

Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index

# SCORE



Indeks društvene povezanosti i pomirenja



**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
OF DENMARK**





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**South Sudan**

**Ukraine**

**Zimbabwe**



**SINCE 2012**

# Methodology of the SCORE BiH 2025 Study

## DATA COLLECTION & SAMPLING DESIGN



**3,812**  
**Face-to-Face Interviews**

Conducted via Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) between November 2025 and February 2026.



**National Representative Coverage**

Stratified random sampling across all 16 regional-territorial units and 63 municipalities.



**10 Geographic Boosters**

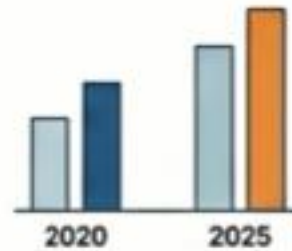
Enhanced local-level data from specific areas including Mostar, Srebrenica, and Brčko District.

## STATISTICAL RIGOR & COMPARISON



**High Precision Margin of Error**

National error <2% (Entities <3%; Brčko District <9%).



**Benchmarked Against 2020 Baseline**

Results are directly compared to the 2020 study involving 4,570 respondents.

## PARTICIPATORY VALIDATION



**Multi-Stakeholder Interpretation**

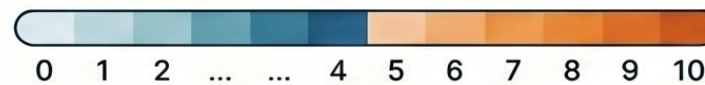
Findings are validated by a Core Reflection Group (CRG) of national experts.



**Evidence-Based Policy Alignment**

Ensures research and metric design, and data interpretation is contextually sensitive, participatory and policy relevant.

## The 0-10 SCORE Scale



Strongly present

Phenomena are measured from 0 (completely absent) to 10 (strongly present).

## -10 to +10 CHANGE Scale

-10



**Severe Deterioration**

-0

No Change

+10

**Significant Improvement**



# Social Cohesion in BiH: Elements and Trends



Functional coexistence across ethnic lines, with low social distance and anxiety, but thin trust with lukewarm feelings

Broadly stable foundational social asset, anchored by strong civic identification with the state (7.8)

Growing sense of civic duty (4.9 > 5.8) to contribute to positive change, coupled with high community cooperation\* (6.7) but trapped by low civic awareness (3.5 > 4.5)

Significant improvement, but divergence exists between accepting the state's legitimacy (6.9) and lack of confidence in government institutions (4.3).

The only element below the midpoint; nearly half of respondents report worsening in trust, rights, safety, services, stability and quality of life

## A SOCIETY OF "CAUTIOUS COEXISTENCE"

BiH does not look like a "collapsed social fabric"; the national picture is more stable than stereotypical perceptions suggest, with functional daily cooperation.

### Personal Reality vs. External Narrative

"Doom and gloom" perceptions are often directed outward toward the system; when asked about personal attitudes and local realities, the picture is much more positive. The defining feature of 2025 is the **Coexistence-Pessimism Gap**: a divide between stable everyday behavior and negative system-level expectations (expectation of instability: 6.1).

### Interpret Trends with Caution

The 2020 benchmark was a "challenged" baseline due to the global COVID-19 pandemic; optimism should be met without complacency.

\*Community cooperation was not measured in 2020

# Strengths and Weakness of Social Cohesion in Bosnia Herzegovina in 2025

## FOUNDATIONS OF RESILIENCE (STRENGTHS)

Everyday Coexistence and Stable Platforms



### SHARED IDENTITY & STATE IDENTIFICATION

Inclusive belonging and high state identification serve as a stable platform for resilience



### LOCAL SOCIAL CAPITAL

High community cooperation and functional intergroup harmony anchor stable, everyday neighborly relations



### RISING CIVIC DUTY

Willingness to take responsibility for the country increased significantly from 4.9 in 2020



### THE COEXISTENCE-PESSIMISM GAP

Contrasting functional everyday resilience with systemic-level challenges

## STRATEGIC CHALLENGES (WEAKNESSES)

Systemic Pessimism and Institutional Divides



### SYSTEMIC PESSIMISM & AWARENESS BOTTLENECK

A negative sense of progress (-1.2) pairs with low civic awareness (4.5) and high expectations of instability (6.1)



### THE TRUST DEFICIT

"Thin" intergroup trust and low institutional trust

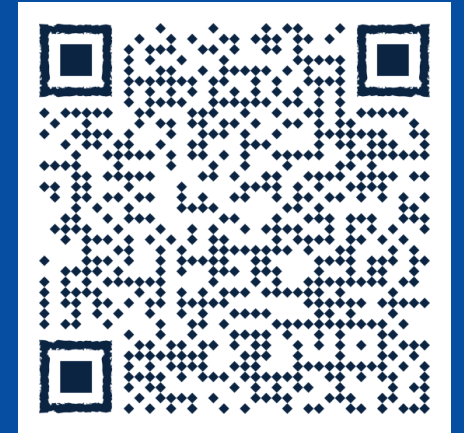


### EMERGING SOCIAL RISKS

Trends show an increased aggression normalization of violence and a growing values gap among young men. They are growing more conservative than older men and women of all ages.

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# PITANJA



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# 6.3/10 Overall Intergroup Harmony

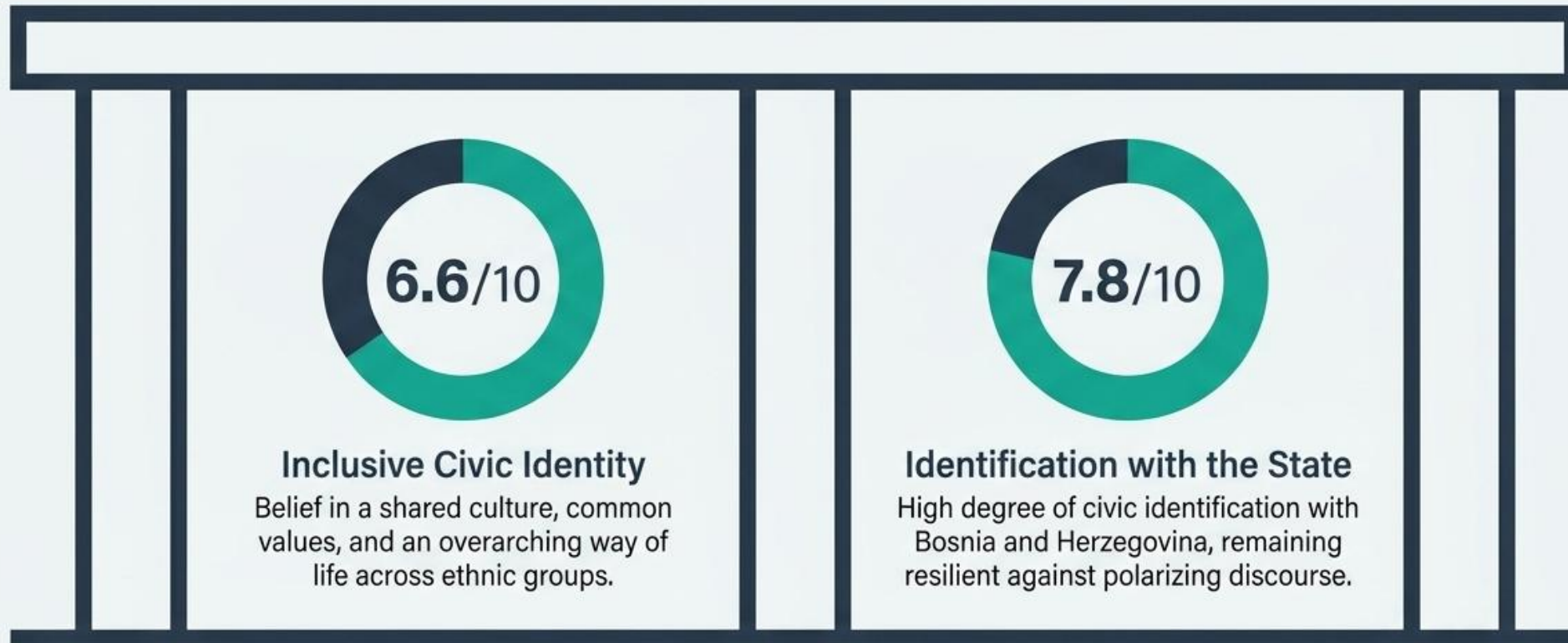


## IMPLICATIONS:

- Daily coexistence across ethnic lines is generally functional, but not necessarily emotionally close. Coexistence does not automatically equal reconciliation.
- Intergroup Harmony has improved modestly (5.7 > 6.3) since 2020, but improvements are not even (e.g. Brčko District).
- Programmes should move beyond one-off "contact" activities or 'inter-ethnic' framing and focus on deepening trust through joint practical problem-solving, perspective taking and social tolerance initiatives through common interests (e.g. occupational partnerships).

# Inclusive Belonging: The Foundational Anchor

A stable civic belonging exists despite political noise and negative discourse



## IMPLICATIONS:

- Even in a country with institutional complexity and intense political contestation inclusive civic identity and belonging emerge as a stable social asset that has shown resilience (has not changed since 2020), capable of supporting inclusive development and societal healing.
- Programming should focus on areas and groups where civic belonging is uneven through practical, citizen-facing improvements and inclusive participation mechanisms that increase shared lived experiences of the state as responsive and fair.

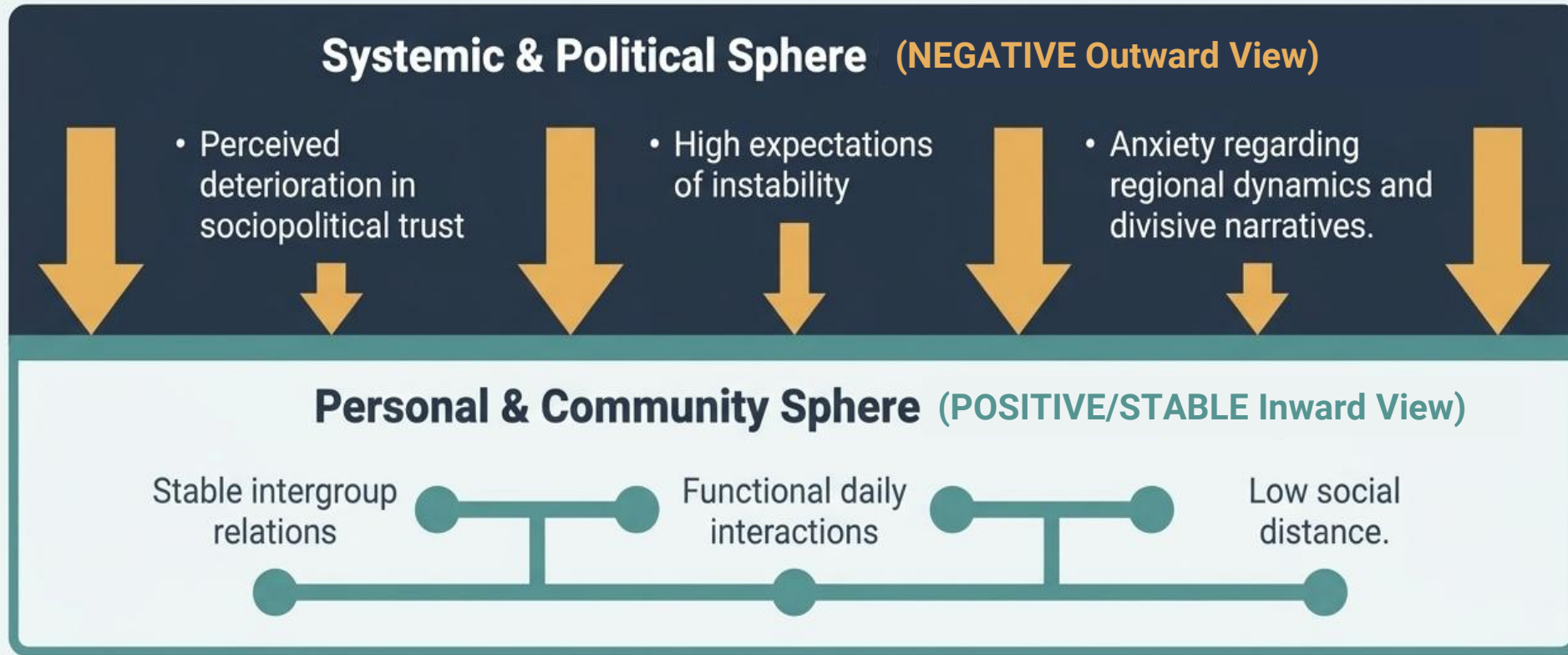
# Locus of Deep Pessimism

Sense of Progress

-1.2/10

Expectation of instability

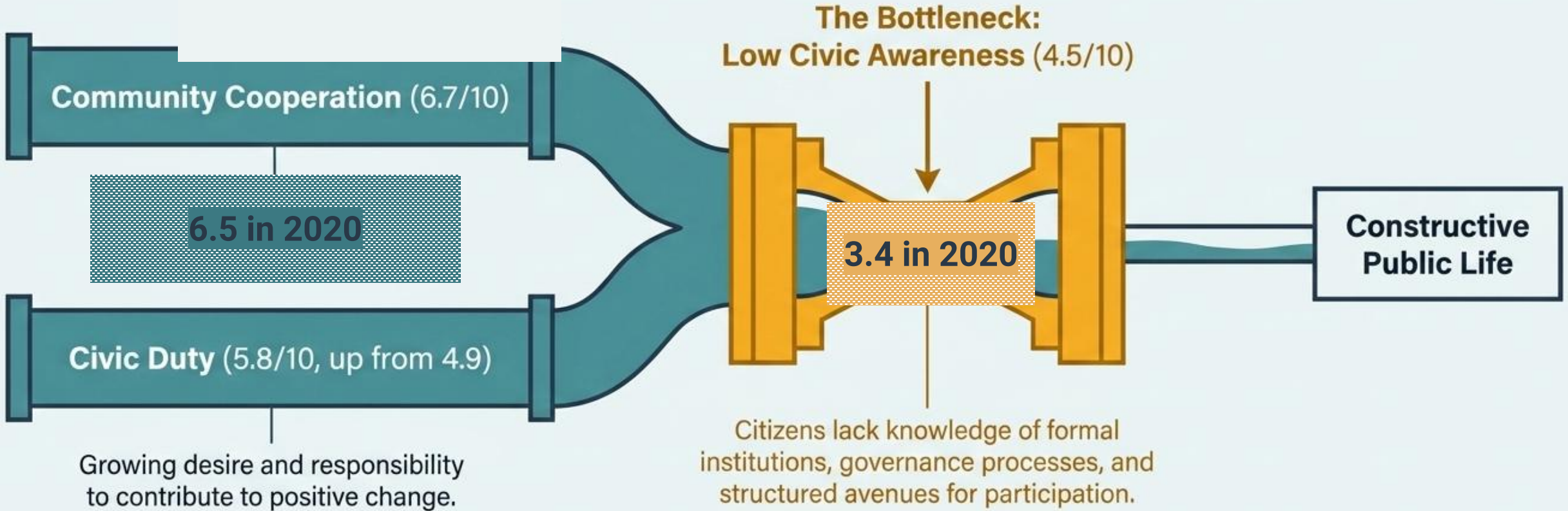
6.1/10



## IMPLICATIONS:

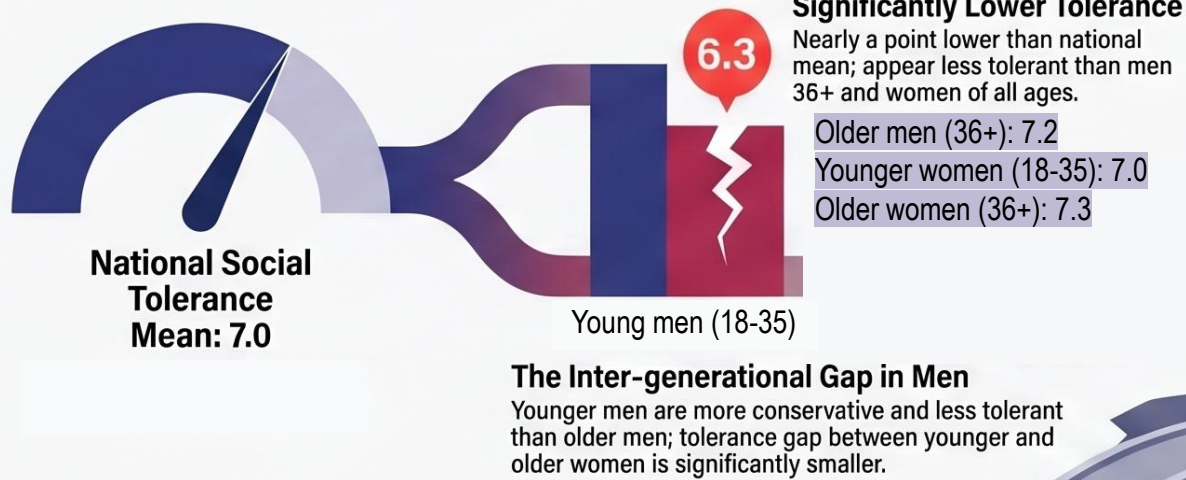
- Pessimism is directed outward at the macro-system, not inward at daily community relations. These do not yet translate into everyday intergroup behaviour.
- If unaddressed, this widespread anxiety about the future and fear of 'doom' can form a vicious cycle, undermining civic belonging, increasing vulnerabilities to divisive narratives and discourage investment in collective solutions.
- Programming should combine communication approaches that highlight positive news, success stories and collective community-level action that make progress more visible and credible to citizens.
- Efforts should also promote responsible communication by public figures and institutions to counteract inflammatory rhetoric and divisive public discourse, reinforcing trust and constructive engagement.

# Constructive Citizenship: The Engagement Gap

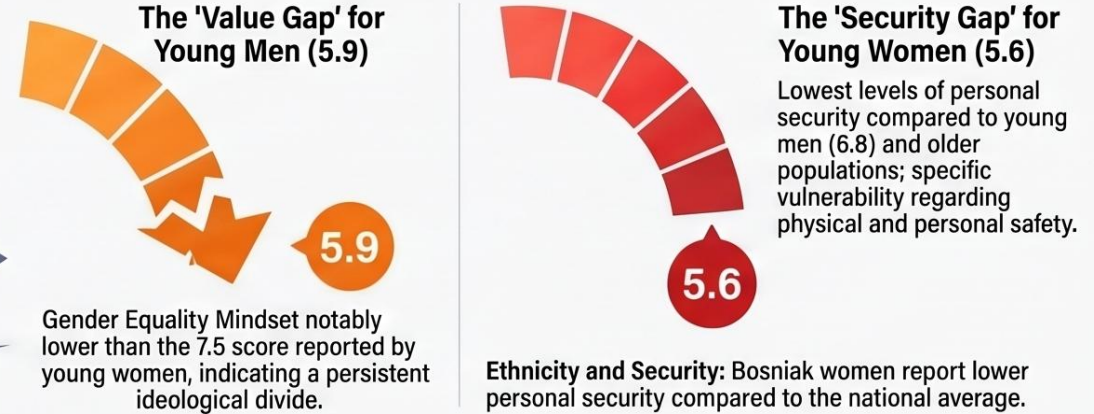


**Diagnostic Insight:** The diagnosis is untapped civic potential, not civic apathy. The desire to engage is trapped behind a lack of pathways.

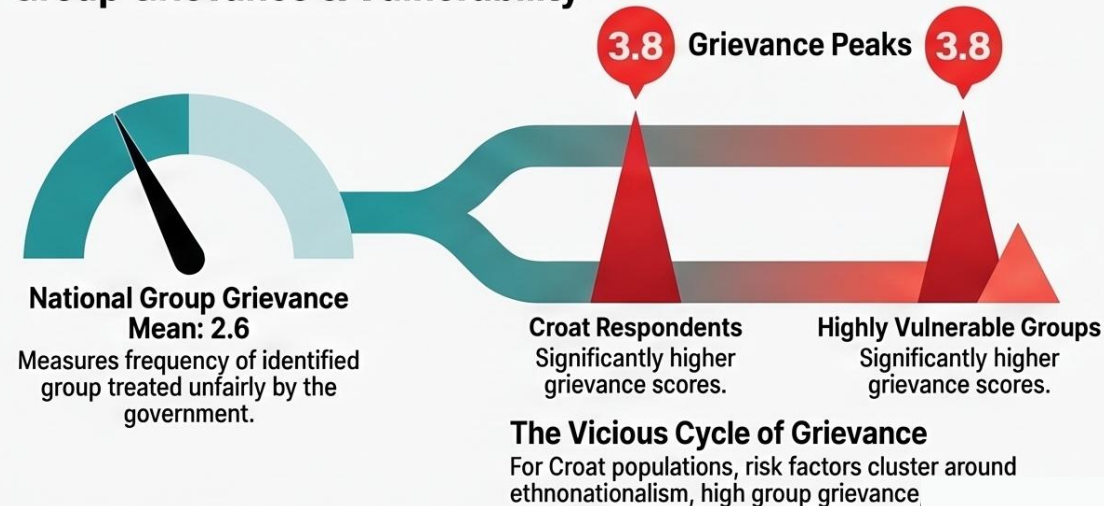
## Social Tolerance & Youth Trends



## The Gender Disparity: Value vs. Security Gaps



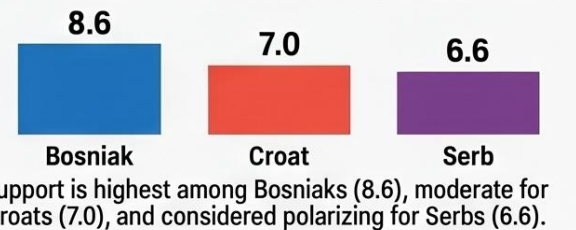
## Group Grievance & Vulnerability



## Forgiveness and Transitional Justice (TJ)



## Support for Transitional Justice by Ethnic Group

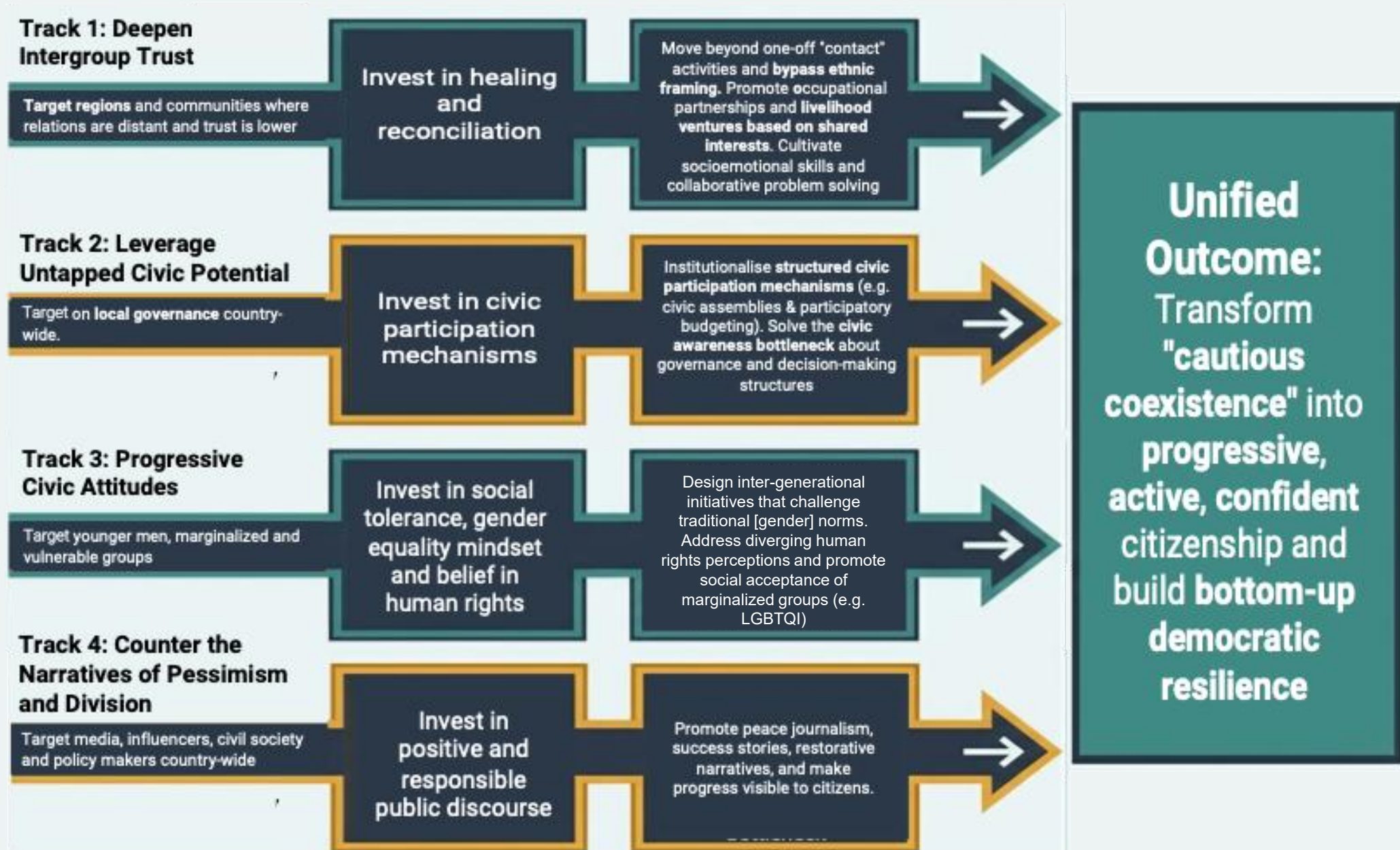


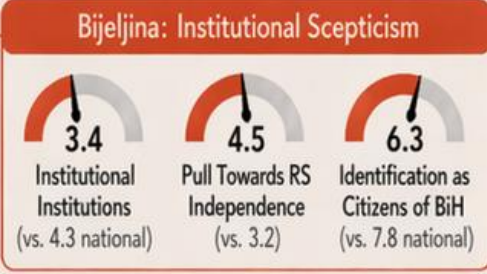
**Cross-Group Support for Missing Persons Commissions**  
 Highest-rated TJ measure across all groups, seen as a vital bridge for reconciliation.

**TJ Indicator**  
 (% Somewhat + Strongly Agree)

Indicator	Bosniak	Croat	Serb
Leaders should recognise war crimes of their own group	90%	69%	60%
Forgiveness requires truth about missing persons	85%	76%	63%
We should all accept war crime tribunal verdicts	83%	66%	43%

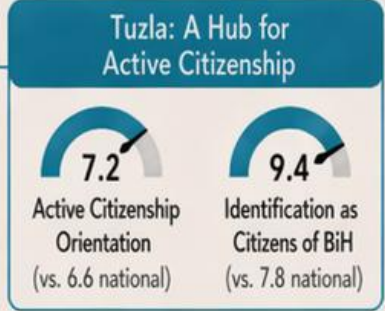
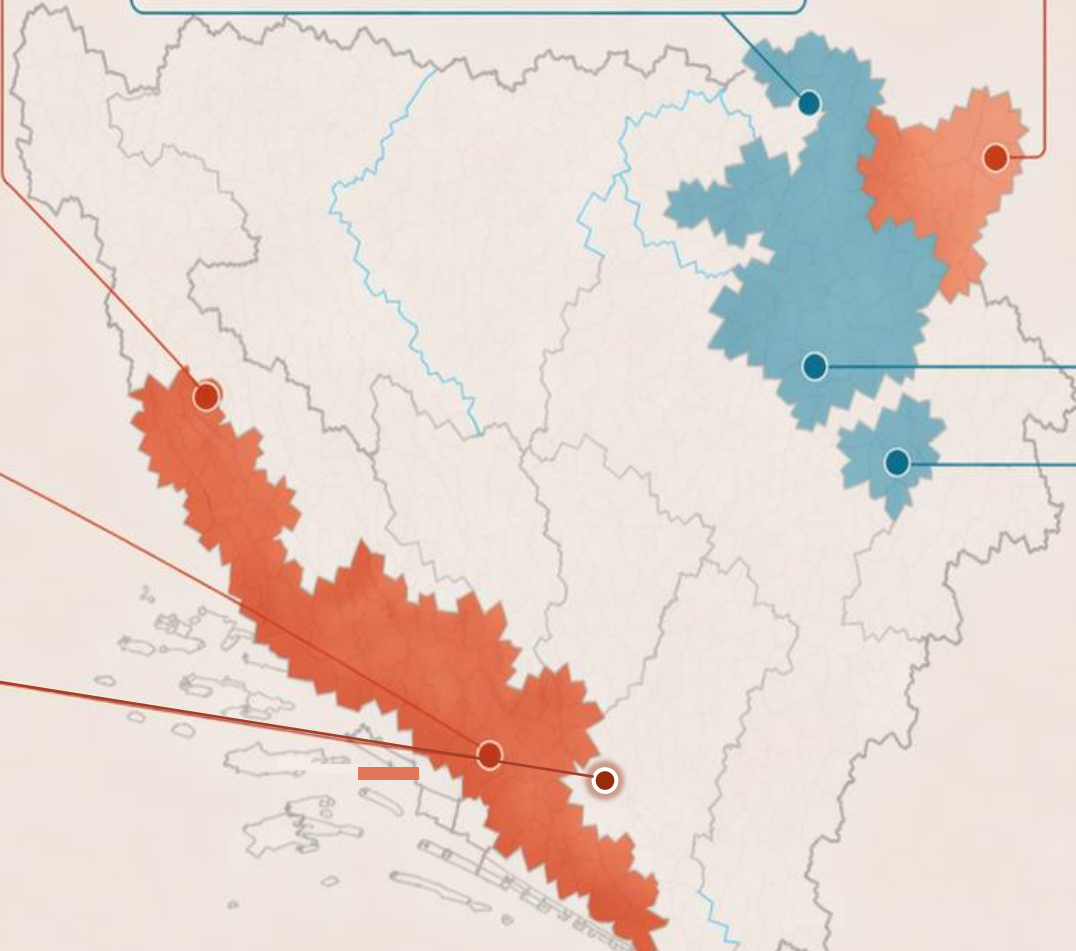
# Pathways to Change: Strategic Programming Tracks for BiH





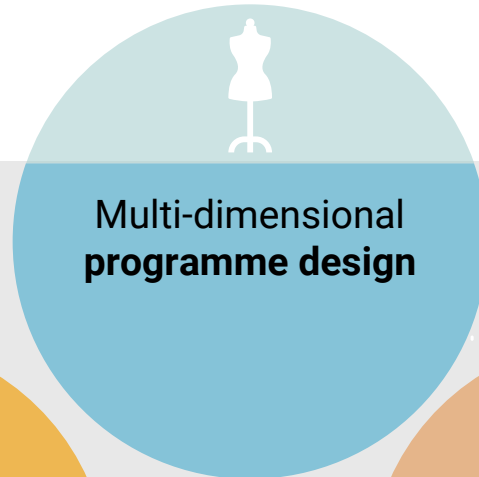
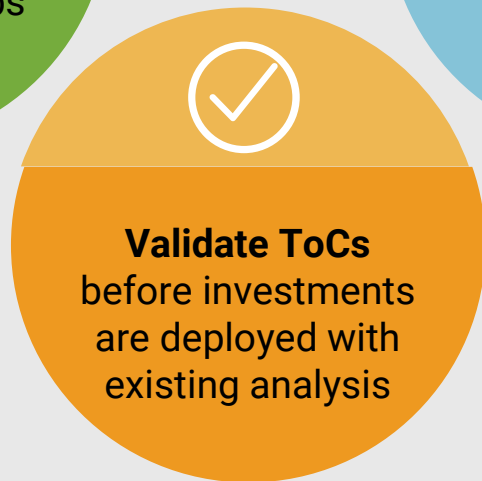
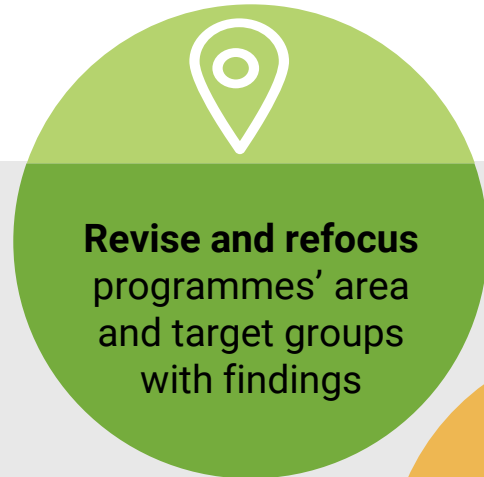
### DEEP DIVE: MOSTAR RISK PROFILE

Indicator	Mostar Score	National Average
Inclusive Civic Identity	5.8	vs. 6.6
Group Grievance	4.8	vs. 2.6
Aggression	5.6	vs. 3.0
Separatist Pull (Three-state separation)	4.1	vs. 2.9
Identification as Citizens of BiH	6.3	vs. 7.8
Intergroup Social Anxiety	3.2	vs. 1.9



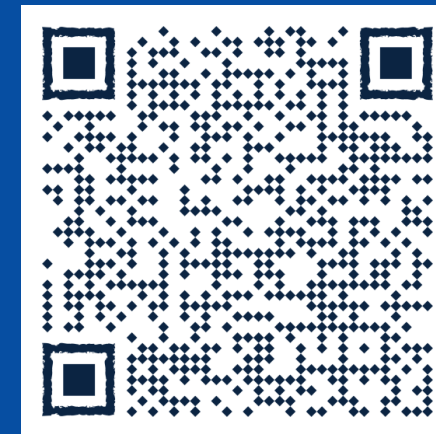
Other **negative** outliers: Stolac (high marginalization, aggression, violence); Other **positive** outliers: Srebrenica (active citizenship, belief in human rights, low ethnonationalism); Sarajevo Canton (high harmony, active citizenship, low marginalization), Prnjavor (low group grievance, low marginalization, low aggression), Bosnian-Podrinje Canton (Active citizenship, critical media literacy, better services), Trebinje (strong mental wellbeing, social tolerance, locality satisfaction)

# SCORE BiH's Value-Add



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# DISKUSIJA



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