

Social Monitoring Center

Ukrainian Institute of Social Studies

**Nationwide Survey:
“Trafficking in Women as a
Social Problem in Ukrainian Society”**

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Winrock International

US Agency for International Development

Kyiv 2001

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In January 2001, Winrock International commissioned the Social Monitoring Center and the Ukrainian Institute of Social Studies to jointly conduct a nationwide survey of girls and young women between the ages of 12-30 regarding the issue of trafficking in women.

The purpose of this survey is to study the reasons why young Ukrainian women and girls most often become victims of the trafficking industry. In recent years, trafficking of women in Ukraine has been on the rise. This outright abuse of human rights has been spurred on due to the difficult social and economic situation in Ukraine. Young women and girls of the at-risk category, are lured by different employment opportunities promising “quick” money that can be earned abroad. The relatively simplified visa process and increase in travel opportunities for Ukrainian citizens to travel abroad for both pleasure and employment, as well as favorable legislation that has prompted the growth of the commercial sex industry in many countries, are all contributing factors to the expansion of the trafficking problem in Ukraine.

In order to study the views of young Ukrainian women about trafficking, the Social Monitoring Center and the Ukrainian Institute of Social Studies jointly implemented the “Trafficking in Women as a Social Problem in Ukrainian Society” initiative, which was commissioned by Winrock International. This sociological survey is a representative sample of young women and girls from 12 to 30 years of age from throughout Ukraine.

The objectives of this survey were to:

- analyze the social and demographic characteristics of young women and girls who are in the potential risk group for trafficking;
- establish the main causes that induce young women and girls to travel abroad;
- establish the motivations of those pursuing employment abroad;
- ascertain the general level of awareness about this problem ;
- determine the readiness of the survey group to work abroad illegally;
- analyze the professional orientation of women and girls who want to work abroad;
- analyze to what extent region, age, and profession influence awareness of the trafficking problem and actual experiences abroad.

Survey facilitators selected groups of women representative of the following official statistic data*

Age group	Thousands of persons
12-14	1,158.0
15-17	1,080.4
18-20	1,059.6
21-25	1,801.6
26-30	1,649.7
Total	6,748.3

**As of January 1, 2000*

In order to study the attitudes of the most vulnerable young women between the ages of 12 and 30, those surveyed were broken down into four categories:

Women aged 12-20	Girls attending boarding schools	Women who conduct business in foreign countries	Women in the sex industry
1520	315	103	110

The total number of those surveyed- 2048 women and girls

THE SURVEY IS DIVIDED INTO THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS:

1. Social self-appraisal of young women and girls within society
2. Level of awareness of young women regarding travel abroad and the sources from which they receive employment offers
3. Recognition and understanding of the trafficking issue among young women and girls
4. Influence of demographic and social-economic factors on understanding the problem of trafficking of women and their effect on the motivation for seeking employment abroad
 - 4.1. Demographic factors
 - 4.2. Social-economic factors
5. Reasons why girls and young women want to travel and work abroad
6. Actual experience of living abroad
7. Sexual experiences and its effect on behavior
8. Violence against women as a prerequisite for at-risk groups of women

*Survey facilitators established a set of criteria to determine young women and girls who were in the **primary-risk group** of falling victim to trafficking. Those in the primary risk group were willing to: work abroad illegally; leave Ukraine without a visa, even if this meant endangering their personal welfare; work in the sex industry; work abroad as dancers and striptease; trust agencies that provide matrimonial matches with foreigners.*

Percentages of **at-risk groups** by category of those surveyed:

	Women 12-30 years of age	Girls attending boarding schools	Women who conduct business in foreign countries	Women in the sex industry
Number	1520	315	103	110
% in Risk group	11%	13%	14%	19%

11% of the 1,520 women and girls interviewed in the general survey group met the criteria for the most vulnerable at-risk group.

General Breakdown of High-Risk Groups by Social-Demographic Factors

By Age:

- 12-14– 9.6%
- 15-17– 9.7%
- 18-20– 12.1%
- 21-25– 12.3%
- 26-30– 11.7%

By Type of Population Settlement:

- Oblast centers – 11.0%
- Other cities – 12.1%
- Villages – 10.3%

Regional breakdown of risk group:

- West – 10.1%
- Central – 7.7%
- North – 12.8%
- East – 12.5%
- South – 14.7%
- Autonomous Republic of Crimea – 9.3%
- Kyiv – 10.1%

The results of the sociological survey indicate that:

- The main underlying cause that defines the social and psychological self-perception of the survey group is *financial status*. Financial problems were a major concern for 59% of all survey participants, and 73% of those engaged in the sex industry. Personal health and the health of loved ones was also a major concern for 30 % - 54%. In the general survey pool, personal health considerations decreased as their perception of personal wealth increased. However, the trend reversed in those engaged in the sex industry, with those who were poorest being least concerned with their personal health. One fifth of the respondents indicated that social and psychological relationships with their loved ones were less important than financial stability.

- Young Ukrainian women are very critical of the *situation in their country*. They seek to overcome poverty, to improve their financial status and live better than their parents did. These women value hard work, are mobile, enterprising and willing to take initiative. Almost two-thirds of young Ukrainian women (64%) live at or below the poverty level. Unemployed women are subject to greater pressure to engage in alternative means of work. One in four women indicated they are hardly able to make ends meet.
- According to basic social and economic factors, such as self-determined financial status, average monthly income, occupational structure, and income base, - the majority of women surveyed fall into the greatest at-risk group, in correspondence with statistical averages. This means that factual **social and economic indicators**, specifically financial and employment status, **are not defining factors motivating women to seek employment abroad**. (see below for the correlation between a woman's perception of herself and her social and economic status and her desire to seek employment abroad)
- The majority of the participants in all categories (83%) are **aware of opportunities to work abroad**. 73% of girls attending boarding schools are aware of foreign employment opportunities; 99% of women engaged in the commercial sex industry, and 90% of women who conduct business in foreign countries know of these opportunities. **On a regional level**, 91% of women from western Ukraine and 91% of those engaged in the sex industry were more likely to know of foreign employment opportunities; 85% of participants from southern Ukraine knew of work abroad and 87% of those engaged in some aspect of the sex industry; 77% of all respondents from northern Ukraine and 84% of girls attending boarding schools knew of opportunities to work in foreign countries. (see table 1)

Table 1. Percentage of Participants with Knowledge of Foreign Employment Opportunities by Region

<i>Region</i>	<i>Women age 12 to 30</i>	<i>Girls attending boarding schools</i>	<i>Women who conduct business in foreign countries</i>	<i>Women in sex industry</i>
West	91	82	100	91
Central	78	81	100	*
North	77	84	100	*
East	81	61	100	97
South	85	78	93	87
AR of Crimea	87	54	100	83
Kyiv	85	64	100	88
Total in Ukraine	83	73	99	90

**In some regions, the survey did not include these categories*

Researchers noted that the greater the unemployment in regions and localities, the more vulnerable the women were to becoming high-risk. Considering the fact that employment

opportunities are easier found in oblast centers, it stands to reason that the most vulnerable women are from smaller towns and villages.

- When asked about *conditions of working abroad*, 78% of young women acknowledged they knew of the dangers of working abroad, including the possibility of being cheated by employers and middlemen who offer passage to work abroad. However, it is important to note that the level of awareness of younger women is markedly lower (59%). Women who provide sex services demonstrated the least amount of awareness of the potential for being trafficked (57%). (see table 2)

Table 2 Percentage of Answers to the Question:

“Are you aware that offers of employment abroad often involve cheating, unfulfilled employment and corrupt middlemen?”

	Women age 12 to 30					Girls attending boarding schools	Women who conduct business in foreign countries	Women in the sex industry
	Total	Age: 12-14	Age: 15-17	Age: 18-20	Age: 21-30			
Yes	78	59	69	84	86	67	86	57
A little	18	31	23	13	13	23	13	36
No	4	10	8	3	1	10	1	7

- Researchers found that only 38% of women knew about *the danger of becoming a victim of trafficking in women*. Only 48% of participants are aware of the potential for an employer to seize their passport or to create a fictitious debt in order to recruit them as sex slaves.
- Girls and young women of all age categories would like to work abroad. Women aged 18-25 comprise the greatest percentage (45%) of participants who would like to seek foreign employment. 40% in the youngest age group (12-14) did not want to work abroad, while 22% have not yet decided where they want to work. However, the majority of these women live with their families, are supported by their parents and are inexperienced in life. They are uncertain as to what may influence their decision to work abroad, as they get older.
- Women’s behavioral orientation *regarding risking their personal welfare in order to work abroad*, broken down by marital status, was as follows:

-never married	5 %
-married	4 %
-unlicensed marriages (common-law marriage)	3 %
-divorced	2 %
-previously lived in a unlicensed marriage, but separated	10 %

- Respondents indicated that their friends and relatives served *as the primary source of information* on working abroad. This was true of 86% of women visiting foreign countries on business, 76% of women working in the sex industry services, 63% of the general survey participants and 44% of girls in boarding schools. 47% of both the general survey participants and those who provide sexual services named the press as their secondary source of information. Girls in boarding schools cited TV programs (38%) as their secondary source of information, while 62 % of businesswomen learned from their own experiences. The most reliable sources of information, according to participants between the ages of 12-20, were TV programs and personal stories of parents and eyewitnesses. Girls 15-17 years old received much of their information from school lectures and lessons. It is interesting to note that one third of the women from western Ukraine cited their parents’ stories as their primary source of information, compared to only 8% of participants from southern Ukraine (in contrast to 27% of girls attending boarding schools, who mentioned personal stories as their primary source of information).
- *In mass media*, TV programs proved most effective in influencing their audience. The most widely seen Ukrainian television channel is Ukrainian State Television Channel 1, therefore the most frequent source of information for young women and girls (57%). 8% of the participants seek information from local TV channels, and 9% from Russian television channels. Participants ranked the following TV channels for information: UT-1, “Inter”, “1+1”.
- The majority of participants (almost half of the survey respondents), from all regions of Ukraine, view the possibility of work abroad as *a possible solution to their financial problems*. Participants identified additional reasons for working abroad including the search for a better life for their families (33% of Crimean participants, 32% and 29% participants from the western and eastern regions respectively); the scarcity of employment in Ukraine (24% in central region and 23% in western Ukraine). Among the more romantic reasons for working abroad, the majority of those surveyed wanted to pursue a long-time dream. While some younger participants, including girls attending boarding schools, viewed working abroad as an opportunity to embark on an adventure or to find a husband, this did not hold true for the majority of those surveyed. However, researchers found that 31 % of girls attending boarding schools in AR Crimea and 24% in western Ukraine, as well as one third of all respondents from the western region and 25% from the northern region of Ukraine would like to find matrimonial bliss abroad (see table 3 and 4).

Table 3. Participants in “General” group and “Girls Attending Boarding School” group responding to the question:

“What would be the reasons for your going abroad to work?”

	Region/G roup	To improve financial status		To improve family’s life		Impossibility of finding a job in Ukraine	
		I	II	I	II	I	II
1	West	50	60	32	44	23	36

2	East	43	25	29	15	16	9
3	South	44	65	15	27	16	17
4	North	50	34	22	34	16	18
5	Kyiv	47	27	23	27	16	18
6	AR Crimea	43	31	33	23	13	8
7	Central Region	48	34	27	16	24	16

*The total percentages in each column exceed 100%, inasmuch as the respondents were allowed to choose more than one answer to these questions

**Table 4. Responses from Participants Categories I-II to the question:
“What would be the reasons for your going abroad to work?”**

	Region / Group	To find a husband		This is my lifelong dream		Looking for adventures	
		I	II	I	II	I	II
1	West	8	30	14	54	8	24
2	South	8	13	12	39	6	22
3	East	8	12	13	11	9	8
4	North	9	25	11	26	7	8
5	Kyiv	5	9	15	55	7	9
6	AR Crimea	15	8	13	31	5	31
7	Central Region	6	9	13	25	4	3

- **The most popular countries** respondents cited as most attractive to visit were the United States of America, Canada and European countries with a high standard of living. Interestingly enough – Poland, the Czech Republic, Israel and faraway Australia – were also among the top countries listed. Other countries mentioned included: Netherlands, Russia, China, and Hungary. Girls attending boarding schools desired to travel to India, China and even specifically to the US state of Hawaii.
- Regarding **employment abroad** (among those surveyed, 21% would like to work abroad for a few years; the same percentage would like to work abroad for a few months), only 6% of those willing to work abroad would work as maids, and 14% as babysitters or homecare nurses. The majority (52%) of the participants said they would like to continue their education, improve their professional skills (24%), or find work in their professional field (23%). Many women sought work as saleswomen/vendors – 12 % of the women in the sex

industry, 37% of those who conduct business in foreign countries. In contrast to their older counterparts, participants in the younger age group (12-17 years old) more often mentioned jobs in the entertainment industry - dancer (67%), singer (77%), striptease-dancer (41%) or waitress in the service industry (30%). Women in the age 18-25 group more frequently named service industry professions such as: maid (55%), homecare nurse (46%), saleswoman/vendor (45%), waitress (44%) and cook (42%). Participants in the 26-30 age group preferred nursing (35%), maid (32%) and saleswoman/vendor (29%).

- The fact that there are many recruitment rings currently in operation throughout Ukraine was supported by the consistency and types of ***propositions participants received for work abroad*** in specific industries. 14% of all those surveyed had been actively recruited to work abroad; 4% of girls attending boarding schools were recruited, 59% of women engaged in business abroad and 47% of those who work in the sex industry. Among those women who received propositions to work abroad, 59 were from acquaintances, 20 from relatives, 9 from recruitment firms, 6 from foreign friends, and 1 from a stranger. The majority of propositions targeted the restaurant business, entertainment and service industries, private companies, and wealthy foreign families. Young women and girls were invited to work as dancers, striptease-dancers, waitresses, babysitters, and homecare nurses for the sick or elderly.
- A small percentage of those surveyed already had ***practical experience working abroad***. These were mostly women who have their own private business, which involve travel to foreign countries (43%) and women who provide paid sexual services in Ukraine (12%). Among 1520 respondents, only 3% had experience working abroad, and none of those were girls attending boarding schools.
- The majority of women who have experience working abroad got there through their acquaintances (52%), relatives (18%), private employment/recruiting agencies (8%), and by invitation from foreigners (5%). Only 5% of women found their job through a newspaper. In most areas of Ukraine, there is very limited access to the Internet, therefore this is currently not a major factor in the recruitment information campaign- only one woman mentioned getting a job through the Internet. Researchers anticipate this percentage to change as accessibility to the Internet increases.
- Some of the participants who visited foreign countries received job propositions that were of a dubious nature: the largest number of these were women who conduct business in foreign countries (26%) and sex industry workers (12%), with only 1% of all those surveyed. The survey showed that a number of those who visited foreign countries were recruited into the sex industry once they were abroad- 8% of women engaged in the sex industry and 3% of women on business. Of the overall survey, the percentage was much lower- only 0.1% (2 women).
- Young women were relatively unfamiliar with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that assist women who have been victims of trafficking: about 7-14% among the various age groups:

-among 15-20 year olds- 8% are aware of NGOs;

-among 21-25 year olds- 11%;

-among 25-30 year olds- 14%

At the same time, those women who conduct business in foreign countries, as well as those engaged in the sex industry, are more informed about these NGOs- 23-25%

- Awareness about NGOs that assist trafficking victims varied greatly among regions, age and professions. Women living in the western and southern regions (17% and 12% respectively) know more about these NGOs than women living in Kyiv (8%) or Crimea and in the central region (5% each). The most informed respondents were higher education students of I-II (14%) and III-IV (24%) levels. In general, 13% of women living in oblast centers, 7% of women living in other cities and 6 % in villages know of NGOs. Researchers found that women who knew about anti-trafficking NGOs are more aware of the potential risks of working abroad.
- One of the factors placing women into the high-risk group, (especially those engaged in the sex industry), is *the early age at which girls engage in sexual relations* (in most cases, under duress): according to the research women, who provide sex services, engaged in sexual relations at least two years earlier than the average Ukrainian woman.
- The survey results prove that the proliferation of *domestic violence* is a major factor in placing women at risk for trafficking. 33% percent of women suffer from moral or verbal assault, usually perpetrated by their husbands, friends, or neighbors. Similarly, women also are subjected to sexual abuse (11-12%) and/or battery. 5% of the respondents suffer from physical abuse, usually by their husbands. 10% feel their rights and freedoms have been infringed upon by the state.
- Participants from different regions indicated varying levels of problems in familial relations. Women from Kyiv mentioned problems in their families most frequently, while Crimean participants described the most peaceful relations. 22% percent of respondents from Kyiv cited quarrels among parents, compared to only 6% of women of the same category in Crimea. The Kyiv women in the general survey group discussed conflict situations within their family more openly:

	<i>Kyiv</i>	<i>AR Crimea</i>
<i>“father beats the mother”</i>	6%	1%
<i>“mother shouts”</i>	13%	4%
<i>“father beats”</i>	4%	0%
<i>“parents offend”</i>	8%	2%

The results of the survey indicate the urgency of the trafficking in women problem in Ukraine. Practical experience shows that girls and young women are most likely to become victims of trafficking. This sociological survey of female youth of Ukraine provides insights as to the level of awareness and motivations of at-risk women who seek work abroad. The results of this survey will serve as the basis for the trafficking prevention and rehabilitation initiatives for at-risk young women and girls.

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