

**UKRAINIAN WOMEN-MIGRANTS IN ITALY
(Research is conducted by The West Ukrainian Center “Women’s Perspectives”
with the financial support by Winrock International)**

The West Ukrainian Center “Women’s Perspectives” is an NGO located in L’viv, Ukraine. The Center was founded in 1997 by a group of professional women from the fields of law, business, and psychology who had extensive experience in women’s organizations.

Women’s Perspectives focuses on issues such as the legal protection of women, gender equality, human rights education, business development, and women’s leadership. The Center has developed numerous projects and programs to help women adapt to the wide range of changes -- legal, social and psychological – in today’s Ukraine. Women’s Perspectives also has extensive community outreach and information programs to provide education on the trafficking of women and domestic violence.

In 2001 Women’s Perspectives was presented with the unique opportunity to survey Ukrainian migrant workers in Italy. This document outlines and discusses the survey and its results.

One of the main issues Women’s Perspectives has focused on is the circumstances and conditions of Ukrainian women working abroad. Millions of women (and men) have left Ukraine to seek work to improve their standard of living for themselves and their families. Ukraine’s population has been shrinking and according to unofficial estimates anywhere from six to eight million people have immigrated to countries such as Russia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Israel.

One of the larger problems is that there is relatively little to no effort to collect statistics on the number of migrant workers. In fact, aside from the research discussed in this document we are unaware of any other study that has been conducted. Certainly, there are no official state statistics for this group and no overt state policy regarding the flight of its citizens.

In December 2001, a woman named Anna who was working in Italy contacted Women’s Perspectives. She had read about the Center’s work in *Vysokiy Zamok*, a L’viv newspaper that sometimes makes its way to Italy through informal channels. Anna offered to help the Center set up the survey on migrant work of Ukrainian women in Italy.

The decision was made that the goal of the survey would be to gather information about the reasons and consequences of Ukrainian women going abroad in search of work. Marta Chumalo, the Vice-Director of the Center, and Assistant of the Professional Skills Training Program of the Trafficking Prevention Program managed the research project.

The sample included 441 Ukrainians – 375 women and 66 men – working in Italy. Given that there are no official statistics on the number of migrants in Italy, because most of them are there illegally, it was difficult to develop a more scientifically rigorous approach, however considering this is most likely the first time such research has been conducted we believe the data has considerable value as an orientation.

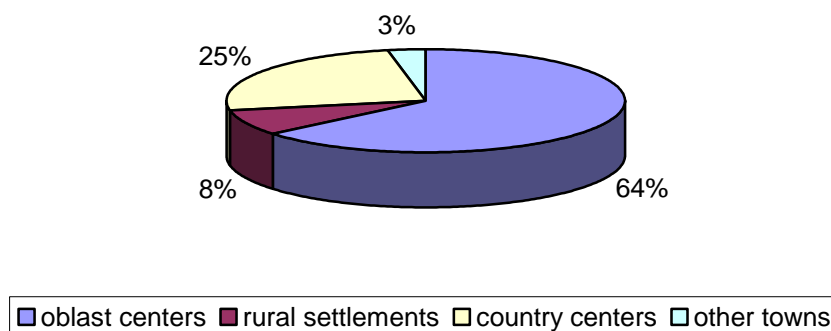
While Ukrainian migrant-workers in Italy represent almost all Ukrainian oblasts, the majority are from the western oblasts of L’viv, Ternopil and Ivano-Frankivsk. This could be due to proximity, access or because Anna (the woman who conducted the interviews) is originally from Lviv, and hence has more contact with people from this region.

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Oblast	%
L’viv	31.51
Ternopil	16.32
Ivano-Frankivsk	9.07
Khmelnysk	7.25
Chernivtsi	4.30
Volyn	2.94
Dnipropetrovsk	2.49
Vinnysia	2.26
Rivne	2.04
Kyiv	1.81
Zaporizhzhia	1.36
Mykolaiv	1.36
Cherkasy	1.36
Donetsk	0.90
Luhansk	0.90
Zakarpattia	0.68
Kherson	0.68
Crimea	0.68
Zhytomyr	0.45
Kirovohrad	0.22
Odesa	0.22
Kharkiv	0.22
Chernihiv	0.22

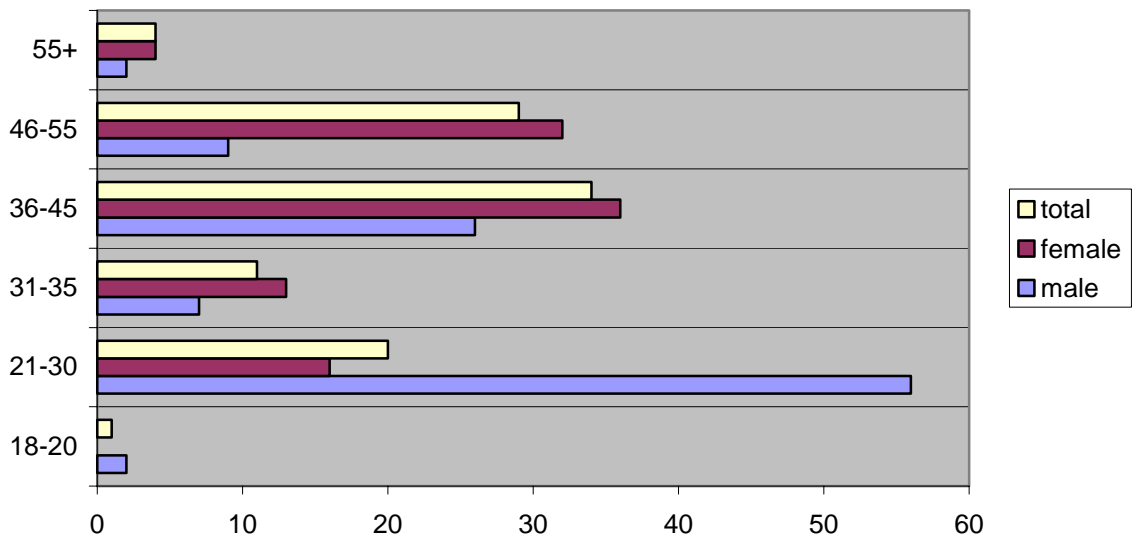
More than half of the respondents (52.53%) came to Italy from big cities (oblast centers), 20.27% from towns (county centers), 2.67% small towns, and 6.13% from villages. This breakdown could be due to the fact that women from big cities were more willing to respond to the survey.

City vs country



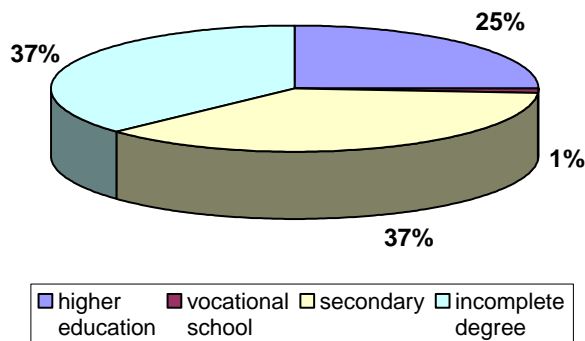
More intriguing is the gender and age correlation. The majority of men tend to go when they are young and probably unmarried, or in mid-career. However, the majority of women leave when their children are in their teens or are in college. The majority of the respondents were women from 36 to 45 years of age.

Age of the respondents



According to education, 37.33% of the respondents have higher education (university degree), 37.07% vocational school, 23.73% secondary school, and 1.07% an incomplete university degree.

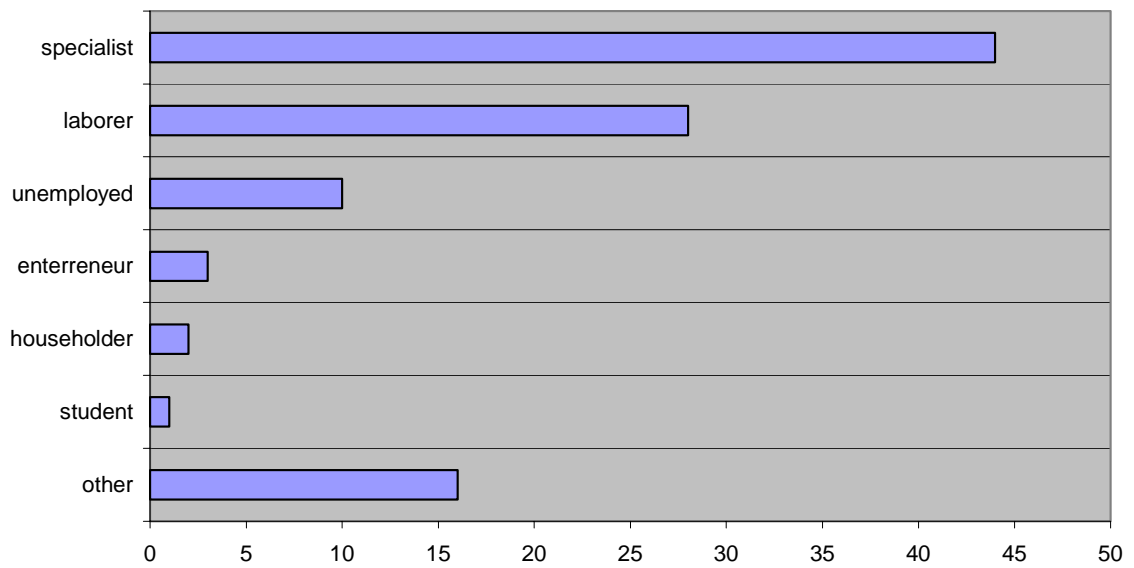
Educational background of respondents



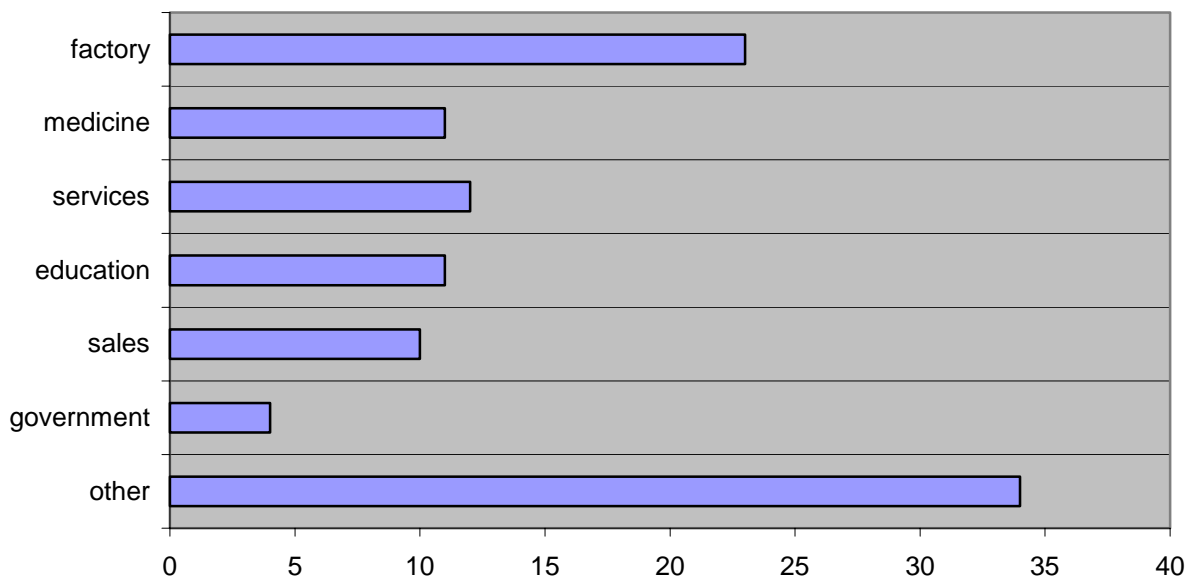
The respondents tended to be better educated and had some specialization or work experience. Interestingly, people in sales and business were by far the least likely to go, probably because they have the opportunity to earn a living at home.

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Status before emigrating

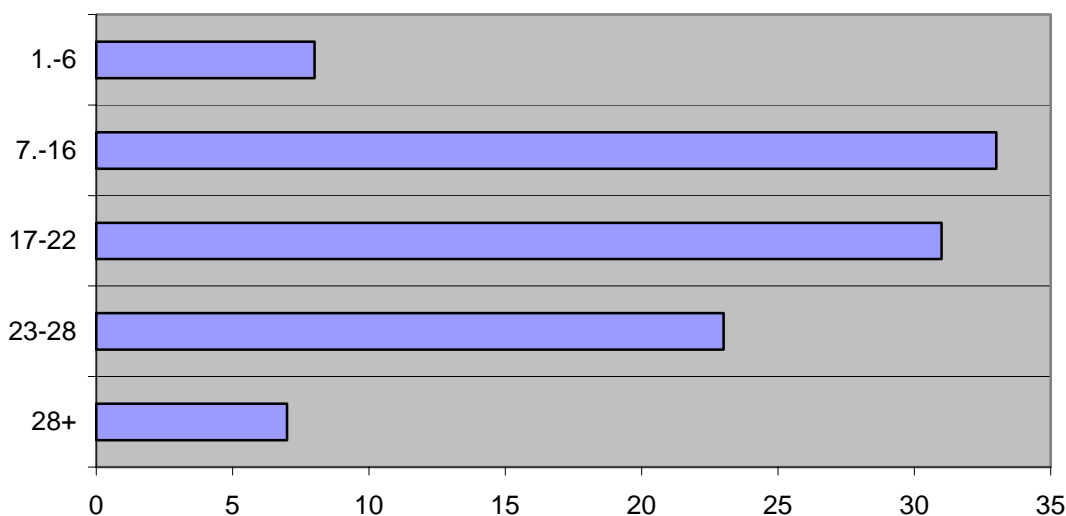


Specialization



Overall, Ukrainian workers in Italy represent the most socially active and mobile part of the Ukrainian population, and mostly the urban part. Many people seem not to have been able to find a place to apply their skills and knowledge in Ukraine, while those with the most secure jobs, civil servants, are least likely to leave. In keeping with the trends for age and gender, 59.20 % of the respondents are married, 20% divorced, 8.53% are not married, 10.67% are widowed. 87.28 % of the respondents leave their children behind in order to work in Italy.

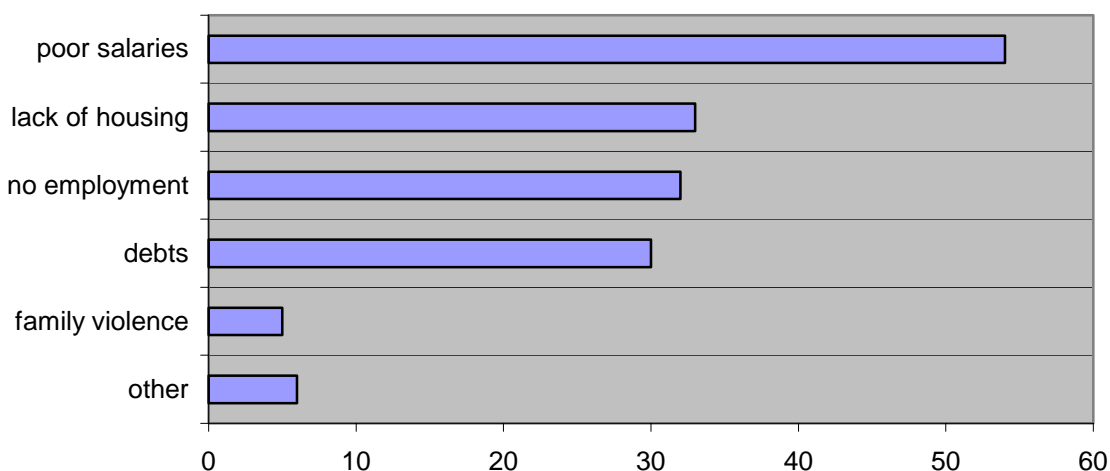
Migrants, with children



This illustrates clearly that the problem of illegal migration touches not only certain aspects of social relationships in Ukraine or certain categories of population but also the whole of Ukrainian society. In fact, the fate of an entire generation is at stake. A clear majority of migrants are working to provide a future for their children, particularly to pay for their higher education. Data shows that probably half of the children of migrants are in their teens, and many respondents noted the high price of higher education as one of the basic reasons why their salary levels pushed them to leave Ukraine and earn better money.

Some of the other explanations given for leaving included the need to provide themselves and their children with a stable future, the need for change, a desire to move forward and to improve themselves, the absence of opportunities in Ukraine, the desire to have a decent standard of living, the willingness to change their way of life, and to see other countries.

Why emigrate?



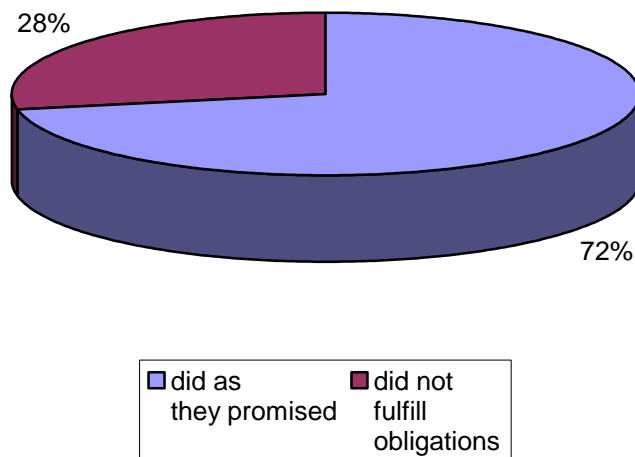
Basically, for the majority of migrants – 93.19% - the reason for going abroad comes down to the need to earn more money. This, in turn, they plan to spend on their children’s education, on buying housing, and on helping either their children or their parents. Some want to earn

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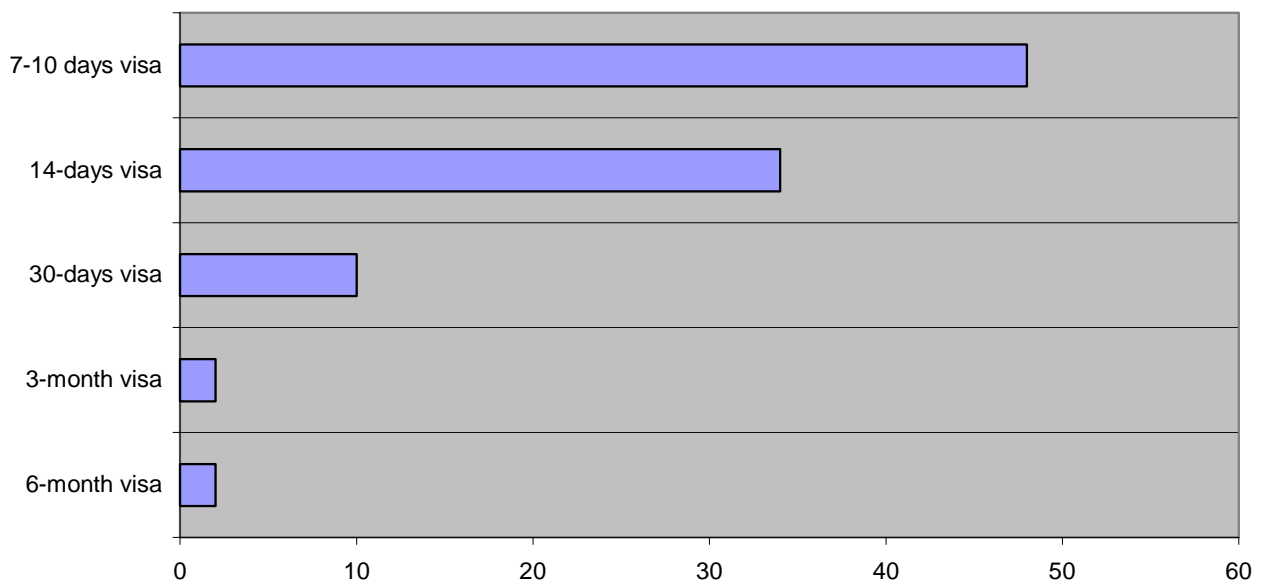
money to ensure a stable future and a decent retirement for themselves. Only 4% of the respondents named non-monetary reasons such as a desire to live somewhere else or for self-realization as the reason for working abroad.

In order to get abroad, 18.82% of the migrants used individual providers while 64.62% used firms to take care of their documentation and travel arrangements. In the end, 85.71% were issued tourist visas, 2.72% got business visas, and 1.36% private visas.

Honest brokers visa services



Outstaying their welcome

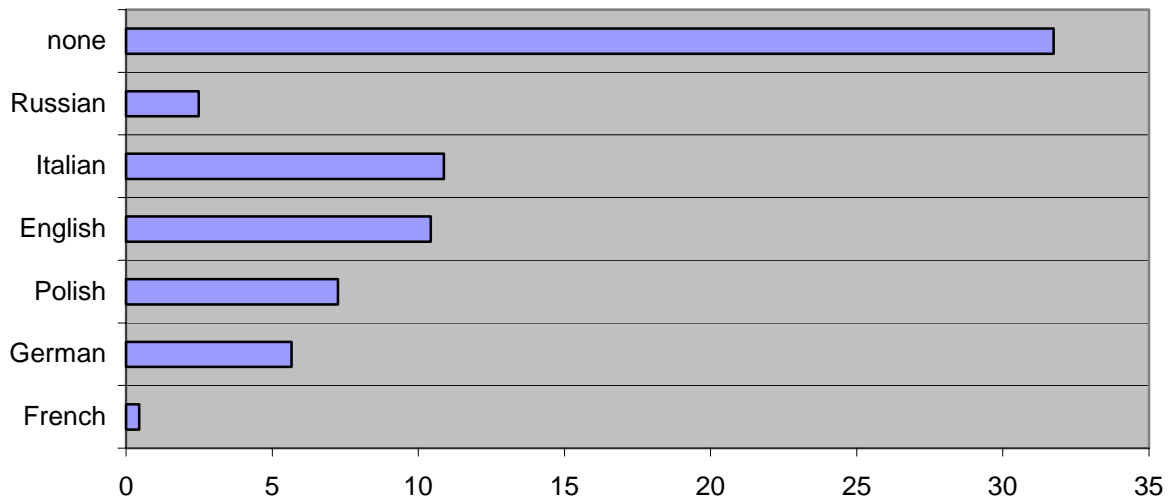


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The discrepancy between visa lengths and the actual length of stay of migrants makes it clear that most of the respondents are working in Italy quite illegally. Only 3.85% admitted that they had formal permission to work. 69.61% admitted to working without any permission or illegally.

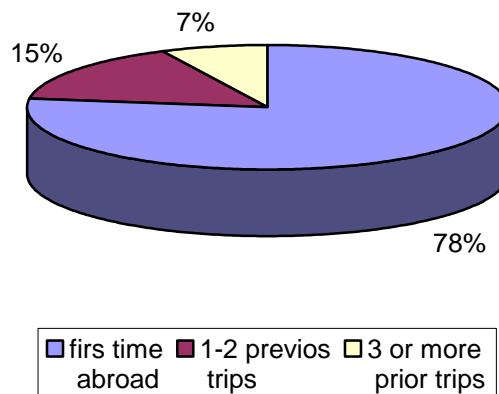
When they went to work in Italy only 10.67% women spoke Italian, 9.07% had some knowledge in English, 6.13% spoke Polish, 5.6% German, and 5.33% spoke French. 33.6% did not speak any foreign language.

Linguistically speaking

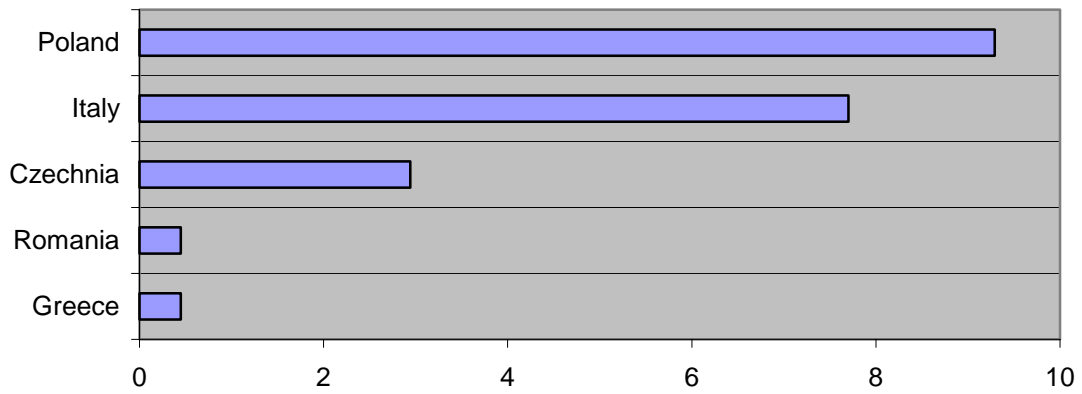


For 77.33% this was their first time working abroad, for 14.66% it was their second time and 5.06% had worked abroad three or more times.

Frequent flee-ers

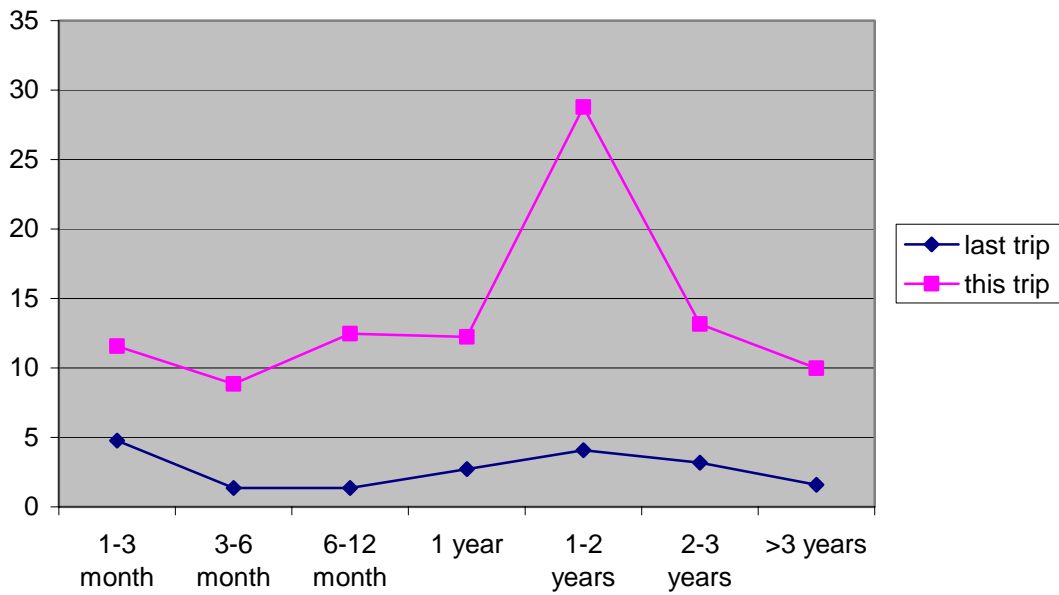


Countries of preference



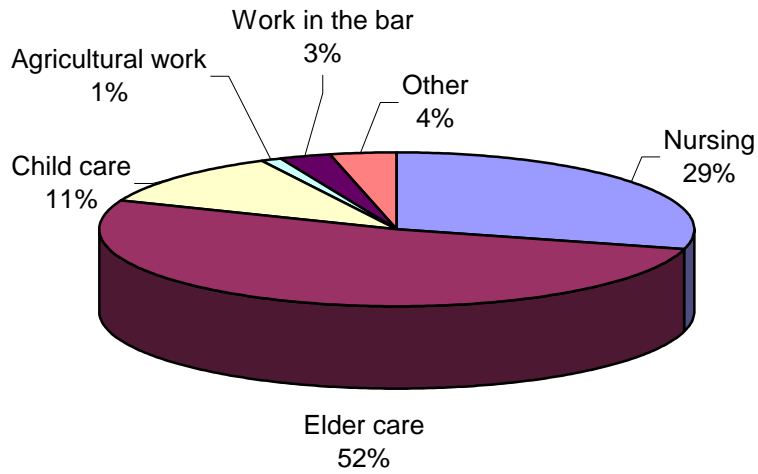
Women had previously worked abroad from three months to three or more years.

Terms of work abroad



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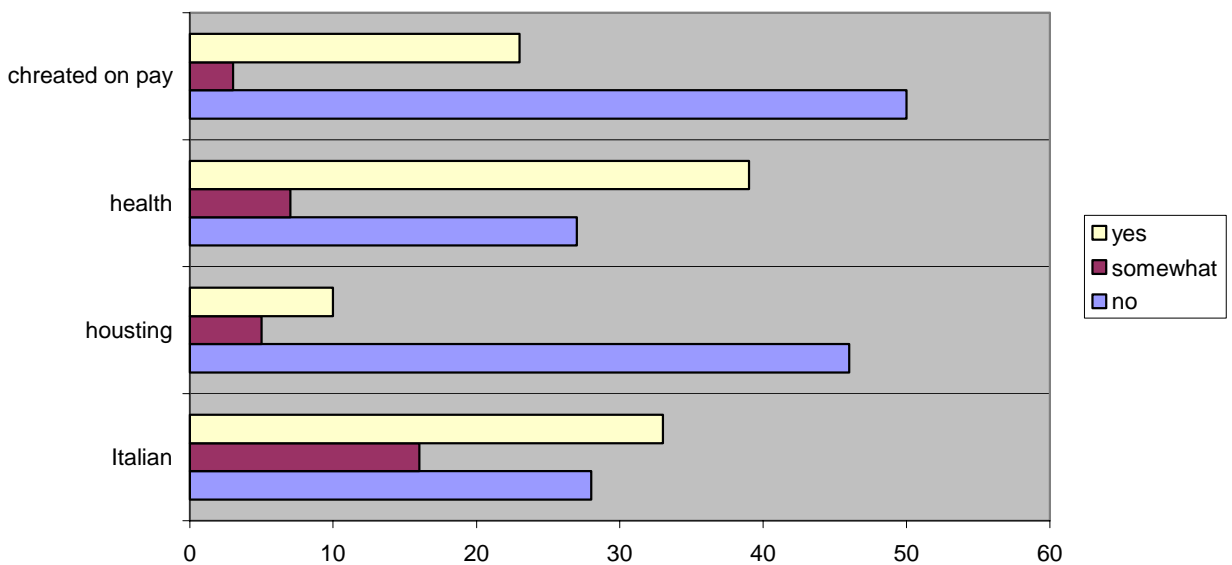
During their stay in Italy every woman changed jobs two to three times. At the time of the survey women worked in the following areas:



Most migrant workers face a variety of problems tied into their status, their ignorance, and their inability to communicate effectively. Illegal migrants are often taken advantage of because of their status and are typically paid less than local workers. The sample of Ukrainian migrants surveyed listed several types of problems.

In addition to these problems, 8.20% of the women admitted that they had been abused sexually. Another 28.34% said that during their stay in Italy they had developed family

Troublesome travel %



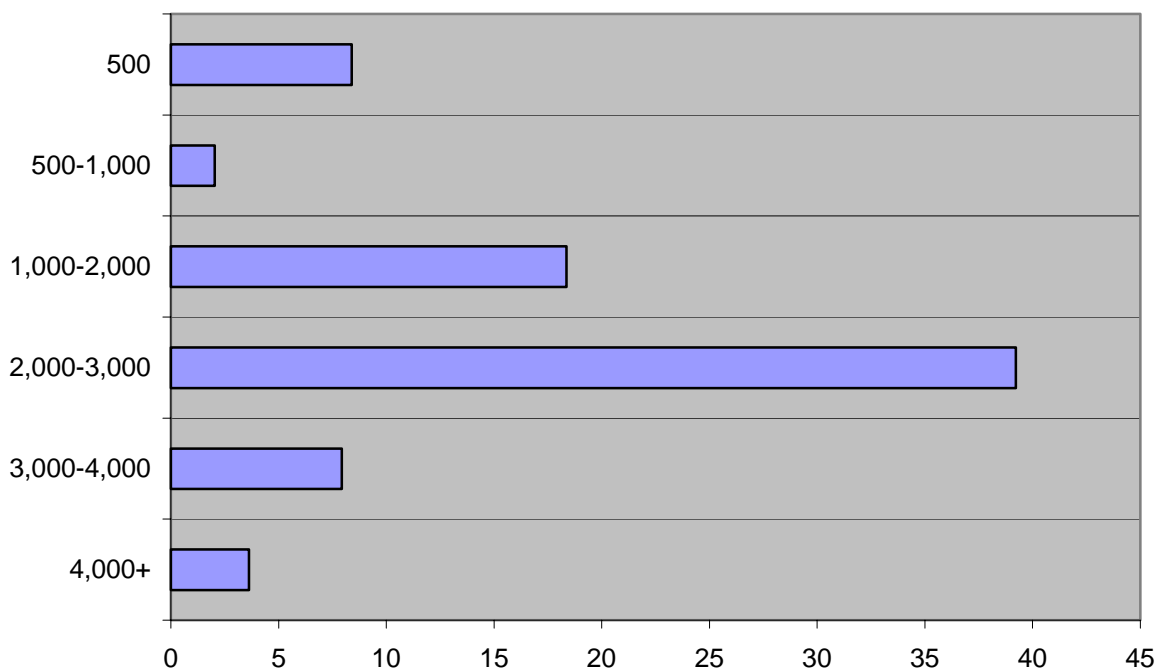
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problems, 8.84% said they had professional problems as a result of working abroad. Another 10.20% could not name a single positive result from their stay in Italy.

However, not every migrant feels that all is bad. 48.29% listed an improvement in material status as a big advantage, broadening their outlook was named by 8.39%, and learning a foreign language was a big plus for another 4.53%.

And when the admitted earnings are examined, it becomes clear why the typical Ukrainian migrant is willing to go through the hassle, risk, and cost of going to a country like Italy. If the self-declared incomes are true, the average migrant easily makes ten times what they would have likely earned in Ukraine in a government job or small enterprise.

Earnings, in hryvna



When all is said and done it seems that Italy is not a bad option. Of those currently in Italy, nearly 50% definitely want to stay for at least a half year and of the 42.63% who could not say for sure, 10% would like to stay forever.

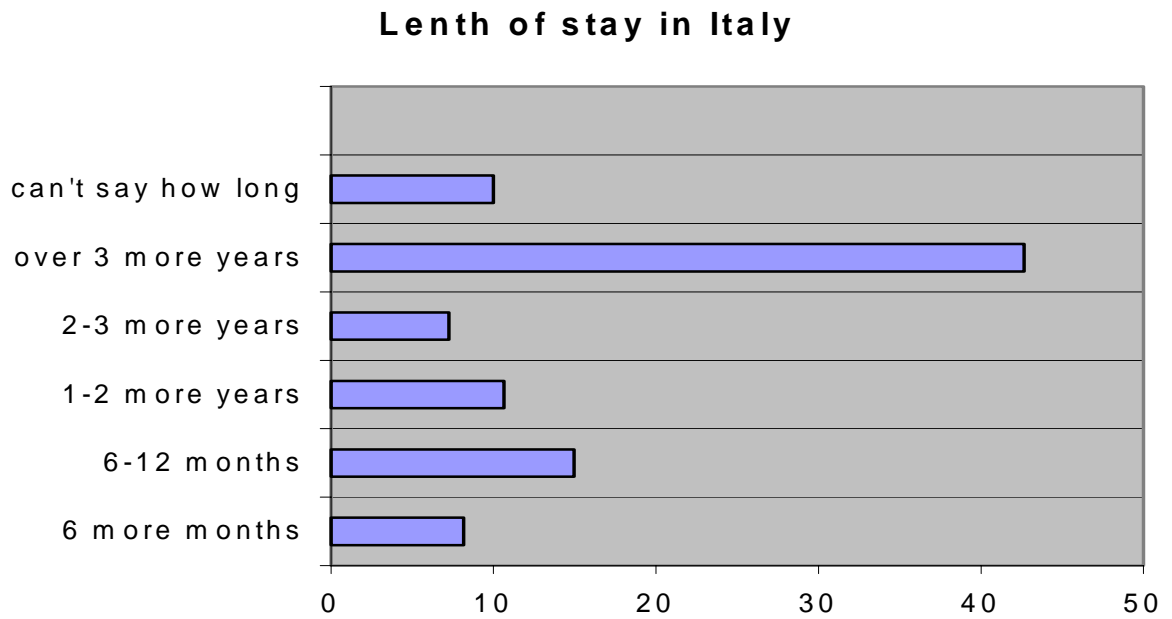
Of those who say they will eventually return to Ukraine -- in fact, the majority of those surveyed -- 9.75% plan to take up their previous professions in Ukraine, 16.78% will try to find a new job here, and 7.70% intend to start their own business. However, 13.15% will live on the money they earned and another 26.75% want to work abroad again at some point. The remaining 28.11% are uncertain what they will do.

Interestingly enough 45.12% of the respondents have relatives working abroad. Based on their own experience, many migrants want to give some advice to those who are considering working abroad. Of these, 7.93% say with conviction that they recommend not going, since it is “very difficult both morally and physically”.

They also warn that a potential migrant should take the trip seriously, learn the language, and get information about their future job. The Italian migrants also suggested that Ukrainians

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“prepare themselves morally” for a completely different way of life. “Be patient, learn the law, take care of your health, and be courageous”.



The research is conducted under Trafficking Prevention Project in Ukraine implemented by Winrock International with the financial support byUSAID.