



Ukraine

# Safe and Child-Friendly Schools in Ukraine

Longitudinal analysis for the Impact Assessment of the “Safe Schools” programme in Ukraine

# Acknowledgement

## Authors

Maria Symeou, Andrii Dryga, Alexandros Lordos

## Special Thanks

The study has benefitted from the valuable inputs of many colleagues throughout UNICEF, SeeD and beyond, including adolescent development specialists, school psychologists and field professionals.

Within SeeD, thanks go to the following for providing input, and for interpreting and contextualising the data: Marian Machlouzarides, Alexander Guest, Georgia Christou, and Ilke Dagli-Hustings.

Within UNICEF, specific thanks go to Bohdan Yarema, Olena Sakovych, Olha Dolinina, Svitlana Stukalo, and Volodymyr Ponomarenko.

Special thanks go to the Ukrainian Institute for Social Research after Oleksandr Yaremenko (UISR), and especially to Olga Balakireva, Tetyana Bondar and Nam-Mykhailo Nguyen, for all their valuable help and guidance throughout the data collection process.

UNICEF also wishes to acknowledge the financial support of the European Union.

## Acronyms and abbreviations

<b>ESPAD</b>	European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs
<b>GCA</b>	Government-Controlled Areas
<b>HBSC</b>	Health and Behaviour in School-aged Children
<b>MoES</b>	Ministry of Education and Science
<b>ODD</b>	Oppositional Defiant Disorder
<b>PTSD</b>	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
<b>SCFS</b>	Safe and Child-Friendly Schools
<b>SCORE</b>	Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index
<b>SeeD</b>	Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development
<b>UISR</b>	Ukrainian Institute for Social Research after Oleksandr Yaremenko
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>USE</b>	United Nations Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index for Eastern Ukraine

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## Key terms and Definitions

**Adolescents:** the term adolescents in UNICEF is used for young people aged 10 to 18 years. However, the vast majority of adolescents that participated in the study were aged between 14 and 19.

**School standards:** are defined as established expectations of how a school should operate, and which help with the day-to-day functioning of the school, as well as in creating a safer and more inclusive school environment.

**Safe and Child-Friendly Schools:** is a concept containing all the necessary conditions for adolescents' health, social, and academic development. In our study, "Safe and Child-Friendly Schools" integrate four school standards, including safe physical school environment, safe psychosocial school environment, competency-based teaching, and participatory and inclusive governance.

**Areas near the conflict line:** the study defines areas near the conflict line as areas within 15 kilometres of the contact line in the government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. Oblasts are administrative units within Ukraine.

# 1. Executive Summary

The main aim of the present study is to provide insight into how effective the “Safe and Child-Friendly Schools” (SCFS) pilot programme that currently operates in fourteen schools in eastern Ukraine is. In addition, the study also seeks to investigate how school standards associate to adolescents’ well-being and adjustment. To achieve these aims, the Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development (SeeD) in collaboration with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) implemented a large-scale quantitative study across Ukraine. The current research is based on longitudinal data which was gathered across two time points – the first data was collected in 2018, and the second one in 2019. Two thousand and forty-five ( $N = 2,045$ ) adolescent students took part in the study at both time-points. They were recruited from 200 educational institutions in 8 oblasts in Ukraine: Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Kharkiv, Mykolaiv, Lviv, Kyiv, and the government-controlled Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

The study first investigates perceptions of school standards by students of Safe Schools and students of non-Safe Schools. The results demonstrated that adolescents, who attend schools that implement a Safe Schools programme, rate school standards higher than students, who attend schools that do not implement the programme. Hence, the results illustrate the effectiveness of the SCFS programme in enhancing adolescents’ perceptions of their school. Further analyses showed that – out of the four school standards – the safe physical school is rated the lowest. It means that students rate the physical spaces of their schools (which may include playground and sports facilities, or restrooms) lower than all the other standards. This important finding can be used to inform relevant stakeholders, local organisations and hromadas, that one of the areas that they should turn their attention to is restoring and upgrading the physical spaces of schools.

Then, the study sought to explore whether participation in the SCFS programme has an impact on students’ perceptions of their school’s climate. As the longitudinal analyses have demonstrated, the school’s involvement in the Safe Schools programme improved the students’ perception of different aspects of their school. Including the school’s environment, quality of teaching, and school governance. Specifically, through participation in the SCFS programme, 16 out of the 20 items that were measured showed statistically significant improvement. For instance, students consider their schools as more physically attractive and providing them with higher teaching quality. In contrast, perceptions of adolescents who attend non-Safe Schools either minimally improved or worsened within a year. These findings support the integration and use of the four school standards in schools across Ukraine.

The study also identifies how a safe and positive school environment is associated with numerous adolescents’ behavioural, psychosocial, and academic adjustment indicators. All in all, the findings support the implementation of the four school standards as a means of promoting adolescent adjustment. School standards were associated, among others, with more positive and supportive social relations with their teachers and fellow peers, higher life skills, higher academic performance<sup>1</sup>, and higher quality of life. Furthermore, school standards were also negatively associated to school dropout tendency and externalising or internalising behaviours. From all four school standards, competency-based teaching is related to the majority of adolescent adjustment indicators. This finding adds support to the ongoing efforts of the education reform of enhancing the quality of teaching methods in schools. One way in which this can be achieved is through student-centred learning such as interactive/experiential teaching which includes group discussions and role-playing activities.

## 2. Introduction

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<sup>1</sup> In this study, academic performance is self-reported by adolescents and is understood as a proxy measure for actual performance.

## 2.1. Background: Safe and Child-Friendly Schools

Among essential endeavours in society is safeguarding the welfare of our children and young adolescents. Governments develop relevant laws and policies that ensure the physical, educational, and emotional well-being of children. Parents strive to provide to their children what they need in order to develop into well-adjusted individuals who can reach their full potential. And in the same sense, schools aim to both educate students *and* socially integrate them into society. As children and adolescents spend at least a quarter of their days in school, school is considered as one of the most important microsystems in a young person's life. Indeed, empirical evidence links school-related factors to an array of long-lasting outcomes. For instance, school connectedness – which is defined in the literature as “the belief by students that adults and peers in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals”<sup>2</sup> – has important implications for adolescents' educational outcomes. Specifically, positive student-teacher relations and being emotionally connected to schools enhances academic success<sup>3</sup>, while simultaneously minimising the tendency to consider early school dropout<sup>4</sup>. Furthermore, school connectedness is an important determinant of adolescents' behavioural and mental health well-being; low levels of school connectedness are linked to both increased behaviour problems<sup>5</sup> and negative emotionality, such as depression and suicidal ideation<sup>6</sup>.

However, even if schools are crucial for children's and adolescents' development, schooling is not always a positive experience for some students. For some, schooling means “being forced to stand in unfurnished classrooms, being hungry, thirsty or unwell; it can also mean being frightened by the threat of punishment, humiliation, bullying or even violence at the hands of teachers and fellow pupils”<sup>7</sup>. All these, along with some students being exposed to a low quality of teaching, thwart young peoples' ability to learn. Empirical evidence suggests that school climate is an important predictor of adolescents' adjustment. In other words, unsafe school environments are linked to multiple problems for the young person. For instance, research findings demonstrate that adolescents who perceived their school as unsafe suffered mental health problems more often<sup>8</sup>.

Furthermore, unsafe school environments are associated with decreased academic performance, increased student absenteeism, post-traumatic stress, and misbehaviours<sup>9</sup>. All these outcomes have future catastrophic consequences for the individual and the society. Since one determinant for these adverse outcomes is the school's climate, then investing in safe and supportive school environments is of chief significance and must constitute a national priority. Research does show that positive school climate constitutes a protective factor against maladaptive outcomes; for instance, when students perceive their school's climate, teachers, and school staff as positive and supportive, bullying behaviours show a decreased trend<sup>10</sup>. There is also a higher likelihood for students to ask for help with bullying or threats of violence<sup>11</sup>. Furthermore, empirical evidence shows that school climate – such as participation in school activities, quality of school materials

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<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2009). *School Connectedness: Strategies for Increasing Protective Factors Among Youth*. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

<sup>3</sup> Crosnoe, R., Johnson, M., & Elder, G. (2004). Intergenerational bonding in school: The behavioural and contextual correlates of student-teacher relationships. *Sociology of Education*, 77, 60–81.

<sup>4</sup> Catalano, R., Haggerty, K., Oesterle, S., Fleming, C., & Hawkins, J. (2004). The importance of bonding to school for healthy development: Findings from the social development research group. *Journal of School Health*, 74, 252–261.

<sup>5</sup> Loukas, A., Ripperger-Suhler, K., & Horton, K. (2009). Examining temporal associations between school connectedness and early adolescent adjustment. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 38, 804–812.

<sup>6</sup> Millings, A., Buck, R., Montgomery, A., Spears, M., & Stallard, P. (2012). School connectedness, peer attachment, and self-esteem as predictors of adolescent depression. *Journal of Adolescence*, 35, 1061–1067.

<sup>7</sup> UNICEF (2009). *Child-Friendly Schools Manual*.

<sup>8</sup> Nijs, M. M., Bun, C. J. E., Tempelaar, W. M., de Wit, N. J., Burger, H., Plevier, C. M., & Boks, M. P. M. (2014). Perceived school safety is strongly associated with adolescent mental health problems. *Community Mental Health Journal*, 50(2), 127–134.

<sup>9</sup> Hong, J. S., & Eamon, M. K. (2012). Students' perceptions of unsafe schools: An ecological systems analysis. *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, 21(3), 428–438.

<sup>10</sup> Low, S., & VanRyzin, M. (2014). The moderating effects of school climate on bullying prevention efforts. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 29, 306–319.

<sup>11</sup> Eliot, M., Cornell, D., Gregory, A., & Fan, X. (2010). Supportive school climate and student willingness to seek help for bullying and threats of violence. *Journal of School Psychology*, 48, 533–553.

and equipment, and school appearance – related inversely to students’ absenteeism severity, anxiety, depression, and oppositional behaviour<sup>12</sup>.

However, a positive school environment is not achieved within a short period of time or with a single programme. On the other hand, achieving safe and child-friendly schools is a lengthy process. The requirements of a safe school are: (i) to account for students’ mental health well-being; (ii) to work towards physical *and* psychological safety; and (iii) to engage all involved parties (e.g., schools, families, and communities) as partners<sup>13</sup>. Relevant to this, UNICEF’s framework for rights-based, safe, and child-friendly schools are characterised as "inclusive, healthy and protective for all children, effective with children, and involved with families and communities – and children"<sup>14</sup>. Safe Schools is a concept which encompasses all the necessary school conditions for the health, social, and academic adjustment of adolescents. A programme which promotes rights-based and safe schools based on UNICEF’s principles is applied to numerous educational institutions across the globe; the focus in the current report is on the programme which is currently being implemented in Ukraine.

## Safe and Child-Friendly Schools in Ukraine

The simulation of the Safe and Child-Friendly School (SCFS) programme in Ukraine was initiated by Ministry of Education and Science and UNICEF. This came at the request from the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine to support the ongoing education reform<sup>15</sup>. There are, currently, fourteen educational facilities in the government-controlled areas (GCA) of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts which operate based on UNICEF’s SCFS principles. The programme supports the comprehensive education reform New Ukrainian School which aims to ensure the rights and equal access of all children to high-quality education, especially the most vulnerable, such as those who are disadvantaged as a result of the ongoing military conflict in eastern Ukraine<sup>16</sup>. Educational institutions become safe and child-friendly if they integrate the following four standards:

1. **A safe physical school environment.** The aim, here, is to offer students both a safe and stimulating environment that would aid in their physical and educational development. Examples of how a school can be a safe place to be around while promoting adolescents’ healthy development are to offer students nutritious meal options, playground and sports facilities, modern pedagogical equipment, and clean and adequately equipped restrooms.
2. **A safe psychosocial school environment.** Psychosocial safety is a definite pre-requisite to adolescent well-being and adolescent learning. Students who go to school feeling unsafe and unsupported cannot learn to their full potential. Hence, the goal of SCFS is to make schools psychosocially comfortable. To do so, SCFS invest in giving students, among others, access to mental health support (e.g., psychosocial services and counselling) for those who need it, access to extra-curricular activities, and having ongoing bullying prevention programmes and precise mechanisms on how to respond to bullying incidents.
3. **Competency-based teaching.** The aim of this standard is for students to “learn how to learn”. In other words, SCFS programme promotes quality learning, including the promotion of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, encouraging students to ask

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<sup>12</sup> Hendron, A., & Kearney, C. A. (2016). School Climate and Student Absenteeism and Internalizing and Externalizing Behavioral Problems. *Children & Schools*, 38(2), 109-116.

<sup>13</sup> National Association of School Psychologists. (2013). *Rethinking School Safety: Communities and Schools Working Together*.

<sup>14</sup> Shaeffer, S. (1999). *A Framework for Rights-Based, Child-Friendly Schools*, UNICEF.

<sup>15</sup> Ponomarenko, V., Vorontsova, T., Sakovych, O., Dolinina, O., & Datchenko, N. (2020) *Child friendly and safe school: modelling of school transformation approach in the context of educational reform in Ukraine* (in Ukrainian). United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

<sup>16</sup> Ponomarenko, V., Vorontsova, T., Sakovych, O., Dolinina, O., & Datchenko, N. (2020) *Child friendly and safe school: modelling of school transformation approach in the context of educational reform in Ukraine* (in Ukrainian). United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

questions and express their opinions, and getting them involved to group assignments and discussions.

4. **Participatory and inclusive governance.** To maintain school safety and a positive school climate, the collaboration between all involved parties is crucial. To achieve an inclusive school environment and participatory school governance, SCFS engage school teachers, school-related staff, along with the students and parents, into the school's decision-making process. This includes respecting and considering students' opinions, and encouraging them to express their views and feelings about school life with confidence that the relevant school personnel will listen to it with respect and seriousness.

In consultation with the key stakeholders, SCFS developed and implemented the action plan to strengthen all four components. UNICEF and local communities supported schools in the implementation of a developed plan.

Albeit the SCFS are in practice for a short period of time, pilot schools have documented positive transformations, such as (i) trust in educational institutions has increased; (ii) adolescents show increased interest in school life; (iii) students explore adaptive, non-violent, ways of communication with each other; (iv) relations between teachers, students and parents have improved; and (v) teachers became more trained on issues of inclusivity, anti-bullying, and development of life skills.

The present study with adolescents aims to provide insight into the effectiveness of the SCFS pilot programme that currently operates in fourteen schools in eastern Ukraine. Furthermore, the study seeks to explore how school standards associate to adolescent well-being and adjustment. Specifically, the study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the levels of the key indicators which measure SCFS (safe physical school environment, safe psychosocial school environment, competency-based teaching, and participatory and inclusive school governance)?
2. Do safe and child-friendly schools impact on students' perceptions of their school's climate?
3. How does a positive and safe school environment associate to adolescent development?

## 2.2. Scope of the study

This report, developed by SeeD and UNICEF, is based on the longitudinal analysis of data that was collected in the second and third planned waves of the USE adolescent component survey. The first wave of data was collected in 2017, with a sample of 3,311 adolescents (aged 13-17 years old) living in the government-controlled areas (GCA) of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. However, the first wave provided only cross-sectional data, in which analyses do not allow for exploring relationships or differences over time. Due to the growing interest in exploring adolescent development among Ukrainians, longitudinal data were collected in the second and third waves of collection to allow for analyses of changes and trends over time. In total, 2,045 Ukrainian adolescents participated in both waves (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>) of the data collection. Adolescents were recruited from 200 educational institutions from 8 oblasts in Ukraine: Donetsk, Luhansk, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhia, Kharkiv, Mykolaiv, Lviv, and Kyiv oblasts. The study aims to provide insights into the SCFS programme that is currently operating in Ukraine, to inform government institutions and other stakeholders on the importance of encouraging schools where students feel included, experience physical and psychosocial safety, and receive high-quality teaching.

Findings are essential because they will inform key education stakeholders and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine on the importance of applying the SCFS programme across Ukrainian schools. This report will shed light onto which school standards – such as safe psychosocial school environment and competency-based teaching – are improved as a result of

participation to the SCFS programme. The study will also highlight how school standards contribute to adolescent adjustment and well-being by investigating their association with a number of adolescent development indicators.

### 3. Methodology

The measures complied with UNICEF’s and national ethical considerations on conducting research using children. For the third data collection process, a modified version of the second wave questionnaire was created. In order to select the indicators most relevant for adolescents, an extensive literature review was conducted at the early stages of the project along with consultations with experts on adolescent development. Numerous indicators were included in the final questionnaire of the third wave of Ukrainian study on adolescence. Indicators range from adolescents’ experiences in the school setting, such as school connectedness to experiences of bullying or victimisation. Furthermore, the questionnaire included, among others, items on life skills, externalising and internalising behaviours (e.g., conduct disorder, aggression, anxiety, and depression), and quality of life.

Furthermore, the questionnaires on both the second the third waves of data collection included questions on school standards, which are based on the “Safe and Child-Friendly Schools” concept, and include items such as: “Our school has an active anti-violence campaign and has clear mechanisms how to react to cases of bullying and violence”, and “There are effective student governance bodies in my school (such as student council, head of class, class students committee) which genuinely represent the needs and interests of the student community” (see Figure 1). A full list of the indicators can be found in the appendix.

#### 3.1. Instruments: Questionnaires

Each of the indicators within the study was measured by combining 2 to 5 items. Each of the items in an indicator measured different aspects of the overall phenomenon that each indicator sought to capture, and was then aggregated to form a composite scale. For instance, school standards were measured through twenty items – 5 items per component of the indicator (see Figure 1). Where available, internationally validated psychometric instruments that provide reliable measures of the indicators were used in the questionnaire, while in other cases, original items were designed using best practices in psychometric scale construction.



Figure 1. Items of School Standards.

### 3.2. Ethical considerations

The research team thoroughly reviewed all ethical considerations to ensure the protection of children's rights during the study. UNICEF contracted the Ukrainian Institute for Social Research after Oleksandr Yaremko<sup>17</sup> (UISR), a leading institute accredited for conduct of national surveys and with substantial experience in school-based surveying to provide expert advice on the questionnaire formulation and its translation. UISR is the institute which gathered the first wave of data for the Eastern Ukraine Social Cohesion and Reconciliation (SCORE) adolescent survey. UISR is also the Ukrainian accredited institute for the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs<sup>18</sup> (ESPAD) and leads Ukraine's data collection for the Health and Behaviour in School-aged Children<sup>19</sup> (HBSC), both cross-national studies taking place in 35 and 48 countries respectively. Approval for the survey was obtained from the Commission on Psychology and Pedagogy of the Scientific-Methodical Council of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine<sup>20</sup>. Before administering the paper-based questionnaire, regional field managers from the UISR National network received a full-day training. To achieve the longitudinal nature of the project, the third wave of the study was formed on the basis of the second wave of data collection, by ensuring before the survey that many of the participating classes took part in last year's survey as well. Students were informed about the objectives of the study, how the data would be used and informed that participation was on a voluntary basis, that not all the questions needed to be answered and that they could withdraw at any time. Each student received a questionnaire and an individual envelope in which they sealed their completed questionnaire. Then all individual envelopes of the class were sealed by the interviewer in a second envelope prior to the return of the teacher in the room.

### 3.3. Data collection

To achieve the longitudinal aims of the project, data were collected from the same participants over two time points. All adolescent data were collected in Ukraine, through a paper-and-pencil self-report questionnaire in the Ukrainian language, from 200 education institutions. Data were collected from eight oblasts: Donetsk, Luhansk, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhia, Kharkiv, Mykolaiv, Lviv, and Kyiv oblasts. For the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, a sample was formed by zones separately: zone 0-5 km, zone 5-15 km and zone 15+ km from the territory of the contact line.

For the first time-point, data were collected during the first semester of the 2018-2019 school-year (October to early December). A total of 7,846 adolescents aged between 13-18 years old (mean age = 15.46 years) participated in this phase of the study. Both genders were represented in the sample; 46.3 per cent of the sample (3,634 males) consisted of males' responses, whereas girls represented 53.5% (4,197 females) of the sample. Fifteen adolescents (.2%) did not provide their gender information.

Similarly, for the second time-point, data were collected during the first semester of the 2019-2020 school-year (October to November). In this survey, 8,643 adolescents aged between 13-19 years old (mean age = 15.26 years) participated. Both males and females took part in the study; boys represented 46.5 per cent (4,022 males) of the sample, whereas 52.7% (4,556 females) of the sample were girls. Sixty-five adolescents (.8%) did not provide their gender information.

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.uisr.org.ua/>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.espad.org>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.hbsc.org>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.mon.gov.ua/>

From all those participants, 2,045 adolescents (aged between 14-19 years old) took part in the surveys at both time-points<sup>21</sup>. Adolescents were both males ( $N = 872$ ; 42.6% of the sample) and females ( $N = 1,173$ ; 57.4% of the sample). They resided in one of the eight oblasts used for data collection, with an oversampling on adolescents living within 15 kilometres of the contact line (see Figure 2).

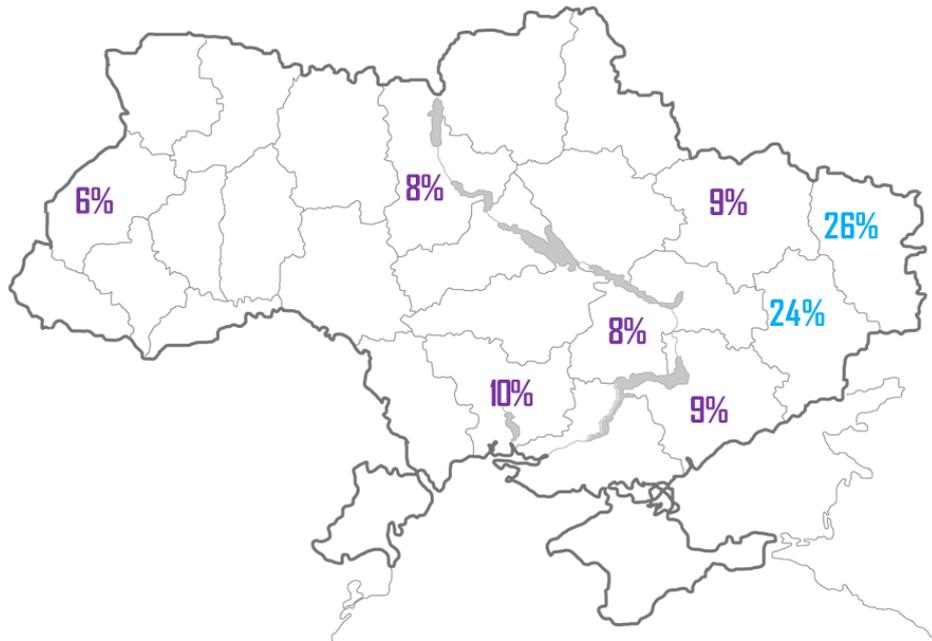


Figure 2. Percentage of surveyed adolescents across the eight oblasts.

Data analysis was conducted on the schools that participated in the SCFS programme along with schools that did not. Even though fourteen schools from the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts participated in the Safe Schools programme, data were collected from only four of those schools. All Safe Schools/Non-Safe Schools were matched based on specific characteristics:

- All institutions were in urban areas of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.
- All institutions were located between 0-5 kilometres or more than 15 kilometres away from the contact line.

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<sup>21</sup> Initially, 2,047 participants took part in the data collection at both time-points, but two adolescents were excluded from further analyses due to a very high percentage of missing responses. The final number of adolescents used in longitudinal analyses is 2,045.

- All institutions were secondary schools.
- The ratio for boys – girls was similar across the schools participating/not participating in the Safe Schools programme.

Forty-nine participants from Safe Schools took part in the study across both time-points, whereas 130 adolescents participated in the survey from the equivalent non-Safe Schools (see Figure 3).

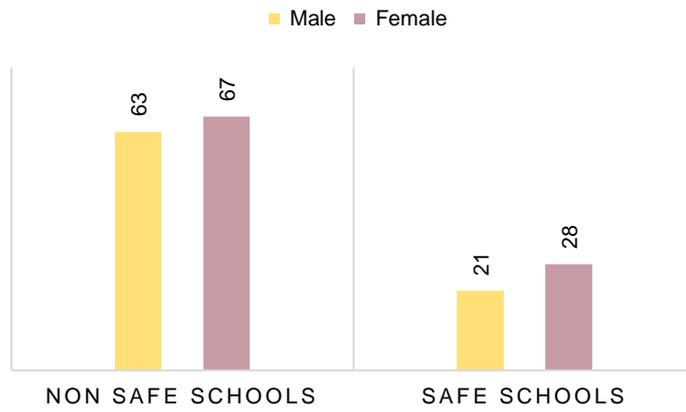


Figure 3. Number of participants from Safe Schools / Non-Safe Schools.

## 4. Safe and Child-Friendly Schools – Findings

### 4.1. The composition of Safe and Child-Friendly Schools in Ukraine

#### 4.1.1. School standards among adolescents who participate in the Safe and Child-Friendly Schools programme and their counterparts

In 2017, the Centre for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development (SeeD) and UNICEF commenced a longitudinal collaboration. Among the aims was the exploration of how school connectedness impacts on adolescent development outcomes both in Eastern Ukraine and across Ukraine. The interest in the present report concerns the Safe and Child-Friendly Schools programme that is currently being implemented in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The aims include investigating the levels of school standards among students of Safe Schools and students of non-Safe Schools, and where stakeholders need to focus their attention.

As mentioned in Section 2.1, “Safe schools” is conceptualised as including all the necessary conditions for adolescents’ health, social, and academic development. The four school standards, which are the key elements of the SCFS, are:

1. A safe physical school environment,
2. A safe psychosocial school environment,
3. Competency-based teaching, and lastly
4. Participatory and inclusive governance

As expected, adolescents who attend schools that implemented a Safe Schools programme rated school standards higher than adolescents who attended schools that did not implement the programme (see Figure 4). For instance, the mean levels of Competency-Based Teaching were 7.4 (in a 0-10 scale) in adolescents who attend schools implementing the Safe Schools programme; in contrast, the mean levels of their equivalent counterparts were 6.2. Similar scores were obtained for the other three school standards as well. This is definitely an optimistic finding.

Due to the ongoing armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, children and adolescents in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts face danger, uncertainty, and a decreased sense of safety on an everyday basis. Consequently, it is optimistic to see that a programme like the SCFS programme is effective in enhancing adolescents’ perceptions of their school, considering it as a safe place to be around and that it provides them with a sense of inclusiveness and participation, and high-quality teaching.

#### 4.1.2. Experiences of school standards among adolescents who participate in the Safe and Child-Friendly Schools programme and their counterparts

In the study, to explore how students experience and perceive their schools, the levels of school standards across both Safe Schools and non-Safe Schools were calculated. The findings show that adolescent students rate the “Safe Physical School Environment” standard lower than the other three school standards (see Figure 4)<sup>22</sup>. In other words, students rate the physical spaces much lower than other aspects of their school (average score 5.5 out of 10 for non-Safe Schools, and average score 6.6 for Safe Schools, whilst other standards have higher scores). Interestingly, this finding is consistent across both school “types” – those which implement the Safe Schools programme and those which do not. For instance, even if differences in the mean levels between the two school “types” were identified (for “Safe Physical School Environment”, the mean levels of “Safe Schools” schools were 6,6 whereas for “non-Safe Schools” schools the mean levels were 5,5), students from both school “types” rated this indicator the lowest, followed by “Competency-

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<sup>22</sup> Average scores for standards were calculated on a 0-10 scale, where 0 signifies very low perceptions of standards and 10 signifies very high perceptions of standards. Figure 1. includes the list of items measured for each school standard.

Based Teaching”, “Participatory and Inclusive School Governance”, and “Safe Psychosocial School Environment”. Consequently, more work is currently required for enhancing the schools’ physical spaces.

From the five items that measure “Safe Physical School Environment”, the worst performing items

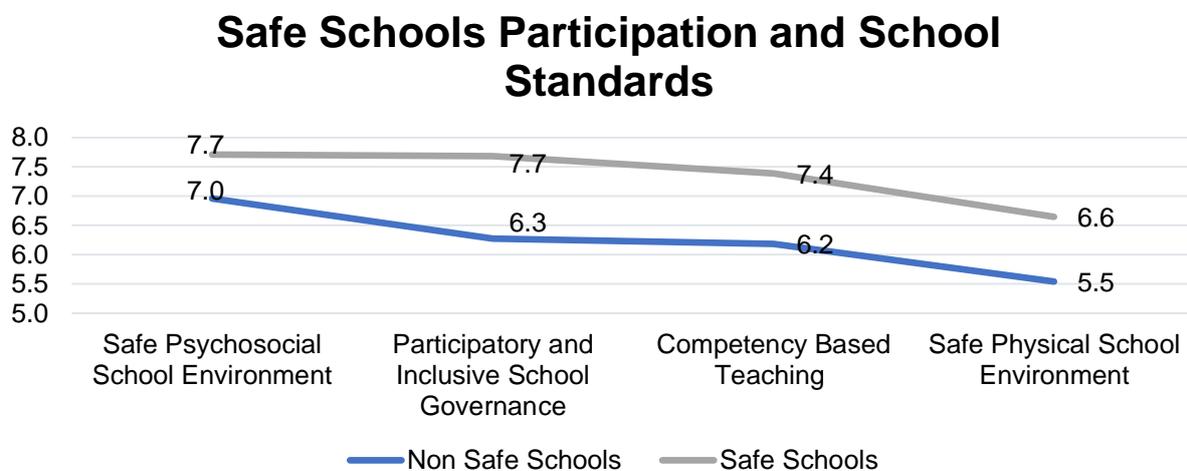


Figure 4. Levels of School Standards across Safe Schools and non-Safe Schools.

are about restrooms at school not being clean or adequately equipped, about the temperature at school not being comfortable throughout the year, and about canteen food not being healthy and nourishing (see Table 1). For those three items (“Bathrooms in our school are clean and adequately equipped”, “Temperature at school is comfortable throughout the year”, and “Food in the school canteen is healthy and nourishing”), approximately one every five adolescents do not consider this to be at all true. Conversely, for the remaining two items (“Our school has modern equipment for interactive learning” and “Our school has adequate playground and sports equipment”), only about one every 12 adolescents (8%) consider this to be false. In contrast, more than half of adolescent students reported that they totally agree with these items. Consequently, key stakeholders should consider these findings as the first step in understanding which areas need more emphasis and require more work. In enhancing the physical environment in schools, our results show that more efforts are needed in measures of hygiene and nutrition.

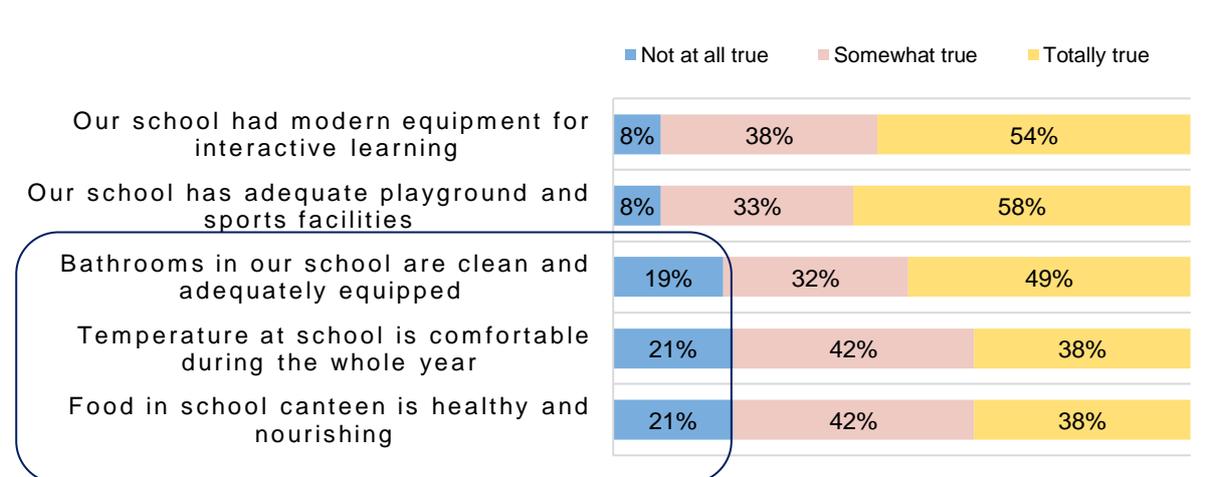


Table 1. Breakdown of items of Safe Physical School Environment.

## 4.2. Safe and Child-Friendly Schools programme improved how students perceive their school

Safe, child-friendly schools aim to help students learn, improve their physical health and well-being, and create a safe and inclusive environment for them to be around.

As mentioned in the Methodology section of the report, a number of adolescent students that took part in the study provided data across two time points with a one-year gap between each data collection. Longitudinal analyses on Ukrainian adolescents demonstrated that the Safe Schools programme improved considerably the degree to which students perceive their school's environment, quality of teaching, and school governance positively. Alternatively, for non-Safe Schools, the opposite was found. Perceptions of adolescents for their schools either minimally improved or worsened. Specifically:

### Safe Physical School Environment:

Safe Physical School Environment was measured through five items (see Figure 1). Perceptions of students attending SCFS regarding their schools' physical environment improved within one year (see Table 2). For instance, for item "Food in school canteen is healthy and nourishing", participation in the programme helped students' perceptions improve; scores increased from 1.98 (on a 0-5 scale) to 2.18 in one year. In contrast, for students attending schools which do not implement the programme, the opposite was noted. Their perceptions of how positive they considered the physical spaces of their schools worsened (see Table 2). Overall, "Safe Schools" students perceived their schools as more physically appealing; this included being offered healthier and more nutritious meal options, and clean and adequately equipped restrooms, playground, and sports facilities.

Changes in items' scores from 2018 to 2019	Safe Schools	Non-Safe-Schools schools
<b>Food in school canteen is healthy and nourishing</b>	↑	↓
<b>Our school has adequate playground and sports facilities</b>	↑	↓
Temperature at school is comfortable during the whole year	No sign. difference	No sign. difference
Our school had modern equipment for interactive learning	No sign. difference	No sign. difference
<b>Bathrooms in our school are clean and adequately equipped</b>	↑	↓

Table 2. Changes in items' scores for Safe Physical School Environment from 2018 to 2019.

### Safe Psychosocial School Environment:

Similar to all school standards, Safe Psychosocial School Environment was measured through five items (see Figure 1). Students attending "Safe Schools" rated their schools significantly higher in providing them with a comfortable psychosocial environment – like offering time to interact with others, or having available psychosocial services for adolescents who need support – than non-Safe Schools students. Perceptions about whether schools promote psychosocial well-being considerably improved in adolescents from Safe Schools. On the other hand, for adolescents who attend non-safe schools, students' perceptions either minimally improved, or worsened (see Table 3). Despite some improvements though, still, students from SCFS always reported considerably bigger improvements. For instance, for item "In our school there is time to rest and interact with friends", there was a small improvement in non-Safe Schools students' perceptions; students obtained a mean of 2.32 (in 2018) which slightly increased to 2,38 one year later. In contrast, for

schools that implement this program, there was a much higher increase in students' perceptions; for this item, the mean increased from 2.31 to 2.47 in one year.

Changes in items' scores from 2018 to 2019	Safe Schools	Non-Safe-Schools schools
Our school has an active anti-violence campaign and has clear mechanisms how to react to cases of bullying and violence	No sign. difference	No sign. difference
<b>In our school there is time to rest and interact with friends</b>	↑	↑
<b>Our school provides access to extra-curricular activities</b>	↑	↓
<b>There is psychosocial support available at our school, for students who need it</b>	↑	↓
In our school, everyone is encouraged to be their own person and diversity is celebrated	No sign. difference	No sign. difference

Table 3. Changes in items' scores for Safe Psychosocial School Environment from 2018 to 2019.

### Competency-Based Teaching:

Competency-Based Teaching was, too, measured through five items (see Figure 1). "Safe Schools" and "non-Safe Schools" adolescents rated differently how positively they consider the quality of teaching in their schools, such as in promoting critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, or having group assignments and discussions. Specifically, participation in the Safe Schools programme substantially improved students' perceptions regarding their school's quality of teaching. For instance, perceptions on whether "lessons at school include group work and open discussions" improved; mean levels increased from 2.24 to 2.39 in one year.

In contrast, perceptions of "non-Safe Schools" students either very slightly improved or they worsened (see Table 4). Despite the minor improvements which are noted in non-Safe Schools students, still, students attending Safe Schools always reported more positive perceptions of how competent and high-quality teaching in their schools is. For instance, for the previously mentioned item, perceptions in non-Safe Schools adolescents slightly increased across the two time-points

Changes in items' scores from 2018 to 2019	Safe Schools	Non-Safe-Schools schools
<b>Our lessons at school include group work and open discussions</b>	↑	↑
<b>In our school, relations between teachers and students are positive and friendly</b>	↑	↓
<b>Through classes in our school, students are encouraged to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills</b>	↑	↑
<b>Teachers at our school are motivated and committed to their work</b>	↑	↓
<b>Our school and teachers care about what we really learn, not just on going through the curriculum and passing exams</b>	↑	↓

(from 2.19 to 2.22).

Table 4. Changes in items' scores for Competency-Based Teaching from 2018 to 2019.

## Participatory and Inclusive School Governance:

The fourth school standard, Participatory and Inclusive School Governance was, too, measured through five items (see Figure 1). Similar to the other three standards, students attending schools which implement the SCFS programme reported feeling, among others, more valued and heard in the school, and having more effective student governance school bodies (see Table 5). Overall, comparing the two school “types”, adolescents who attend Safe Schools demonstrated significantly greater improvements in all measures. For instance, for the item “Students in our school can openly express their feelings and opinions about the education process and school life, with confidence that school authorities will take them under serious consideration”, all students’ perceptions increased. However, although perceptions in non-Safe Schools students only slightly improved (increased from 2.11 to 2.18), in schools that implement the SCFS programme, there was a considerably more noticeable improvement in students’ perceptions. Participation in the programme increased students’ mean levels from 2.23 to 2.55 in one year.

<b>Changes in items’ scores from 2018 to 2019</b>	<b>Safe Schools</b>	<b>Non-Safe-Schools schools</b>
<b>My opinion is valued and heard in the planning of school life</b>	↑	↑
<b>There are effective student governance bodies in my school (such as student council, head of class, class students’ committee) which genuinely represent the needs and interests of the student community</b>	↑	↑
<b>Students in our school can openly express their feelings and opinions about the education process and school life, with confidence that school authorities will take them under serious consideration</b>	↑	↑
<b>Parents take an active part in the life of the school</b>	↑	↑
<b>In our school, students from both genders and all social backgrounds can openly express their views and be heard by school authorities</b>	↑	↑

In conclusion, standards were measured through twenty items in our questionnaire wherein Table 5. Changes in items’ scores for Participatory and Inclusive School Governance from 2018 to 2019.

Ukrainian adolescents participated. Analyses demonstrated that SCFS improves how adolescent students experience and rate their schools. Specifically, through participation in the programme, 16 out of the 20 items measured show significant improvement. Overall, participating students experience more inclusion and participation in the schools’ decision-making process. Furthermore, they consider their schools as more physically attractive, with better physical and psychosocial provisions, and with providing them with higher teaching quality and standards. On the whole, the findings of the adolescent Ukrainian study on Safe and Child-Friendly Schools supports the use of the four school standards in Ukrainian schools. Our results demonstrate that extending and integrating the SCFS principles across all regions in Ukraine will positively contribute to the ongoing education reform.

### 4.3. School Standards are associated with higher well-being

Past research indicates that adolescent well-being depends on a multitude of factors. First and foremost, microsystemic factors are crucial for a person’s well-being. Family dynamics and school connectedness are crucial in determining the degree to which adolescents will show educational adjustment, behavioural and mental health well-being, and positive civic engagement.

One other potential school-related factor other than school connectedness that may contribute to adolescents’ adjustment is school safety, such as being in a positive, inclusive, and healthy school environment. As demonstrated in Section 2.1, a positive and safe school environment links with adolescents’ behavioural, psychosocial, and academic adjustment. In the present study, all four school standards were found to play a pivotal role in positive adolescent development; findings support previous empirical evidence that school standards associate positively with well-being and adjustment in adolescents, and negatively with maladjustment. Specifically:

#### Safe Physical School Environment:

Safe physical school environment – which includes having healthy canteen food options, comfortable temperature in classes and common areas all year round, and adequately equipped and clean restrooms – is positively associated to life skills acquisition, school connectedness, and overall positive quality of life (see Figure 5). In other words, being in an environment wherein its physical spaces elicit positive feelings enables, for instance, experiences of connectedness. One explanation is that a safe physical school environment may increase the likelihood that adolescents will want to spend time there and get attached to their schools. On the other hand, a favourable physical school environment is negatively associated with externalising problems, such as aggression or oppositional and defiance behaviours. This means that being in a physically safe school environment tends to lower incidents of “acting out” behaviours.

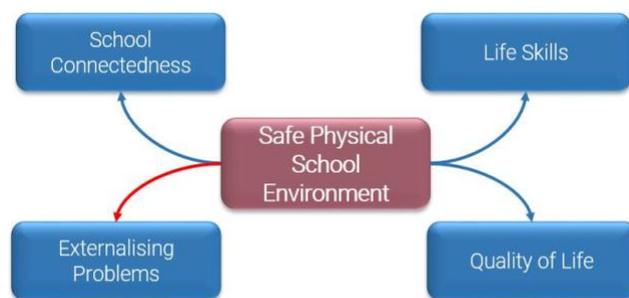


Figure 5. Associations of Safe Physical School Environment.

#### Safe Psychosocial School Environment:

A psychologically safe school environment is one which offers extra-curricular activities to students, provides psychosocial services for students who need it, or applies an effective anti-violence or anti-bullying school programme. Findings show that safe psychosocial school environment is related to higher levels of school connectedness, development of life skills, and more positive quality of life, and negatively associated to a tendency to consider early school leaving (see Figure 6). These can be for a number of reasons. For instance, extra-curricular activities enhance students’ participation in school life. This contributes to increased opportunities for friendships and to feelings of satisfaction and emotional connection to their schools. Likewise, schools that encourage and promote respect in diversity and schools with clear rules and recommendations on how to respond



Figure 6. Associations of Safe Psychosocial School Environment.

to violent and rule-breaking behaviours result in experiences of school connectedness. When schools offer students the freedom to express themselves without fears of being ridiculed or teased, then they are more likely to experience a connection to their schools and their social networks, as well as experience a higher life quality. Finally, students who consider their schools as ones which actively work against incidents of bullying or aggression, and which have clear and consistent rules, are less likely to experience negative emotions and, thus, consider early school dropout.

### Competency-Based Teaching:

Competency-based teaching, including how students perceive the quality of teaching in their schools, is associated with numerous outcomes (see Figure 7). For instance, positive perceptions of quality teaching are linked to the development of skills which promote lifelong learning, employment, and personal empowerment. Furthermore, high levels of competency-

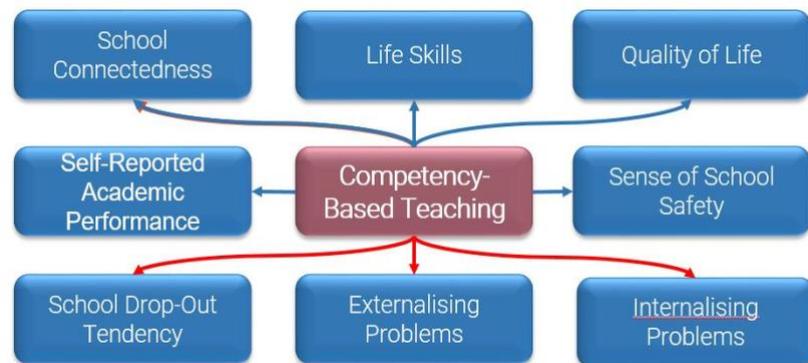


Figure 7. Associations of Competency-Based Teaching.

based teaching are associated with decreased externalising or internalising behaviours, such as anxiety, depression, or aggression, and a lower likelihood to consider dropping out of school. These findings show that competency-based teaching seems to have a stronger effect size on adolescent outcomes. Therefore, while all safe school standards are important, competency-based teaching, and all the sub-standards it includes, should be prioritized.

### Participatory and Inclusive School Governance:

Participatory and Inclusive School Governance, similar to other school standards, was positively associated to school connectedness, life skills acquisition, and quality of life, and negatively associated to internalising symptomatology and tendency to consider school dropout (see Figure 8). Being in a welcoming and inclusive school environment, where all concerned parties, including students and

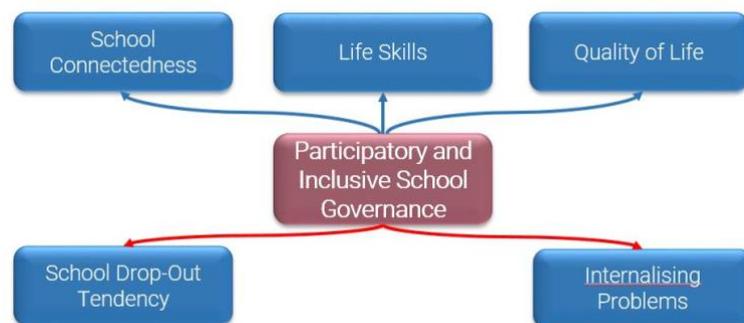


Figure 8. Associations of Participatory and Inclusive School Governance.

parents, feel that diversity is embraced, that they are respected, valued, and heard, is important for adolescent adjustment. This decreases negative emotionality, while simultaneously enhancing experiences of school connectedness and a higher quality of life – perhaps due to the social relations that become more positive. Hence, this lowers the likelihood that students would consider dropping out of school before completion.

### 4.3.1. Special Section: Which specific school standards are associated to adolescent well-being?

Section 4.3. indicates that school standards are associated to adolescent development. All four standards have been found to be positively associated with experiences of school connectedness, life skills acquisition, and quality of life. Furthermore, high levels of standards are indicative of lower externalising and internalising behaviours, and a lower tendency to consider school dropout.

This section investigates precisely which of the twenty items that make up school standards are uniquely associated to indicators of adolescent adjustment and well-being<sup>23</sup>. Tables 6 includes which specific criteria of the “Safe Physical School Environment” indicator are either positively or negatively associated to adolescents’ well-being. For instance, analyses showed that an increased sense of hygiene is a very important school standard for adolescent adjustment. Having “clean and adequately equipped” bathrooms in students’ schools increased the likelihood of school adjustment (as indicated through the increased experiences of school connectedness and lower incidents of bullying behaviours), behavioural and mental health well-being (as indicated through the lower levels of externalising and internalising problems), life skills acquisition, and having an overall high quality of life.

	Food in school canteen is healthy and nourishing	Our school has adequate playground and sports facilities	Temperature at school is comfortable during the whole year	Our school had modern equipment for interactive learning	Bathrooms in our school are clean and adequately equipped
School Connectedness	0,10	0,09	0,12	0,09	0,12
Life Skills	0,05	0,07		0,05	0,04
Bullying					-0,05
School Dropout Tendency				-0,05	
Quality of Life		0,06	0,05		0,05
Internalising Problems		-0,05			-0,05
Externalising Problems				-0,06	-0,08

Table 6. Associations of items of “Safe Physical School Environment”.

Section 4.3 concludes that investing in a school environment wherein students feel psychosocially comfortable and safe is important for increasing their life skills, their school adjustment, and their well-being. Further information on these associations is found in Table 7. For instance, as the table shows, students attending schools that invest in “an active anti-violence campaign and has clear mechanisms how to react to cases of bullying and violence” are expected to report high levels of school connectedness, develop life skills, and be less likely to consider dropping out of their school. Additionally, school experts who are interested in promoting school connectedness or working against school dropout, based on our analyses, should focus in improving all aspects of the

<sup>23</sup> The tables include the correlation coefficients of the associations between the items measuring each standard and indicators of adolescent adjustment and well-being (the highest the coefficient, the higher the association between the variables). Blue-coloured cells signify a positive association, which means that as one indicator increases, so does the other one as well (e.g. as perceptions that “food in the canteen is healthy and nourishing” increase, school connectedness increases too). On the other hand, red-coloured cells signify a negative association, which means that as one indicator increases, the other one decreases (e.g. as perceptions that “schools have adequate playground and sports facilities” increase, internalising problems become less prevalent). Please note, that analyses were performed on  $\Delta$  (DELTA; difference) variables. The change, for instance, in the level of School Connectedness was calculated by taking the level (score) of School Connectedness as measured in wave 3 and subtracting it from the level of School Connectedness as measured in wave 2. Individuals who had an increase in connectedness over time will have positive values of Connectedness\_DELTA, while those individuals who had a decrease in school connectedness over time will have negative values of Connectedness\_DELTA. The same logic was used to calculate all variables tracking the change of indicators over time.

particular school standard, including providing students with extra-curricular activities or offering psychosocial support at schools for students who need it.

	Our school has an active anti-violence campaign and has clear mechanisms how to react to cases of bullying and violence	In our school there is time to rest and interact with friends	Our school provides access to extra-curricular activities	There is psychosocial support available at our school, for students who need it	In our school, everyone is encouraged to be their own person and diversity is celebrated
School Connectedness	0,08	0,09	0,09	0,09	0,12
Life Skills	0,06	0,06	0,06		
School Dropout Tendency	-0,05	-0,07	-0,06	-0,06	-0,07
Sense of School Safety			0,05		
Quality of Life		0,07	0,10	0,05	
Externalising Problems					-0,05

Table 7. Associations of items of “Safe Psychosocial School Environment”.

“Competency-Based Teaching” comes out as the most important school standard for adolescent adjustment and well-being. Findings of the adolescent Ukrainian study supports the enhancement of high-quality teaching as an approach for promoting behavioural, psychosocial, and educational adjustment (see Table 8). Results indicate that this school standard is particularly crucial for numerous adjustment indicators, such as experiences of school connectedness, life skills, sense of school safety, decreased tendency to consider school dropout, decreased externalising problems, and quality of life. In other words, students who attend schools which emphasise high teaching quality are more likely to be more adjusted in their school life – as indicated by their experiences of school connectedness, sense of school safety, and self-reported academic achievement, and lower incidents of bullying and victimisation experiences. Furthermore, students who perceive their schools as providing them with teaching of high quality are less likely to “act out” on their social environment. This could be because when teachers are successful in establishing friendly and caring relations with their students and are genuinely interested in their students’ learning course, they indirectly act as positive role models. Specifically, students who, among others, perceive that “relations between teachers and students are positive and friendly” or believe that their “school and teachers care about what we really learn, not just on going through the curriculum and passing exams” display less externalising problems like aggression or oppositional and defiance behaviours (see Table 8).

	Our lessons at school include group work and open discussions	In our school, relations between teachers and students are positive and friendly	Through classes in our school, students are encouraged to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills	Teachers at our school are motivated and committed to their work	Our school and teachers care about what we really learn, not just on going through the curriculum and passing exams
School Connectedness	0,12	0,15	0,15	0,15	0,11
Life Skills	0,06	0,05	0,08	0,07	0,06
Bullying	-0,05			-0,05	
Victimisation	-0,05			-0,05	
School Dropout Tendency		-0,06	-0,05	-0,08	-0,07
Sense of School Safety	0,05	0,06	0,05		
Perceived Academic Performance	0,06				
Quality of Life	0,09	0,06	0,07		
Internalising Problems	-0,06				
Externalising Problems	-0,06	-0,07		-0,06	-0,05

Table 8. Associations of items of “Competency-Based Teaching”.

Finally, Table 9. shows that all items measuring “Participatory and Inclusive School Governance” are important for experiences of school connectedness. Being in an inclusive environment, wherein the active participation of all involved parties in the school life is encouraged, and where teachers, students and parents feel that diversity is embraced and that they are valued and heard is linked to positive interactions with the schools’ teachers, the adolescents’ peers, or with the school itself. What’s more, findings demonstrate that item “My opinion is valued and heard in the planning of school life” is the one that mostly associates with adolescent adjustment indicators. Students who feel that their opinion is valued and accounted for experience higher school life adjustment, such as experiences of school connectedness, self-reported academic performance, sense of school safety, and lower tendency to consider early school leaving. Likewise, this item is also linked life skills acquisition, less internalising symptomatology or externalising problems, and higher quality of life.

	My opinion is valued and heard in the planning of school life	There are effective student governance bodies in my school (such as student council, head of class, class students committee) which genuinely represent the needs and interests of the student community	Students in our school can openly express their feelings and opinions about the education process and school life, with confidence that school authorities will take them under serious consideration	Parents take an active part in the life of the school	In our school, students from both genders and all social backgrounds can openly express their views and be heard by school authorities
School Connectedness	0,15	0,11	0,14	0,06	0,15
Life Skills	0,05			0,06	0,05
School Dropout Tendency	-0,06		-0,05		
Sense of School Safety	0,06				
Perceived Academic Performance	0,05				
Quality of Life	0,07		0,05	0,05	0,08
Internalising Problems	-0,05				-0,05
Externalising Problems	-0,05				

Table 9. Associations of items of “Participatory and Inclusive School Governance”.

Overall, the findings of the adolescent Ukrainian study on Safe Schools support the use of the four school standards as an approach for promoting adolescent adjustment. School standards provide opportunities for adolescents to experience positive and supportive social relations with their school and school-related members, develop their life skills, and experience a high quality of life. They also decrease the likelihood to consider early school leaving, exhibit externalising problems, or experience negative emotionality. Competency-based teaching seems to make the highest significant contribution to adolescents’ educational, behavioural, and mental health well-being, followed by effective school governance. The intended outcomes should be taken into consideration when promoting SCFS in educational institutions across Ukraine. For instance, to address and prevent negative emotionality in adolescents, school experts and relevant stakeholders should ensure to provide schools with adequate playground and school facilities, ensure that measures of personal hygiene are satisfied, that school lessons include group work and group discussions, and that schools value and consider students’ opinions. However, when intending for multi-faceted well-being, schools should make sure to incorporate a broad mix of school standards and criteria.

## 5. Key Findings and Conclusions

The adolescent study in Ukraine on Safe and Child-Friendly Schools explored the implementation of the SCFS pilot programme in Ukraine, as well as how the four key school standards associate with adolescent adjustment and well-being. From the results of the present study, the following conclusions are drawn, and policy recommendations on national and local level for MoES, local authorities, as well as hromadas are suggested:

1. SCFS programme effectively enhance adolescents' perceptions of their school. For instance, findings show that when comparing students attending SCFS to their counterparts, participating adolescents rate the provisions and operation of their schools much higher than non-participating adolescents. This provides support for the prospect of extending the implementation of the programme on a nationwide basis.

2. "Safe Physical School Experience" was rated considerably lower than the other three school standards. Consequently, those who currently work on the SCFS programme should use this finding and enhance/modify the schools' physical spaces. Restoring the physical component of a school should not be underestimated. Even though, safe and child-friendly schools are often understood as relating to the physical and psychosocial safety of students, this goes well beyond that. Creating positive, friendly, and comfortable spaces for students is much more important than having physically attractive schools. Our findings show that a positive and safe physical school environment is linked to experiences of school connectedness, life skills acquisition, and quality of life. To this end, local communities, hromadas, and local organisations should invest in restoring the physical spaces of existing schools. The areas wherein more work is required are in providing cleaner and more adequately equipped restrooms, in making the temperature at school comfortable throughout the school year, and in offering healthier and more nourishing meal options in the canteen.

3. "Safe Schools" participation leads to better students' perceptions of their school. Improvements were noted in the majority of school standards. Overall, students attending SCFS consider their schools as more physically attractive, with better psychosocial provisions, with providing them with higher teaching quality, and as being more inclusive. Considering how school standards are associated with a wide array of adjustment and well-being indicator, our study provides support that SCFS will have positive outcomes on adolescents' development.

4. School standards are positively associated with adolescent developmental outcomes and negatively associated with several maladjustment indicators. Considering how "Competency-Based Teaching" and "Participatory and Inclusive School Governance" came out as the most important school standard, in the design of SCFS, these two school standards should have a central role. For instance, student-centred learning should become a priority in teaching. Schools should make use of interactive/experiential learning to promote learning, including group discussions and role-playing activities. Likewise, schools should include parents' and students' views and opinions in the school's decision making and school planning, such as in the development of school rules and school guidelines, as well as in the planning of school activities and events.

## Appendix: Glossary of Adolescent Component indicators

Indicator	Indicator Description
<b>Aggression</b>	Extent to which one is aggressive in daily life, such as frequently getting into fights and confrontations.
<b>Anxiety</b>	Degree to which one feels anxious and insecure to an extent that the person finds it hard to stop worrying and relax.
<b>Bullying</b>	Exposure - repeated over a period - to negative behaviour by one or other persons including in-person or online harassment and physical violence.
<b>Competency-based teaching</b>	Standard that describes how teaching is of high quality (e.g., promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills).
<b>Conduct Disorder</b>	The display of disruptive and violent behaviours and, difficulty in following rules
<b>Depression</b>	Degree to which one feels depressed or very sad.
<b>Emotional connection to school</b>	Degree to which one is emotionally invested in their school.
<b>Life Skills</b>	Abilities that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life, including problem-solving skills, critical thinking skills, and cooperation skills.
<b>Participatory and Inclusive Governance</b>	Standard that describes measures that ensure that everyone's' views are valued, heard, and respected in the school community.
<b>Peer support</b>	The extent to which one receives support and can rely on peers.
<b>Quality of life</b>	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.
<b>Safe Physical School Environment</b>	Standard measures ensuring that students experience physical safety at their school (e.g., healthy and nutritious meals, clean and adequately equipped restrooms).
<b>Safe Psychosocial School Environment</b>	Standards that promote a school environment that is psychosocially safe to students, including having available psychosocial support for students, or applying anti-violence campaigns.
<b>Safe and Child Friendly program</b>	All the necessary school conditions that would ensure the well-being of adolescents (health, social, and academic).

**School Connectedness** The extent to which one feels connected to peers and teachers in the school context.

**School Dropout Tendency** The extent to which one is inclined to consider to drop-out a school or discontinue their studies.

**School Safety** The degree to which one feels safe in the school environment.

**Self-Reported Academic Performance** Self-reported evaluation of one's school performance.

**Teacher support** The amount of help, concern and friendship the teacher directs toward the students.

**Victimisation** Directly experiencing bullying in the form of repeated physical, verbal or psychological attack or intimidation that is intended to cause fear, distress, or harm.

## Composite Indicators

**Bullying** Includes Physical, Relational, Verbal and Cyber Bullying.

**Externalising problems** Includes Aggression, Conduct Disorder, and Oppositional Defiance Disorder.

**Internalising problems** Includes Anxiety, Depression, PTSD, Self-Harm & Suicidality.

**Life Skills** Includes Respect for Diversity, Kindness, Expressive Communication, Receptive Communication, Cooperation, Negotiation, Civic Participation, Problem-Solving, Decision Making, Critical Thinking, Distress Tolerance, Self-Management, and Creativity.

**School Connectedness** Includes Peer Support, Teacher Support, and Emotional Connection to School.

**Victimisation** Includes Physical, Relational, Verbal and Cyber Victimisation.

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Maria Symeou, Andrii Dryga & Alexandros Lordos. Safe and Child-Friendly Schools in Ukraine: Longitudinal analysis for the Impact Assessment of the “Safe Schools” programme in Ukraine. *UNICEF, 2021*.

