



# UN SCORE for Eastern Ukraine

## School component

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. For more information on USE and the results of the first wave please visit [use.scoreforpeace.org](http://use.scoreforpeace.org)

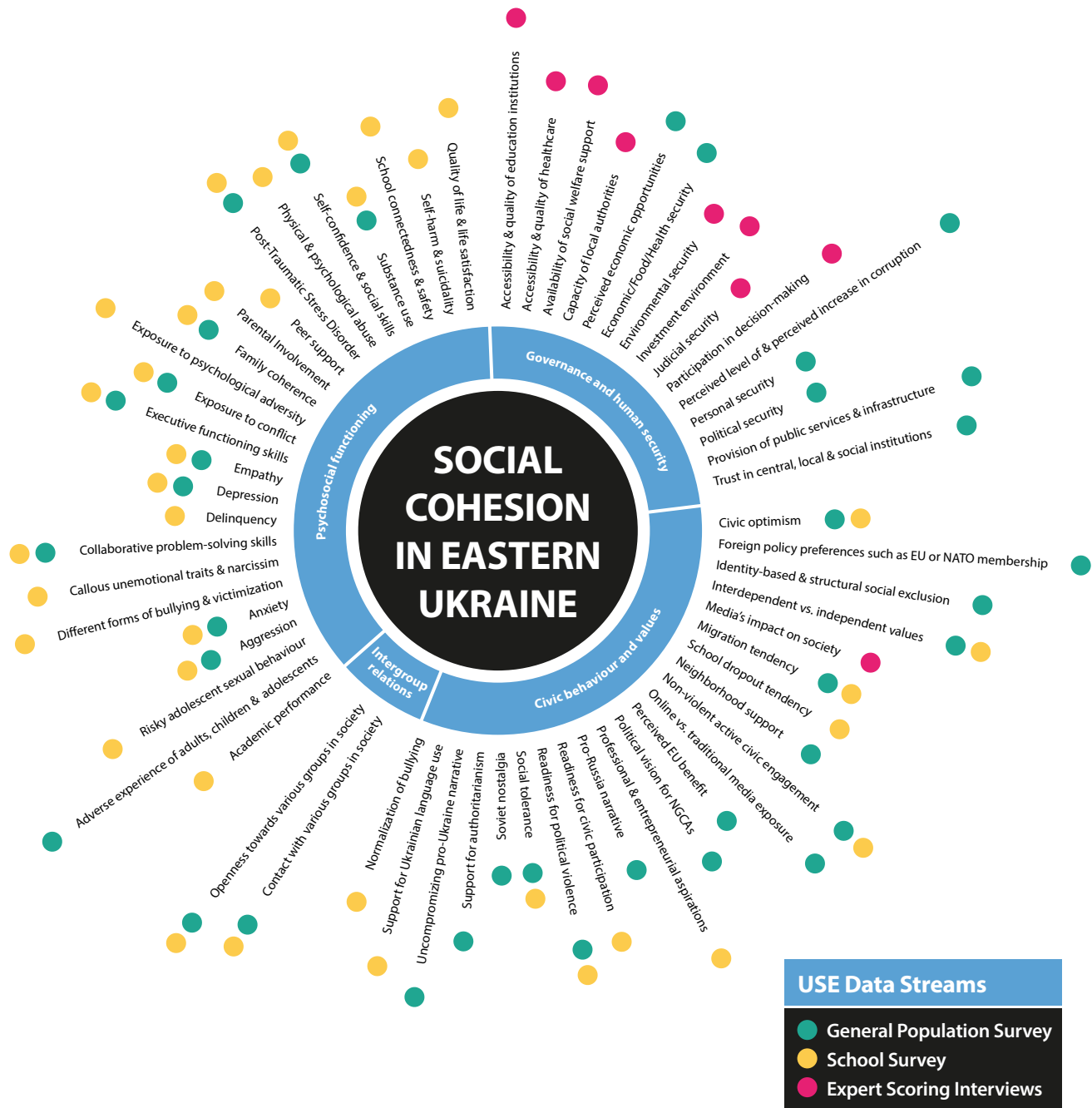


Figure 1: USE conceptual model for social cohesion in eastern Ukraine

# USE School Survey

## Introduction

The USE school survey was developed based on the USE general population survey and adapted to the younger age group. The survey was conducted in education institutions throughout government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts and reflects the views and perceptions of children aged 13 to 17 years (in this document referred to as adolescents). Adolescents represent a key demographic group in societal development as they can shape the attitudes, values and social norms of their communities. This brief outlines the key findings based on the two desirable outcomes of the USE school survey; mitigating negative population trends and readiness for active civic participation. Additional data is available at [use.scoreforpeace.org](http://use.scoreforpeace.org)

## Summary of key findings

The key findings of the USE school component are:

- migration tendency is high among adolescents, and significantly higher than the adult population;
- among adolescents, girls are more likely to contemplate migrating, with exposure to psychosocial adversity being one of the reasons for girls' migration tendency;
- schools play a positive role in mitigating migration tendency and encouraging civic participation among adolescents;
- adolescents are overall positively disposed to engaging in civic and political matters, especially through specific youth mechanisms;
- callous unemotional traits, linked to becoming desensitized due to acute stressors and/or prolonged exposure to life stressors, is a strong factor decreasing levels of readiness for active civic engagement.

## Mitigating negative population trends

Mitigating negative population trends is assessed by measuring migration tendency (here referring to movement both within Ukraine and abroad).<sup>1</sup> Migration reflects the mobility of the population and freedom of movement, and is thus a neutral or even a positive phenomenon in itself. However, analyzing migration tendency among adolescents and the dynamics behind it, particularly as it may relate to the ongoing conflict and its consequences, is of high relevance for understanding large-scale migration of youth, and the potential risk of brain-drain.

The average score for migration tendency among adolescents is 6.8, where 0 indicates that no one is thinking about leaving, and 10 indicates that everyone wishes to leave (Figure 2). Similar to the adult population scores for migration tendency, there is a notable variation within Donetsk oblast. In both the school and general population components, the highest levels of migration tendency are found in the more rural parts of the two oblasts, and southern Donetsk oblast stands out as having the lowest

<sup>1</sup> Migration tendency refers to the extent to which one is inclined to leave one's region in search for more or better opportunities.

migration tendency. This may in part be explained by the presence of Mariupol, a large city that offers more economic and social opportunities than are available in other parts of the oblast.

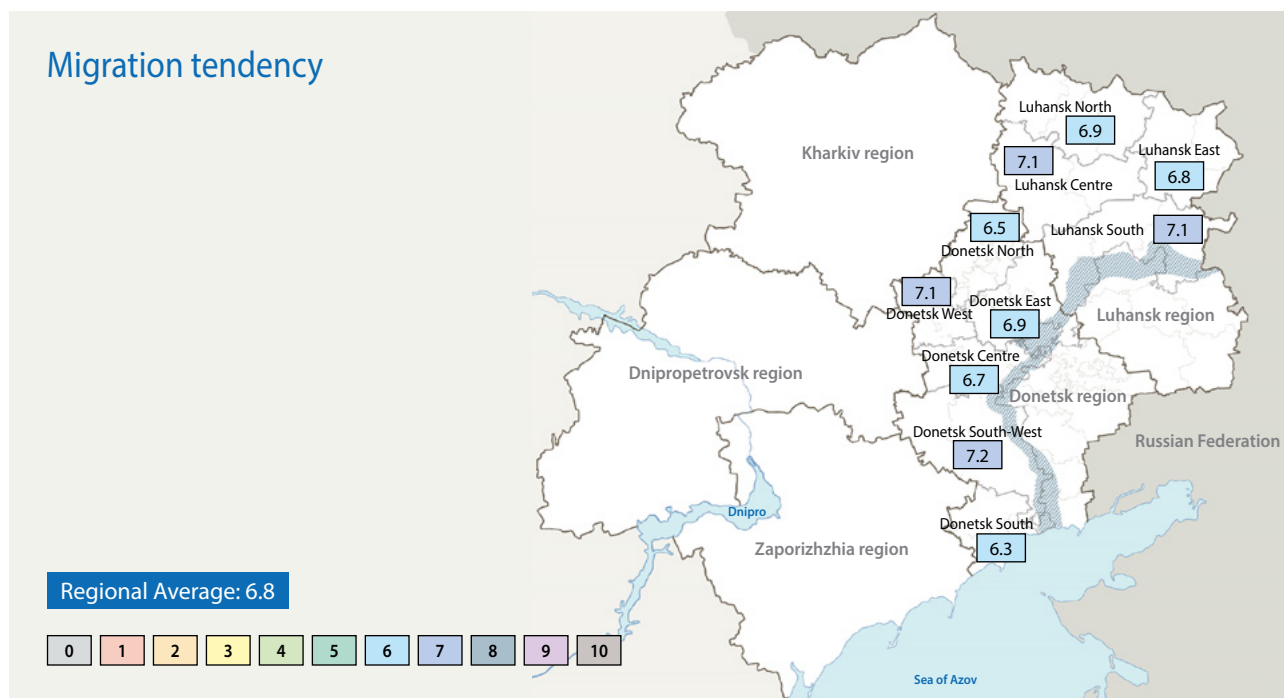


Figure 2: Scores for migration tendency

The scores for migration tendency among adolescents is significantly higher than for the adult population (Figure 3). The school component shows scores of 6.8 and 7.0 for Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, respectively, which is significantly higher than the 4.1 and 4.4 average scores for the general population. A demographic breakdown by age across both the general and school components shows that migration tendency peaks at age 16-17, followed by a steep decline thereafter. The particularly sharp decrease in scores at age 18-24 may be explained by either a change in aspirations or life circumstances, or due to actual migration occurring at the onset of adulthood, resulting in a lower migration tendency score for the part of the population that remains.

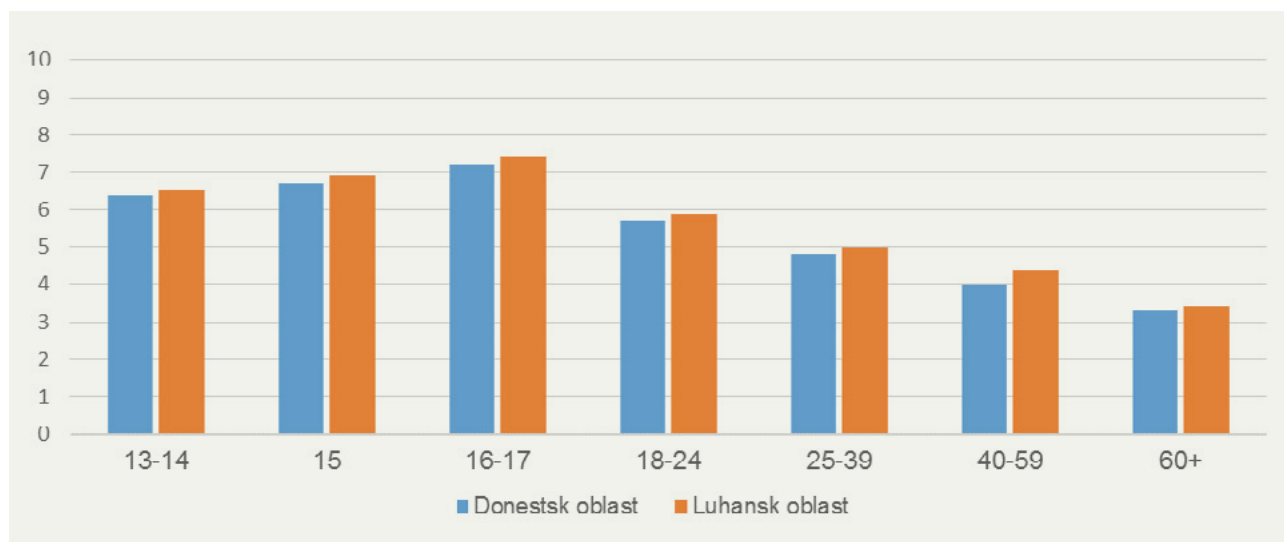


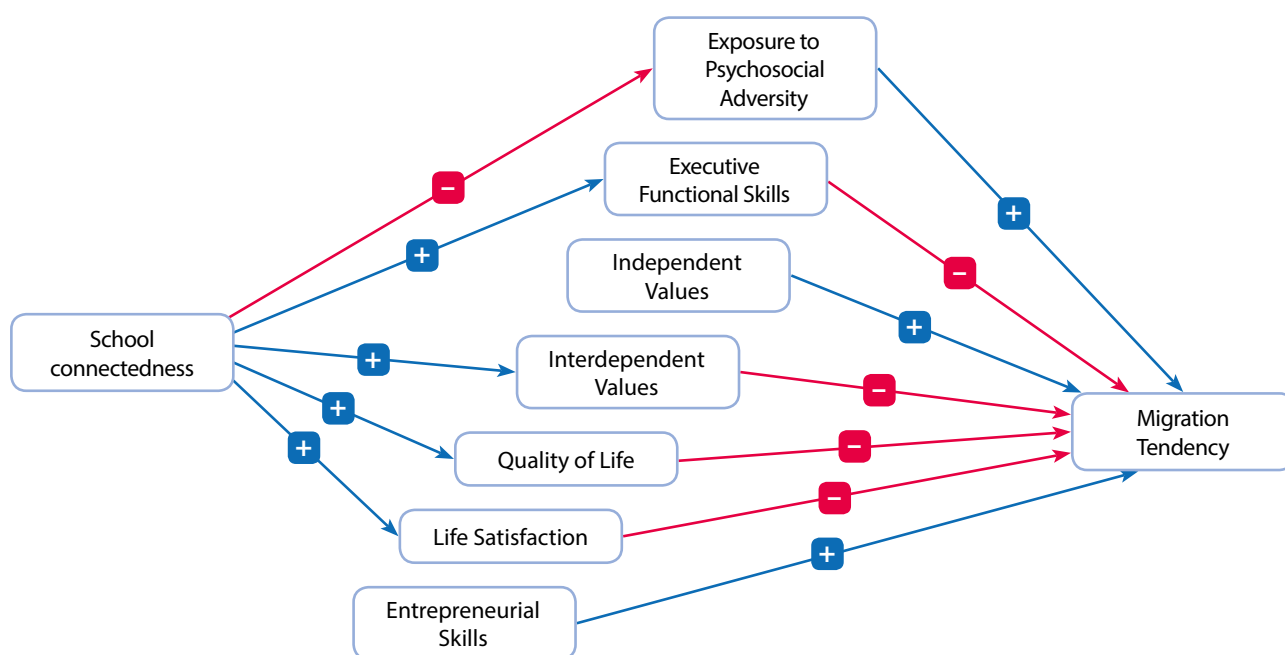
Figure 3: Score for migration tendency by age based on data from general population and school components

Although the general population analysis did not show any significant gender difference with regards to migration tendency, in the school components it emerges as a strong demographic factor, with girls showing higher migration tendency (7.2) than boys (6.4).

An in-depth analysis further identifies the significant factors influencing migration tendency (Figure 4), with psychosocial adversity,<sup>2</sup> independent values,<sup>3</sup> quality of life<sup>4</sup> and entrepreneurial skills<sup>5</sup> having a particularly strong impact. In other words, adolescents, who have been directly or indirectly exposed to negative life events, have strong independent values, and/or entrepreneurial skills are more likely to want to leave their region. Conversely, executive functioning skills<sup>6</sup>; interdependent values<sup>7</sup>, and quality and life satisfaction are factors that contribute to adolescents wanting to stay in their region. In other words, adolescents who are satisfied with their lives and are well integrated are less likely to want to leave their region compared to those who are more exposed to adversity and/or are independent and adventurous. Moreover, the analysis shows that girls are more susceptible to psychosocial adversity; score higher independent values; and tend to perceive their quality of life worse than boys do. These factors taken together explain why migration tendency emerges stronger among girls than boys.

The findings for migration tendency among adolescents may not be surprising in themselves, and are certainly not unique to eastern Ukraine. The extent of the impact of the conflict in eastern Ukraine is well documented, however, and it is likely that the conflict contributes to high levels of desire to migrate. The direct influence of exposure to psychosocial adversity on migration tendency is another mechanism through which the conflict may contribute to these high scores.

Moreover, the analysis shows the importance of the education system as it directly influences, through school connectedness<sup>8</sup>, six of the seven migration tendency factors. School connectedness has a particularly strong impact on life satisfaction, quality of life, independent values and interdependent values.



**Figure 4:** Factors impacting on migration tendency.  
Red arrows indicate a negative association, and blue arrows a positive association

<sup>2</sup> The direct or indirect exposure to negative life events, such as bullying, punishment, neglect, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Being ambitious and adventurous, preferring to do things in one's own way.

<sup>4</sup> The way a person evaluates different aspects of his/her life in terms of mood, relations with others, and goals and the degree to which a person feels satisfied with his/her life.

<sup>5</sup> Entrepreneurial ambitions and career path preferences one wants to follow.

<sup>6</sup> Ability to control impulses, consider consequences of actions, plan tasks, focus attention and multi-task.

<sup>7</sup> Preference to follow societal norms and traditions and caring for the wellbeing of others

<sup>8</sup> The extent to which one feels connected to peers and teachers in the school context.

## Readiness for active civic participation

Readiness for active civic participation refers to adolescents' willingness to engage in civic and political matters using non-violent means. The average score across both oblasts is 5.4 (Figure 6), where 0 indicates that no adolescents are ready to play an active role in public affairs, and 10 indicates that all adolescents are ready to actively engage in civic and political matters.

While some differences appear within the oblasts at the cluster level, only northern Luhansk oblast (5.9) stands out against the regional average. A demographic breakdown by income and gender shows significant variations – adolescents living in families with lower income are less likely to be willing to engage in civic and political matters, and girls are far more likely to display an interest in being civically engaged than boys.

The score of 5.4 is significantly higher than the 0.3 score for “non-violent active civic engagement” in the general population component (see USE Outcome 4: Tolerant and socially responsible citizenship). This suggests that adolescents are more likely to be drawn to engaging in civic matters than the adult population. This may be due to various reasons, such as being more politicized due to the conflict, or that the willingness to engage gradually decreases with age as other issues take precedent.

The analysis further shows that adolescents are overall positively predisposed to engage for example in youth councils, should such an opportunity be presented.

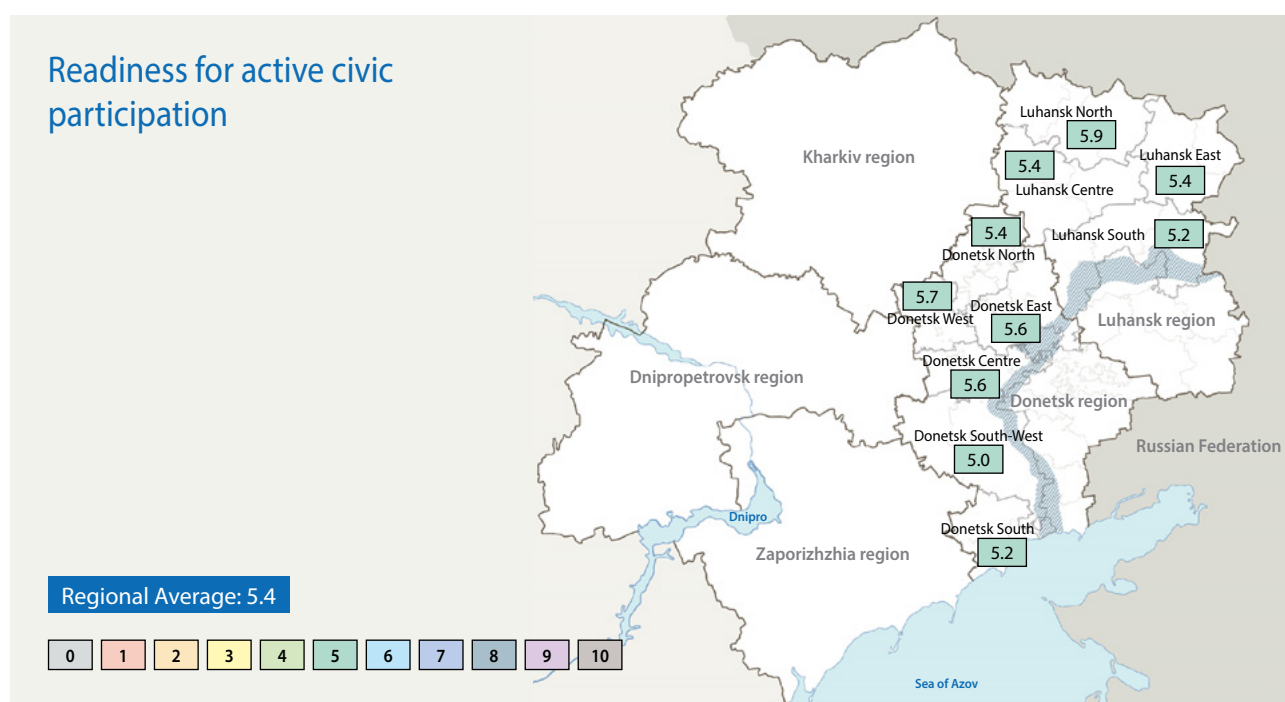


Figure 5: Scores for readiness for active civic participation

An in-depth analysis identifies the factors influencing adolescent's willingness to engage in civic matters (Figure 6). The main factors positively impacting on adolescents' readiness for active civic participation are school connectedness, empathy,<sup>9</sup> social skills<sup>10</sup>, interdependent values and openness toward IDPs<sup>11</sup>. Conversely, adolescents who perceive bullying as normal and who are ready to use violence to achieve societal change are less likely to want to be open to active civic participation.

<sup>9</sup> The degree to which one feels empathetic towards others, and shares the feelings of others.

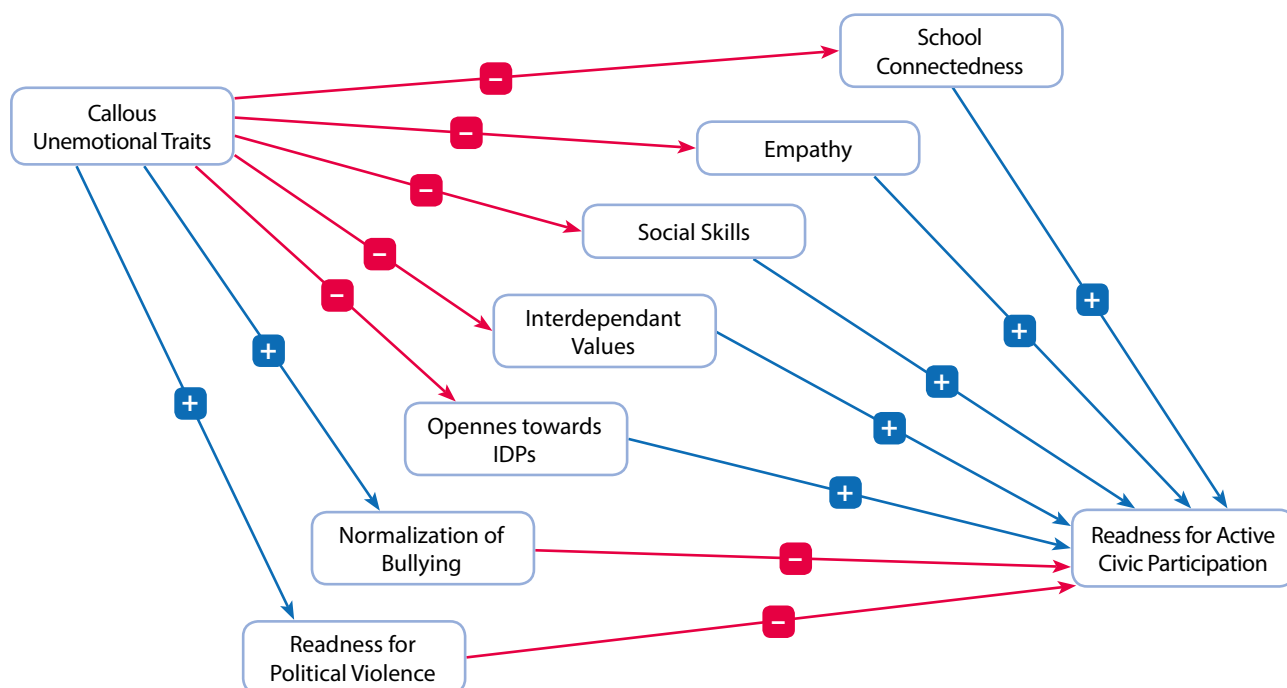
<sup>10</sup> Possessing skills that facilitate social interaction and communication with other people.

<sup>11</sup> Openness to engage in dialogue with and feelings towards IDPs living in one's community.

The analysis also highlights the important role schools play in fostering and promoting active civic engagement indirectly. School connectedness is a positive driver in and of itself, but the education system also strongly impacts on the development of empathy and social skills, both of which are direct predictive factors for active civic participation. This confirms that working through and within the education system is likely to be an effective way to increase readiness for active civic participation.

Furthermore, the analysis shows that callous unemotional traits plays an important role as they increase the levels of readiness for political violence<sup>12</sup>, which holds the strongest negative influence on readiness for civic participation. Callous unemotional traits also bear a strong and negative impact on the cluster of drivers which, under the education system, increase readiness for active citizenship participation.

Callous unemotional traits can be a consequence of acute psychosocial distress and prolonged exposure to life stressors. With strong levels of exposure to the conflict and its consequences, it is likely that adolescents are exposed to conditions favoring the development of such traits, which is a concern due to their potential medium to long term impact on social cohesion.



**Figure 6:** Factors impacting on readiness for active civic participation. Red arrows indicate a negative association, and blue arrows a positive association

<sup>12</sup> Propensity to use violent means to achieve political change.