found for the citizen-state peace dimension. Importantly, low national civic life satisfaction and low intrapersonal peace predicted higher willingness to use violence as means of social and political change.

Recommendations for peacebuilding in Nepal based on the findings of the study included:

- Mainstream intra-personal peace into peacebuilding interventions, for example by teaching self-empathy and empathy for others through Nonviolent Communication (NVC) training for teachers, peacemakers, and psychosocial workers;

- Strengthen nonviolent action tendency, for example by increasing awareness of nonviolent means for social change in the traditions of Kingian and Gandhian nonviolence;

- Help to constructively channel the frustrations surrounding national civic life dissatisfaction in Nepal, for example by communicating grievances through media and advocacy campaigns in ways that bridge the gap between citizens and state and reduce polarization.

These and other findings and recommendations were published in a book entitled *Predictors of Peace and Violence in Nepal: An Empirical Study of Peace Needs and Peace Services* (June, 2016) by Pro Public, which will inform Pro Public's and ZFD/GIZ's future program development. The publication was presented to the government of Nepal and the wider peacebuilding community in July 2016.

# SCORE Case Study: Ukraine

Recently emerged and long standing political and cultural divisions have been exploited and in part contributed to Ukraine's current conflict. To address the issues underpinning community tensions and cohesion, the USAID/OTI supported programme "Ukraine Confidence Building Initiative" (UCBI) and SeeD implemented the Social cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) Index. The UCBI programme is complementing ongoing USAID efforts to create a prosperous and stable Ukraine by responding to the crisis in the East, helping the Government of Ukraine engage citizens in the reform process, and promoting national unity.

The Ukraine SCORE was initially implemented with a sample of 7,500 residents across the country; an additional sample of 1,800 Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs); and 900 residents of Crimea and non-government controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk. The SCORE questionnaire addressed multiple themes including emerging trends in identity, civic engagement, support for policy reforms, IDP integration and perspectives on the peace process.

Headline findings of the Ukraine SCORE include:

- a) Predictably, the conflict was found to be fuelled by ideological divides, namely around the dilemma of whether Ukraine's future lies with the West or with Russia. However, the SCORE additionally revealed that each of these two groups is further sub-divided into tolerant and polarizing camps.
- b) Civic engagement is quite low in most regions of the country, and of those who are engaged in civic affairs, a

large proportion does so in a way that contributes to polarization.

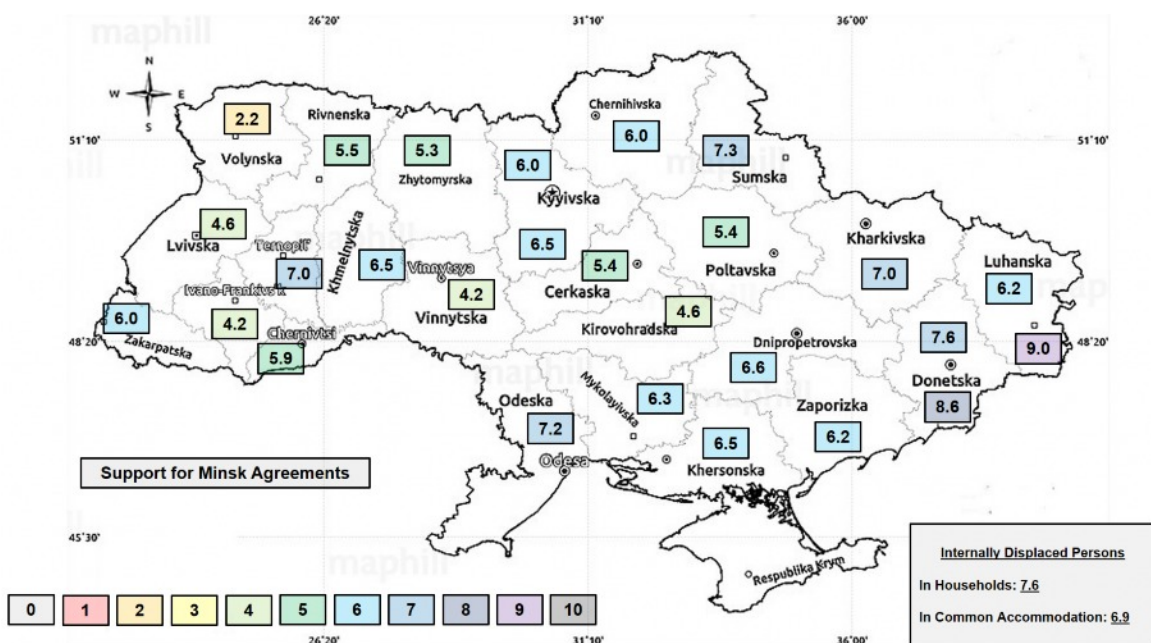
c) Support for anti-corruption reform was found to be high throughout the country. Support for decentralization reform is high in West and South Ukraine, but ambivalent in East Ukraine. Support for privatisation was found to be low throughout the country.

d) IDPs that have moved further away from the Donbas region (e.g. to Odessa or Kyiv) are facing greater challenges in attempts to integrate.

e) Residents across the country now believe that peace talks are the only possible way for the conflict in the East to be addressed. However, Central and West Ukraine appears to be ambivalent over the terms of the Minsk Agreements, with specific concerns being expressed over provisions for amnesty and special autonomy for the Donbas.

Based on these findings, several policy recommendations were formulated with a view to rebuilding social cohesion and preparing the ground for reconciliation in Ukraine. These recommendations are currently being introduced into participatory deliberations with government authorities, international organizations that are active in Ukraine, and local non-governmental organizations.

Following on from the success of the country-wide Ukraine SCORE, the UN Country Team, with the specific participation of UNDP, UNICEF and IOM, is now moving ahead with the development of an East Ukraine SCORE. This will attempt to illuminate social dynamics down to the Rayon level and accordingly inform the work of the UN in the region.



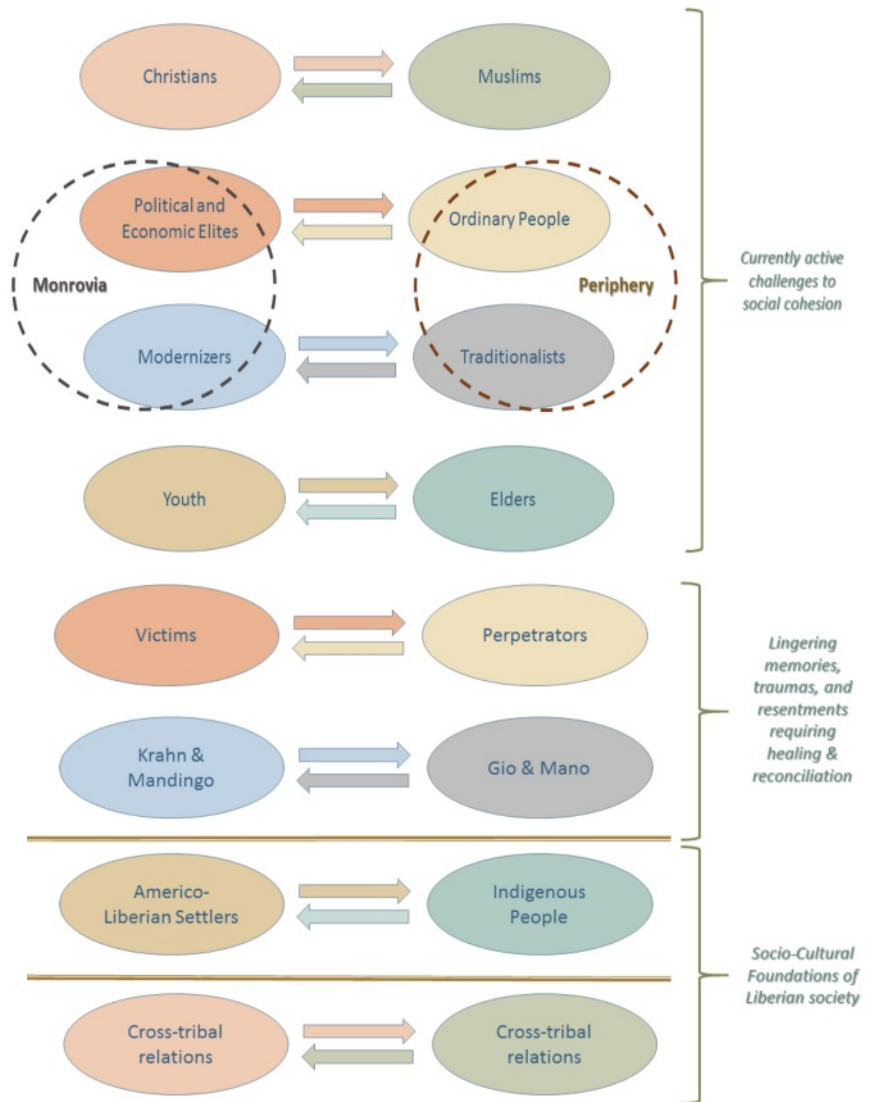
*Support for Minsk agreements was found to be high in East and South Ukraine, but ambivalent in West and Central Ukraine, More national dialogue is called for to fine-tune the content of a potential peace agreement that could re-unite the country.*



# SCORE Case Study: Liberia

Implementation of the SCORE for Liberia started in May 2016 and is expected to be completed in February 2017. The Liberia SCORE is the first to be implemented in Africa and the process to date has already set new standards for future SCORE projects. This includes the creation of a partnership framework which includes the Government, the UN system and a local implementing partner. The other unique feature of the Liberia SCORE has been the establishment, from the outset, of a broad societal coalition of supporters from civil society and academia. This was achieved through an inclusive and participatory consultative process which involved local government officials and civil society actors in conflict-affected regions of Liberia outside Monrovia. The attention to local realities has brought a new dimension to the Liberia SCORE, allowing it to explore in detail the conflict dynamics and relationships between the country's elites in Monrovia and communities disconnected from the centre of government decision-making. Thus the Liberia SCORE embraces a strong governance dimension.

The Liberia SCORE comes at a critical moment in the country's transformation from war to peace, and the findings will be used by the government and development agencies to strengthen the capacity of local society and institutions to advocate for peace consolidation priorities, human rights protection and reconciliation. SCORE Liberia will diagnose the current state of intergroup relations and identify which intergroup tensions are most salient among different socio-demographic groups at the local level. Project results will show how such tensions predict downstream outcomes such as civic resentment and the propensity for violent conflict. In this context the SCORE process will identify those aspects of civic and political life that most contribute to growing civic resentment, mistrust and disconnection, while also identifying factors that would mitigate civic resentment and



SCORE analysis of the historic and current intergroup landscape of Liberia

intergroup tensions. From this perspective the Liberia SCORE predictive analysis will advance the understanding of the factors that contribute to readiness for social and political change, understood as an un-ambivalent willingness and capacity to implement specific social cohesion and reconciliation policies.

In February 2017 the SCORE Liberia project will deliver results in the following areas:

- Specify the critical priority areas where investments need to be made to accelerate progress to reaching the goals laid out in the Liberian Government's roadmap for reconciliation and development.
- Assess the capacities of existing peacebuilding and reconciliation mechanisms and identifying policies for their enhancement.
- Provide policy direction to the implementation of the Statement of Mutual Commitments (SMC) which was agreed in 2016 between the Government of Liberia and the Peace Building Commission.



SCORE consultation with civic and traditional leaders in Zwedru, Grand Gedeh county

# Core Values of the SCORE Index

## *Attention to Context*

SCORE Implementation is always preceded by a mission to the country, to engage with national stakeholders, select/calibrate instruments and develop context-specific scales where appropriate.

## *Leading from the Field*

The SCORE team leadership is directly engaged in each project's implementation, travelling personally in the field to guide the research process at key junctures in each project's cycle.

## *Reliable and valid 360-degree metrics*

A wide library of assessment instruments, most of which have been developed by the SCORE team, is made available to each country project.

## *Advanced Analytics*

The SCORE Index seeks to introduce best practices in predictive statistical analysis, typically encountered only in academic social science literature, into the applied field of peacebuilding.

## *Direct Links to Policy and Programming*

The SCORE Index approach includes participatory processes, global reviews of best practices and pilot interventions to ensure that research findings directly impact programme design.

## *Open Approach to Data*

All data is uploaded to the interactive SCORE online platform - [www.scoreforpeace.org](http://www.scoreforpeace.org) - and made publicly available (subject to approval by project donors and partners).

## *Building Local Capacities*

Through the various stages of SCORE implementation, every effort is made to identify, train and collaborate with local researchers and peacebuilders, who can eventually lead sustainable research and peacebuilding initiatives that grow out of the SCORE process.

# Our Partners

## *UN Entities*

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

United Nations Department for Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)

United Nations Department of Political Affairs (DPA)

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

UN Women

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

## *Development Agencies*

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

## *Peacebuilding Organizations*

Interpeace

Search for Common Ground

Berghof Foundation

United States Institute of Peace

## About SeeD

The SCORE Index has been created and is implemented by the Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development (SeeD) under a non-commercial, royalty-free licence from the United Nations Development Programme. SeeD uses participatory research to make effective and sustainable policy recommendations that seek to support informed decision-making, based on the values of inclusivity, accountability and democracy. SeeD specializes in the development of innovative quantitative methodologies for use in peace-building contexts. Originally growing out of a Cyprus-based

initiative, SeeD is now implementing programmes across multiple contexts in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

For more information on SeeD or the SCORE Index, please contact:

Dr. Alexandros Lordos, Research Director  
[lordos@seedsofpeace.eu](mailto:lordos@seedsofpeace.eu)

Meltem Ikinici, Programme Development Officer  
[ikinci@seedsofpeace.eu](mailto:ikinci@seedsofpeace.eu)

