



UNITED NATIONS
UKRAINE



Social cohesion brief

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The United Nations Development Programme has been active and present in eastern Ukraine for the past decade, prior to the conflict, with a focus on community development, civil society development, and environmental protection. Work on addressing the specific conflict-related development challenges built on this earlier engagement, established partnerships, started in 2015 through the United Nations Recovery and Peacebuilding Programme (UN RPP). UN RPP is a multi-donor funded framework programme formulated and led by the UNDP in collaboration with the Government of Ukraine and in cooperation

with a number of partnering UN agencies (UN Women, FAO, UNFPA). The brief is based mostly on practices and experiences of UNDP Ukraine's work via UN RPP.

Social cohesion refers to the state of a society's convergence, or the "common bonds" that unify different people and groups that share space or territory .

It reflects the quality of relationships between individuals and groups in a society (horizontal aspect) and also between people and the institutions that serve them (vertical aspect).

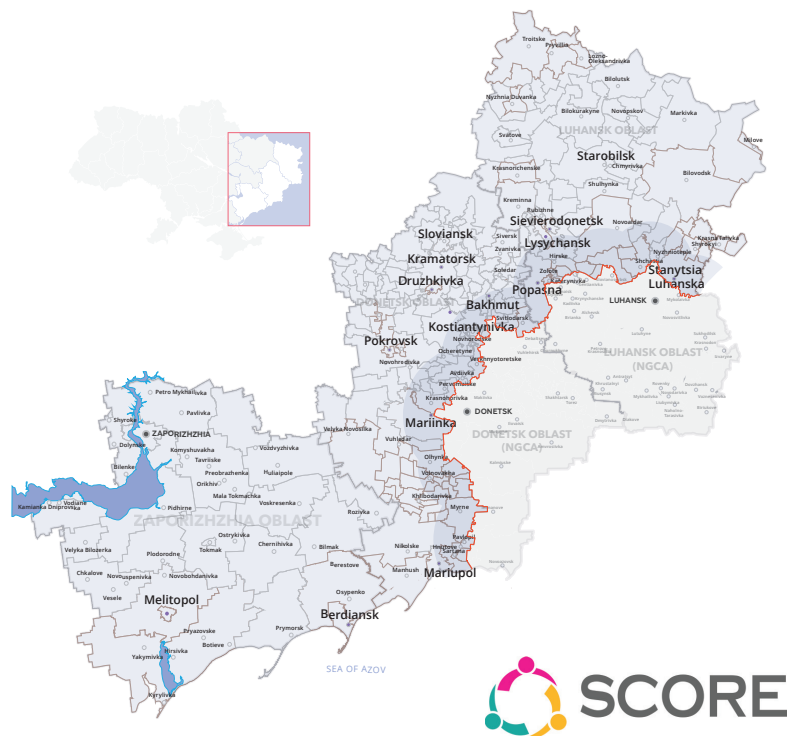
Key approaches to measuring social cohesion

Social cohesion can be measured: evidence-based analysis

The Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index (SCORE) for eastern Ukraine is an analytical tool designed to improve the understanding of societal dynamics in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, as well as selected areas along the Sea of Azov coastline in Zaporizhzhia Oblast. This helps to identify strategic entry points for policies and programs that contribute to strengthening social cohesion.

SCORE for eastern Ukraine has built a library of more than 200 indicators since its first wave in 2017 that can be used to measure different aspects in societies seeking to transform conflict. Data is available at regional, sub-regional and city levels, and disaggregated by various demographics.

The SCORE 2019 findings cover government and non-government-controlled areas of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, including responses from residents along the contact line, ex-combatants, and a city booster from selected cities of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

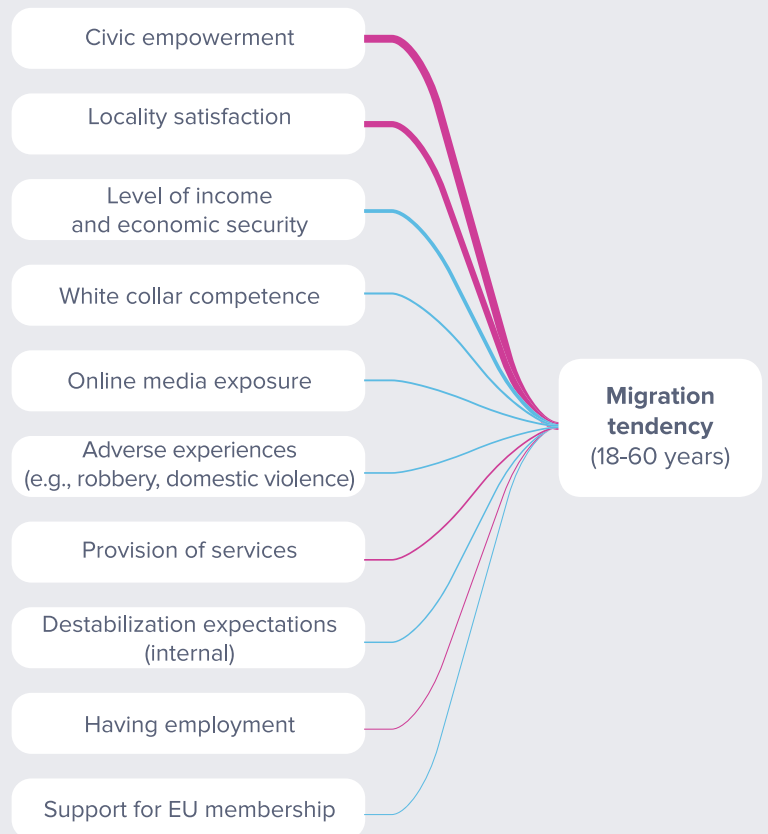
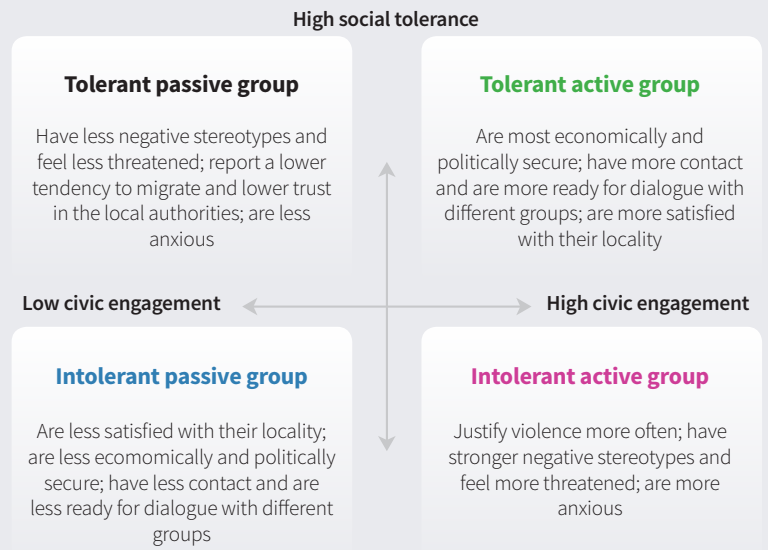


The SCORE also gives an option for predictive analysis and shows how support for one statement may influence support for another within a selected group of respondents. Such analysis helps identify strategic entry points for advocating or implementing positive and desirable changes in society.



How can SCORE be used?

- Profile target groups** based on context-appropriate criteria (i.e., displacement status, gender or political preferences, group characteristics, inter-relationships) and analyse them to understand their experiences, perspectives and concerns. For example, the initial programming focus has been on IDPs, however, evidence suggested that IDPs have been gradually integrating into host communities. At the same time, ex-combatants emerged as a distinct group facing similar tensions to those IDPs used to experience.
- Identify entry points and key actors for greater efficacy of programs:** SCORE helped identify change-makers in the society, constructive types of civic activity, and entry points that can address either passive civic behaviour or radicalisation. A cluster analysis was used to identify key groups based on their views of different scenarios for conflict resolution in government and non-government-controlled areas. Such an approach provides a better understanding of the motives behind different conflict resolution visions and helps identify entry points for a dialogue towards a common future.
- Adjust and refine programming rationale.** SCORE demonstrated that disempowerment is the main explanation for the outmigration of young people from the Donetsk and Luhansk GCAs. Their perception of not being given opportunities for making a difference, is identified as a powerful negative driver. A belief that they could change nothing was driving them away more than any other considerations, including fragile security or the lack of jobs. Based on this insight, programmes aimed at civic empowerment through better institutionalised participation in decision making, support for socially minded business, and innovation will put local young people at the centre of change, help them become change-makers.





⤷ A meeting of a Community Security and Social Cohesion Working Group in Sloviansk

Community mobilisation: a “give and take” practice of social cohesion

Social cohesion is based on the voluntary decision of an individual to participate in community life. UNDP Ukraine provides a framework that helps community members “get a taste” of cooperative practices, develop a shared vision and strategy, and impact politics.

Youth programs at schools and universities foster self-government, while school parliaments and other forms of participation that provide young students with the experience of being in charge nurture civic responsibility and accustom them to democratic practices.

UNDP Ukraine supports teachers, helping them to be better prepared to teach in a reformed school environment, manage conflicts constructively, and develop

collaborative approaches. The “Peace Ambassadors” is a network of teachers that receive UNDP training and get other support for innovative school projects.

University students become multipliers and active agents of change among young people. UNDP has helped universities and students that live and study in difficult conditions in conflict-affected areas in eastern Ukraine, some of them IDPs from the conflict area, to develop community projects, form environmental movements, engage in various forms of activism, and “move and shake” others at the university and in the community.

UNDP Ukraine works with communities at the local level. To include different voices from the community, and to secure

representation regardless of a person's group affiliation, vulnerability, age, income, gender, occupation, etc. UNDP encouraged and supported the creation of Community Security and Social Cohesion Working Groups (CSWGs). The CSWG, as an open dialogue platform and community level advisory body, contributes to strengthening both vertical and horizontal ties in the social cohesion matrix.

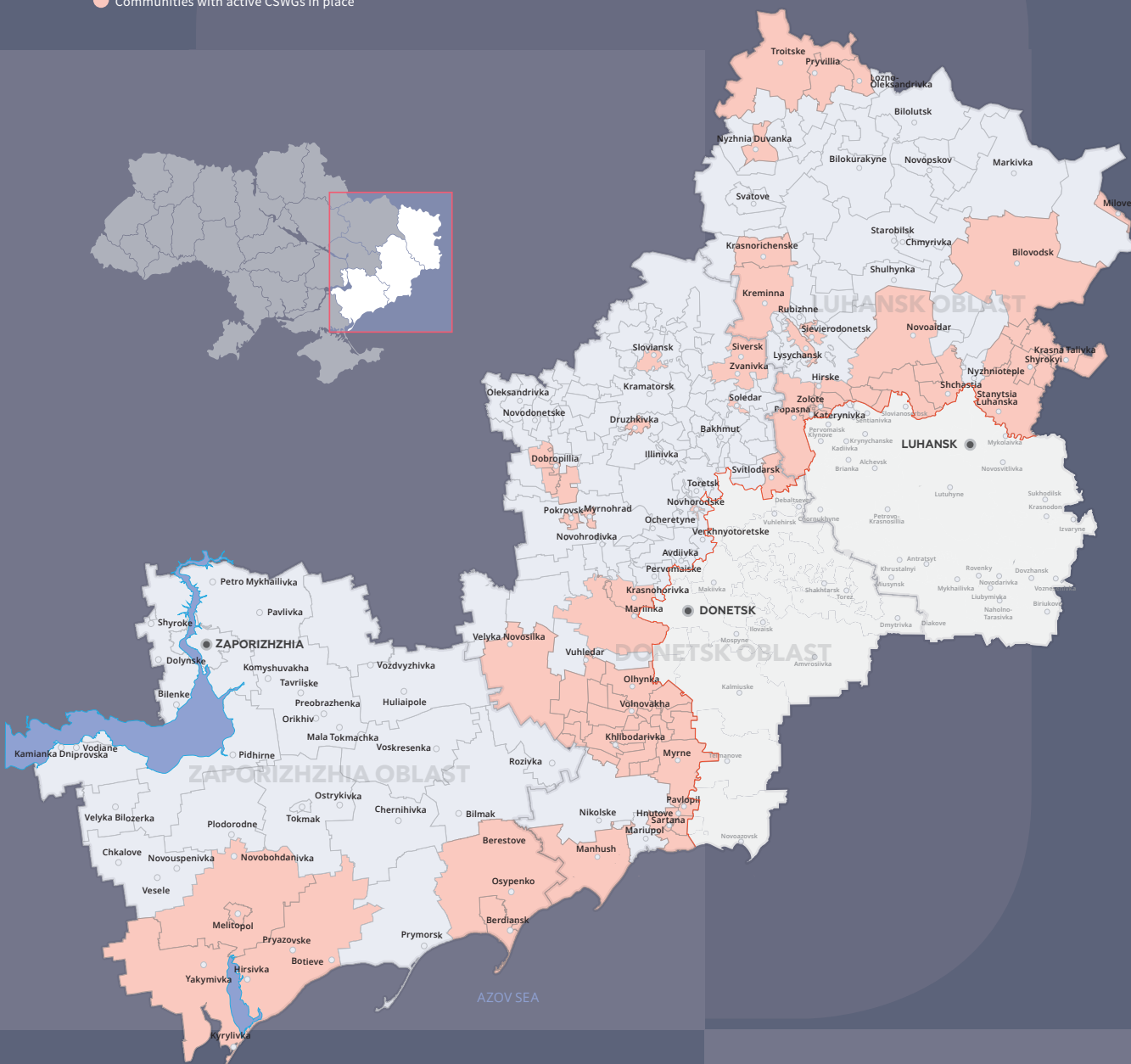
UNDP Ukraine supports CSWGs in 48 communities across in four oblasts. Regular meetings of CSWGs are attended by local authority officials, initiative and advocacy group representatives, civic activists, representatives of vulnerable groups, local businesses representatives, and security services providers. Any community member who wants to participate can do so. In order to bring change, CSWGs actively use the potential of communities for civic engagement through civil society organisations and initiative groups.

Even though CSWGs function sustainably through various regulations or decrees adopted by local councils, they are a rather flexible tool. Practically, CSWGs attract resources and enhance cooperation between different stakeholders. The UNDP community mobilisation approach encourages intercommunity cooperation. Thus, the CSWG network that has been created helps to consolidate work at the regional level, exchange best practices, and enhance coordination.

As a democracy tool CSWGs help to build community dialogue, blurring the line between "we" and "they" in a community, and increasing trust. In such a way, the working groups are transforming the relationships and dynamics between local authorities and the local population, enabling people to better engage in the life of their communities.

Project's target communities covered by a network of CSWGs

● Communities with active CSWGs in place



Social cohesion is strengthened through community action

Advocacy and social change for social cohesion

Communities' efforts to strengthen social cohesion may be restricted by inadequate laws, corrupt policymaking, and the disconnect between powerholders and the public. Removal of structural barriers to social cohesion through advocacy and solidarity helps take social cohesion to the next level.

UNDP support for a network of inclusivity advisers from a group of people with

disabilities led to a major change in the Ministry of Social Policy's approach to funding national, regional and local programs for people with disabilities. Thanks to the efforts of inclusive advisers from the Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts, a new transparent tender system was introduced at the national level. Moreover, a new position of Adviser to the Governor of Donetsk Oblast was offered to one of the UNDP inclusivity advisers.

Social cohesion and a responsible private sector

Private business is a key factor in the economic well-being of a community. The more a business responds to the needs of the customers, the more it "gets it right" – the greater the profit.

Cooperative decision making on the priority needs for the community is an innovative practice that UNDP supports within the framework of its business grants program. This is important because the community must co-finance the investment. In a transparent discussion and decision-making process, the community determines which

services or goods it most needs, and the business applicant that has a plan to deliver them is supported with a grant.

Targeted business support programs for IDPs in the early months after the cease-fire in the Donbas led to the feelings of exclusion among businesses in the host communities. Based on this feedback, UNDP re-formatted its support for entrepreneurs, focusing on social cohesion and shared benefits. Specifically, job creation and value chain sustenance were set as priorities for business support.

What is particularly important for the recovery of communities in eastern Ukraine is building shared value based cross-sectoral partnerships which involve local authorities, civil society and private sector. UNDP approach invites communities to change their perspective and look at the business not just as the source of economic profit but what is more important – as the change-maker in the process of social value co-creation.

The research has been conducted to examine private sector engagement in the development of communities in Eastern Ukraine. It identified the main factors hindering the partnerships development:

- Lack of understanding of the shared value of economic and social improvements in the community by both businesses and local authorities
- Low awareness among local entrepreneurs and local government officials regarding effective models of cooperation with the private sector in combination with the elements of distrust
- Often a bias, among local government representatives towards business structures and vice versa

Professional use of social cohesion tools (dialogue facilitation, conflict mediation, leadership support and evidence-based stakeholders' capacity building) resulted in some positive experiences in this field. In Novhorodske, close to contact line community, Donetsk oblast, representatives of the village council and the public have raised debates on expediency of the big local private enterprise social programme for the next year. As a result of dialogue-based community mobilisation efforts, the Coordinating Council for Cooperation between government, business and society was established to make joint decisions on the community development priorities. Community development HUB "Ukrainian New York" has been created in the renovated historical building of Novhorodske as a co-financed by community, private sector and UNDP project.

Good governance bolsters social cohesion

Democratic institutions and procedures, rule of law and justice, and human rights and non-discrimination help turn social cohesion into a political resource for the community. Citizen participation in decision making, a strong, independent civil society, grassroots initiatives, and activism change the way the authorities interact with the community.

UNDP Ukraine support for local civil society, helping it evolve and become an acclaimed and appreciated local agent of change, promotes more cooperative and transparent relationships between the authorities and

the community. Participatory budgets, innovative programs and the principle of co-financing have significantly changed local politics in the communities targeted for UNDP support, increasing "vertical" cohesion and enhancing the government's legitimacy and accountability.

Social cohesion councils are a democratic innovation supported by UNDP at the local level. Civil society, local authorities, and other community actors volunteer to regularly meet and discuss community needs, as well as plan and budget activities and strategies.

Piloting new methods for conflict resolution

Over the last several years, a critical mass of people has been trained by UNDP and other international organisations in effective ways to resolve conflicts to reconcile and build mutual understanding in communities. These people have significantly developed their potential as “conflict mediators.” To make further use of this meaningful network of people who are ready to consolidate their efforts, a pilot system dubbed GISMAERC (Geoinformation System for Monitoring, Analysis, Evaluation and Resolution of Conflicts) has been launched and is now publicly available.

The system comprises an online platform that receives information from ordinary residents and activists on current conflicts in communities. Residents can visit the web-platform, select a conflict category, and submit detailed information on the nature of the conflict. The reports are then submitted for in-depth discussion and scrutiny by members of the Advisory Groups on Social Cohesion, who, in close cooperation with the network of mediators, rate the conflicts, and select one to tackle with an action plan that they devise.

The mediators have already reviewed and analysed seven conflict cases in targeted communities, most of them related to tackling tensions between the IDPs and their host communities, public property management, the resistance of some communities to the prospect of territorial

amalgamation, and other similarly important societal concerns. To ensure the mediators have sufficient capacity, a series of specialised training sessions have been organised to enhance the skills of the mediators in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

A special set of training sessions on improving debating skills has been launched for young people who are actively participating in community life of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The training sessions are aimed at increasing the level of argumentation in the communications of youth leaders and improving their public speaking skills, as well as promoting and popularising debates as a non-conflict communication and dispute-resolution method. UNDP supports a unique “Donbas Dialogue” project that was created by three IDPs from Donetsk and Luhansk with the aim of repairing the relationships between people that ended up on different sides of the armed conflict in Donbas. Since face-to-face dialogue in the given circumstances was extremely difficult and risky for the participants, the project created a space for dialogue and communication within a closed Facebook group that has since grown and now has 480 members from the two sides. Ideas for dialogues are crowdsourced. The process is crowned with two annual week-long dialogue marathons. Some of the marathoners gather in person, while others participate virtually. There have been eight dialogue marathons held since 2015.

Dialogue reports are made public and appear on one of the Donbas Dialogue virtual platforms, together with the methodology, blogs and ongoing communication:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/DonbassDialog/>

<https://online-dialogue.org/>

<https://www.donbassdialog.org.ua/>

The platform adheres to the “Do No Harm” principle



⤴ The "green room" in Druzhkivka

Social Cohesion and Community Security

The concepts of community security and social cohesion are mutually reinforcing. If communities feel physically secure, then they are likely to act in more cohesive ways, and vice versa. Hence social cohesion should be understood as both an essential component of, and a compliment to, the overall aim of achieving community security.

Enhancing the capacity of police to be openly and proactively engaged with local communities and respond to their needs and priorities is key in strengthening trust in these institutions, and thus supporting vertical cohesion.

Community Policing

UNDP Ukraine is carrying out wide-ranging work on introducing the Community Policing approach to police activities in conflict-affected regions. A series of training sessions on the topic have been conducted

for police command staff, district police officers and juvenile-crime prevention officers, and a guidebook on Community Policing in rural areas has been produced. Community Policing was identified as one of the key areas for UNDP grant support under joint projects between civil society organisations and the police.

Inclusiveness

Social exclusion is a significant contributor to insecurity in communities, as the affected groups and individuals lose confidence in the institutions designed to protect them.

UNDP Ukraine has implemented several pilot projects to increase the inclusiveness of security providers and remove barriers to access to security services by various groups of people. The refurbished front offices of police stations, which are now friendly to persons with disabilities and people



⤴ The building of the rehabilitated Vuhledar city court after a major refurbishment in line with universal design principles

with limited mobility; specially equipped "green rooms" in police departments for work with child victims or witnesses of crimes, or children in conflict with the law; the development of the "101" mobile application for reporting emergencies or dangerous situations, which is adapted for people with hearing and visual impairments; sign language courses for patrol, district and juvenile-crime prevention police officers – these are all simple and low-cost interventions that provide quick results in involving various groups in community life and increasing public confidence in security institutions.

School Mediation

A key aspect that the social cohesion component brings out is the development

of dialogue processes and collective mechanisms to manage disputes and develop solutions to problems. Tensions and disagreements are a regular occurrence in crisis-affected communities.

UNDP Ukraine reinvigorated the School Reconciliation Service system by training mediators among juvenile-crime prevention police officers and school psychologists in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, whose task was to identify and prepare mediators among schoolchildren. Thus, adolescents can address emerging and potential conflicts in their environment in a non-conflict manner, using mediation techniques and, when appropriate, without involving the school administration or the police, which helps to resolve conflicts that previously remained latent.