



MOVING FORWARD
TOGETHER



UNITED NATIONS
UKRAINE



2018

UN SOCIAL COHESION AND RECONCILIATION INDEX
FOR EASTERN UKRAINE

Photo: Shutterstock

Skills and economic security: Self-assessment by women and men

2018

Skills and economic security:
Self-assessment by women and men



About UN Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index for Eastern Ukraine

USE is an analytical tool implemented on an annual basis and designed to improve the understanding of societal dynamics in eastern Ukraine. This 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, which was originally developed in Cyprus by the Center for Sustainable Peace and Democratic Development and UNDP. For more information on USE methodology and to see the results of the first (2017) and second (2018) waves visit use.scoreforpeace.org

The findings in this paper are based on the results of the 2018 UN Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index for Eastern Ukraine (USE). The data captures the views of 6,000 residents of the five oblasts in the east of Ukraine (government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, and neighboring Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhia oblasts).

This publication was prepared by the United Nations Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme, which is funded by the European Union.

The views, conclusions and recommendations presented in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the UN or the European Union.

The UN Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme is being implemented by four UN agencies: the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

The programme is supported by ten international partners: the European Union, the European Investment Bank and the governments of Canada, Denmark, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, and Switzerland.



Introduction

The ongoing conflict in the east of Ukraine has caused a decline in many of its backbone industries, with widespread unemployment and increased migration being one of the consequences. This has further exacerbated a long trend of the region's aging and shrinking population¹, marked by a loss of social capital and brain drain, undermining social cohesion. The different professional specializations of men and women, further fed by prevailing gender norms, means that adverse economic trends and labor market developments affect men and women differently. This report is the second in a series of reports unpacking social cohesion in eastern Ukraine from a gender perspective. It presents data on how women and men assess their skills and job opportunities across eleven occupations, which in turn allows for a better understanding of economic security in eastern Ukraine².

Summary of findings

- Men and women assess their skills across most occupations differently: within the blue-collar professions there are areas where either predominantly men or women report skills necessary to perform jobs in a given profession. On average, men report having skills across more professional areas than women.
- Women and men have similar views on job opportunities across occupations in which they have skills. The largest share of those who have necessary skills but do not see job opportunities in their professional area is in engineering, followed by construction, factory or mine work, and healthcare or education.
- Women and men with tertiary education and white collar skills report higher household income³ and greater economic security⁴. Men, however, consistently report higher income than women. This is predominantly due to a greater representation of men in high productivity⁵ blue-collar occupation, which in turn is linked to the presence of structural gender-based norms and discrimination on the labor market.

Employment status

As in the rest of Ukraine, more men participate in the paid labor market in eastern Ukraine: 70 percent compared to 52 percent of women (see Table 1). Twice as many men report being unemployed. Respectively, relatively more women are running a household or report being on maternity leave – 24 percent compared to 2 percent for men. Among other things, this reflects the norm of men being perceived as breadwinners and women as caretakers (see USE brief *Gender norms and stereotypes in eastern Ukraine: the views of women and men*).

Table 1. Employment status, age 18–64, by sex, %

	Men	Women	Total
Employed, including part-time work and self-employment	70	52	61
Running a household / looking after family / maternity leave	2	24	14
Retired	13	16	14
Unemployed ⁶	11	6	8
Student	5	3	4

¹ See the Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment report at <http://www.un.org.ua/en/resident-coordinator-system/recovery-and-peacebuilding>.

² In government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, as well as Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia oblasts.

³ The level of income scale is based on a respondents' self-assessment of what they can afford to buy in their households if needed (on a scale from food to expensive goods such as car or apartment).

⁴ Economic security is encompassing such aspects of wellbeing as the stability of incomes, social assistance availability and food security.

⁵ High productivity jobs are ones enabling a person to produce more output; normally these jobs are created in more technologically advanced and knowledge-based sectors of the economy.

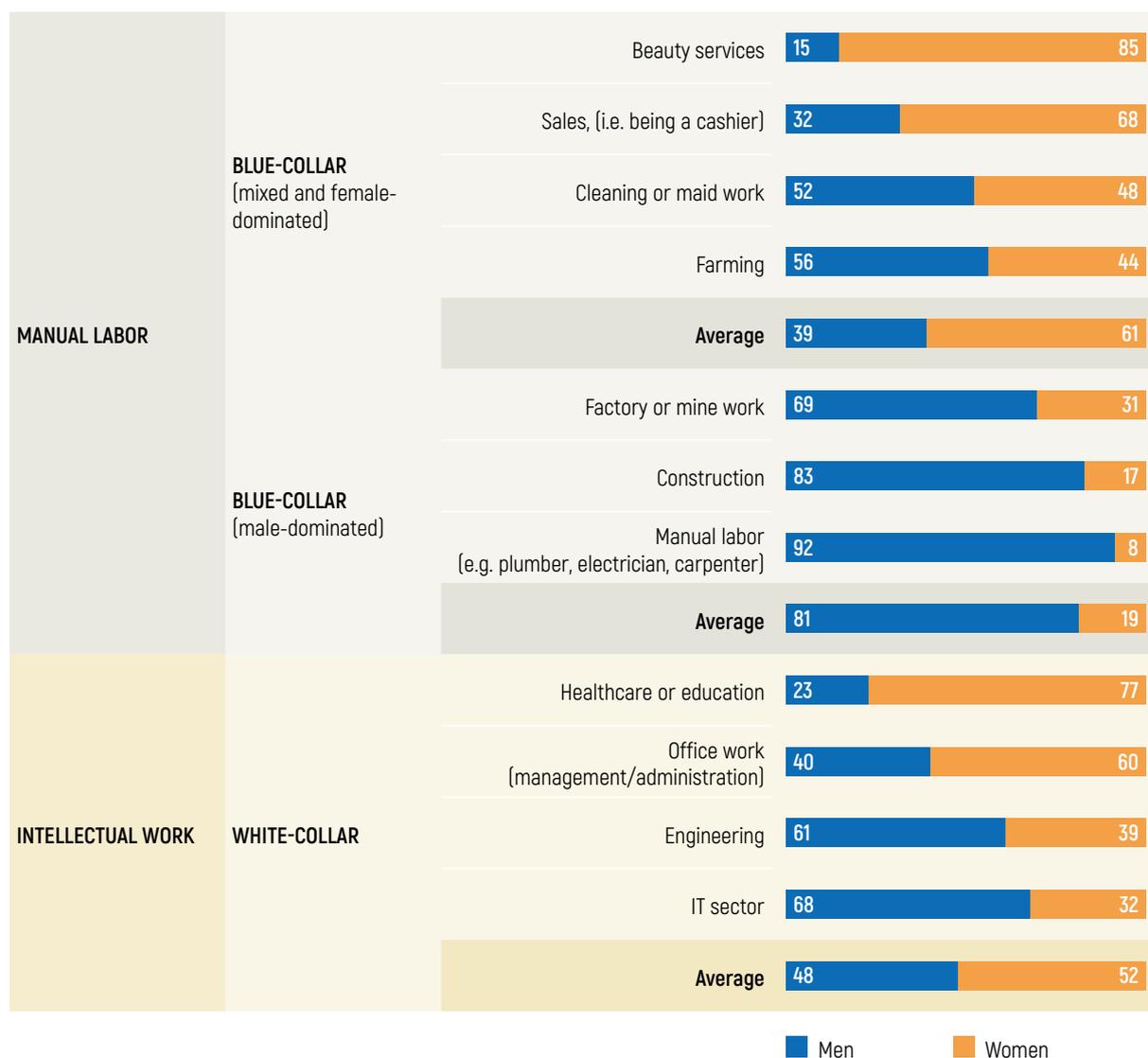
⁶ The share of respondents who define their current employment status as 'unemployed', without distinguishing whether they are engaged in active job search or not.



What skills women and men have?

There are differences in how men and women assess their skills across sectors and occupations.⁷ The main difference is in the so-called blue-collar field, which is dominated by men (see Figure 1). For example, out of the people who report having skills to perform such jobs as electrical work, plumbing, carpeting, 92 percent of respondents are men. Women are over-represented with regards to skills required to work in such occupations as beauty services (85 percent), and in some white-collar ones such as healthcare and education (77 percent) and sales (68 percent). The difference is much smaller in the so-called white-collar professions, such as in engineering or managerial occupations.

Figure 1. Distribution of men and women (18–64 years) within the specific skill*, %



* Respondents were asked whether they think they possess the skills needed to work across these occupations and sectors.

Men report having skills across a larger number of professional areas than women. On the average, men report having skills in four out of eleven occupations compared to an average of three skills for women. There are also twice as many women (compared to men) who report having just one skill out of eleven professional areas provided. Most often women believe they have skills only in healthcare and education, office work or sales, while men believe they have skills in factory or mine work or manual labor. This may point to a combination of women having fewer skills or more specialized skills in addition to women having less confidence compared to men in reporting on their own skills.

⁷ Skills are measured across eleven occupations and sectors, which in turn have been grouped into manual and intellectual categories and three sub-categories: a) female-dominated and mixed blue collar: farming, cleaning, sales, beauty services; and b) male dominated blue collar: construction, factory work, manual labor; and c) white collar: IT sector, engineering, office work, healthcare and education. The division into sub-categories has been determined by cluster analysis, and hence the division into categories represents a certain oversimplification.



Mismatch between skills and (perceived) job opportunities

One of the main factors behind the labor market (im)balance is the extent of the (mis)match between the skill one possesses and available job opportunities in the same occupation/area. Such a mismatch in eastern Ukraine is particularly significant in professional areas such as engineering, construction and factory/mine work: for example, 38 percent of women and men who claim to have engineering skills do not see job opportunities for this profession in their place of residence (see Table 2).

Sales, cleaning, manual labor, beauty services and IT sector are areas with the lowest mismatch, possibly for quite different reasons: jobs in sales and other similar low productivity sectors are characterized by low entry-barriers (and provide ample job opportunities), while the relative uniqueness of the IT skills enable those few possessing them to find a job easily/be optimistic about job prospects.

Women and men have similar views on the mismatch in most spheres: some of the differences reflects the distribution of skills predominantly chosen by men and women, respectively.

Table 2. Mismatch between skills and perceived job opportunities,
% of those (18–64 years) who have a skill, and do not see a job opportunity in that area

	Category	Skills by occupation	Men	Women
MANUAL LABOR	BLUE-COLLAR (mixed and female-dominated)	Farming	19	22
		Cleaning or maid work	11	10
		Sales (i.e. being a cashier)	7	8
		Beauty services	22	15
		Average	15	14
	BLUE-COLLAR (male-dominated)	Construction	34	33
		Factory or mine work	34	28
		Manual labor (e.g. plumber, electrician, carpenter)	15	17
		Average	28	26
		INTELLECTUAL WORK	WHITE-COLLAR	Office work (management/administration)
Healthcare or education	30			30
Engineering	39			35
IT sector	19			17
Average	29			28

2018

Skills and economic security:
Self-assessment by women and men



Education and skills

Level of education and skills are unsurprisingly linked: women and men with higher education have the highest proficiency in professional areas associated with intellectual work or white-collar skills. Similarly, women and men with completed vocational secondary education tend to associate themselves with certain high productivity blue-collar occupations, such as factory or mine work, more often than those with incomplete secondary education.

Education pays off: both men and women with more years of schooling report higher income and have greater economic security. While men and women in eastern Ukraine have similar average levels of education, men report both higher household income and higher level of economic security than women (see Table 3). These results hold true for all levels of education. The income gap seems to be the biggest among women and men who dropped out of school, i.e., those who have very little education and skills, and among those with higher education and skills.

While men consistently report higher levels of income than women, both have more similar assessments of their economic security. Relatively high level of economic security reported by women (compared to the level of income) could be explained by greater reliance on the support from other members of the family (responsible for breadwinning), or from the state.

Table 3. Education, incomes, and economic security by sex,
scores on a scale from 0 to 10

Education	Level of income		Economic security	
	Men	Women	Men	Women
Primary / unfinished secondary*	3.3	1.6	4.1	2.7
Secondary general	3.8	3.5	4.3	4.2
Secondary vocational	4.0	3.3	4.6	4.1
Higher	5.1	4.3	5.4	5.0
Total	4.3	3.7	4.8	4.4

* Note that the number of male and female respondents in this category is too small for valid analysis (27 and 26, respectively).

The observed income gap could be the outcome of the sex-segregated specialization in skills, with men constituting the majority in occupations with higher labor productivity (see Figure 1), but also due to gender-based discrimination. For instance, more than one in three women and men (44 percent and 36 percent, respectively) agree with the statement that women are treated unfairly in the workplace, e.g., earning lower salaries or receiving less bonuses/promotions or being harassed/bullied by other colleagues. About half of all women believe it is harder for women than for men to find or stay in employment in eastern Ukraine. Such views are more common among less educated women and those who are more likely to be unemployed, while young and employed are less likely to share such views (see Table 4).

Notably, women who acknowledge barriers for female employment tend to have higher levels of support for the traditional gender norms (men as breadwinners and women suitable for specific jobs). This points to a vicious circle: women facing hardships on the labor market embrace or reinforce their views on the validity of the traditional gender norms, while belief in such norms serves as a disincentive for women to enter and compete on the labor market.

2018

Skills and economic security:
Self-assessment by women and men

Table 4. Relative barriers for women on the labor market as viewed by women, age 18–64, %

		Disagree that barriers exist	Agree that barriers exist	Total
Age, years	18-35	43	30	36
	36-60	51	59	56
	61-64	6	11	8
Employment status	Employed	58	48	52
	Unemployed	4	7	5
	Other (retired, student, running a household)	39	45	42
Education level	Secondary and vocational	59	65	62
	Higher	41	35	38
Income group	No money for food or clothes	43	50	47
	Enough money for clothes and food, but not for expensive goods	47	44	45
	Enough money for expensive goods	10	6	8
<i>'If a man is capable of providing for his family the woman should take care of the kids instead of working'</i>	Disagree (fully or somewhat)	52	42	46
	Agree (fully or somewhat)	48	58	54
<i>'Women should have more delicate jobs (e.g. nurse, teacher, secretary, receptionist)'</i>	Disagree (fully or somewhat)	34	18	25
	Agree (fully or somewhat)	66	82	75

Conclusions

Despite ongoing structural changes in eastern Ukraine, to a large degree precipitated by the impact of the conflict, the long-standing image of the region as a heavily industrialized economy persists. Many have the skill-sets for an outdated or even destroyed economy and often have limited opportunities to gain new skills and occupations. This, in part, leads to unemployment alongside high vacancy rates in 'newer' professions, and therefore undermines economic revival while at the same time driving high labor migration (see the USE policy brief *Migration tendency in eastern Ukraine: negative trends in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts*).

A better match between education and training (skills) on the one hand and the actual job market and demands on the other would require both evidence-based insights into the ongoing structural changes of the local economies, alongside updating the curricular and technical capacities of the vocational and educational training and tertiary institutions in the region.

Challenging and changing traditional gender-confined attitudes would help drive such change, while at the same time strengthening social cohesion by pushing the gender boundaries closer to new realities. For example, by encouraging more women to go into otherwise male dominated jobs in the IT and construction sectors, while at the same time attracting men to sectors traditionally dominated by women. A gender norms-based society not only reinforces expectations and certain behavior in the home (see USE report *Gender norms and stereotypes: the views of women and men*), but also mirrors this societal attitude in the workplace. Greater labor inclusiveness, therefore, does not just require lowering legal barriers for women to work, but also addressing attitudinal change – it is e.g., not enough to give women the legal right to work in a certain profession; it must be accompanied by efforts that dispel the myth that this may not be the 'right job for a woman' and thus prevents women from even applying.