



IOM International Organization for Migration

Final Report

Capacity building action towards Ukrainian local institutions
for the empowerment of migratory and social-educational
policies on behalf of children, women and local communities



This publication appeared within the project '**Capacity building action towards Ukrainian local institutions for the empowerment of migratory and social-educational policies on behalf of children, women and local communities**', managed by the International Organisation for Migration with the financial support of the Italian Cooperation – Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Opinions expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Italian Cooperation – Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the IOM or the Organizations participating to the project.

Publisher:
International Organisation for Migration, MRF Rome
Psychosocial and Cultural Integration Unit
Via Palestro 1, 00185 Rome, Italy – Tel. +39 06 87 42 09 67
Email: psycho@iom.int – Internet: www.iom.italy.int

This Report has been realised by
Author - Cristina Montefusco, Project focal point, Psychosocial and Cultural Integration Unit, IOM Italy
Supervision - Rossella Celmi, Coordinator of the Psychosocial and Cultural Integration Unit, IOM Italy

Special thanks go to Iryna Kolesnikova (PhD. Ukrainian Pedagogical University), Svitlana Kovalska (Association of Ukrainian Working Women in Italy), Tetyana Kuzyk (Municipality of Rome) and Olena Malynovska (Institute of Strategic Research of Ukraine).

Many thanks also to colleagues Daiva Vilkelyte, Svitlana Slabinska, Tetyana Miskova (IOM Ukraine) and Viviana Sacco (IOM Italy).

The IOM project team thanks all the people that took part in the project, including children, young people and mothers that shared their valuable experiences, as well as representatives of the local authorities, schools and community services involved.

Final Report *November 2010*

*Capacity building action towards Ukrainian local institutions
for the empowerment of migratory and social-educational policies
on behalf of children, women and local communities*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ARGUMENT	5
1 The Psychosocial-Educational Component	8
1.1 The situation of Children Left Behind in the schools of Chervnisti and Ternopil	12
1.1.1 Conclusions	16
1.1.2 Recommendations	18
1.2 The Psychosocial training and the Creative Laboratories	20
1.3 The Pedagogical Guidelines for teachers	24
2 The Institutional Dialogue	25
2.1 The Italian Ukrainian Observatory on Migration and the Cooperation Agenda	25
2.2 The micro projects	34
2.3 The survey on Labour Migration in Ukraine	38
3 The Empowerment Of Ukrainian Women In Italy	40
CONCLUSIONS	42

ARGUMENT

The present report intends to highlights the strategy and main achievements of the pilot project Capacity building action towards Ukrainian local institutions for the empowerment of migratory and social-educational policies on behalf of children, women and local communities. The Project tackled the negative consequences of labour migration of mothers on their children left at home with a community based approach. More specifically, it tried to identify measures able to reduce the disruption of families in Ukraine highlighting, at the same time, the potential positive effects of migration on Ukrainian young generations.

The project took place in the regions of Ternopil e Chernivtsi, respectively in the Municipalities of Terebovlia and in the Villages of (Lower and Upper) Petrivtsi as amongst the most affected areas in Ukraine. The place chosen to carry out activities for Children Left Behind was the school as considered the first local public service they access and use. It is the place where they spend most of their time after home and for this reason more capable to influence them in a so sensitive phase of their lives.

In these regions of intensive labour migration, up to a quarter of children are reared by one parent families. According to the Survey of the State Committee of Ukraine for Statistics, the region of Chernivtsi has half of its migrants working in Italy¹. Referring to Ternopil region, a survey indicates that 25.5% of schoolchildren have one parent working abroad, while 4.2% both of their parents².

In the last ten years approximately, Children Left Behind assumed an alarming dimension in Ukraine. This is linked to the decision of many women to leave the country to work abroad as care givers and housekeepers: Ukrainian women leave their households and enter those of millions of Italians to 'take care' of elders and children.

According to estimates, after Russia, Italy is the first place of destination of labour migrants of Ukrainians, especially women³. Therefore Italy is indirectly strongly involved in the issue. It is important to know - especially the civil society and institutions of the destination countries - the enormous sacrifice migration implies for Ukrainian families especially very young people.

In a circular perspective, the project also aimed at investigating the situation of women working in Italy with a view to empower and integrate them. It also highlighted the way they experience the separation from their children.

The project's structure is based on three inter-connected strands to which results subsequently refer:

- The Psychosocial-educational component
- The Institutional dialogue
- The Empowerment of Ukrainian migrant women

This choice is based on the assumption that migration is a complex fact which needs complex responses. In line with this view, there is also the idea of involving all key actors - the institutional as well as the civil society ones; the local and central level.

¹ Please refer to the Survey of the State Committee of Ukraine for Statistics of 2008.

² Dovzhik B. Experience and Proposals of the Oblast Employment Centre on Addressing Adverse Impacts of Labour Migration on the Labour Market // www.dcz.gov.ua/ter/control/uk/publish/article?art_id=5223990

³For more details please refer to 'Labour Migration from Ukraine: A Survey', O. Malynovska, 2010

Concerning the first strand, it envisaged a preliminary inquiry in 24 schools of the above territories which confirmed that Children Left Behind suffer from emotional and psychosocial distress and have a decrease in school performances due to the departure principally of their mothers. It also envisaged **Training** on behalf of teachers, psychologists and social workers and the implementation of **Creative Laboratories** for students to better elaborate the distress caused by the separation from mothers. Based on the information obtained, **Guidelines for teachers** were outlined for schools with a high number of children left-behind in Ukraine.

Concerning the Institutional dialogue, the **Italian-Ukrainian Observatory on Migration** was constituted to become a forum of discussion and cooperation between the two countries in a decentralised perspective. At the end of the process, a **Cooperation Agenda** was signed by its members and identified priority areas of work: the Agenda constitutes therefore the base for the future cooperation.

Last but not least, the **empowerment of Ukrainian women** working in Italy envisaged their active participation to the inter-institutional dialogue, in psychosocial focus groups and in integration activities. The experience let us know how socially and institutionally they are isolated on one side, and how acute is the emotional and psychological impact due to the separation from their children.

A **video documentary** on Children Left-Behind in Chernivtsi was also produced.

1 The Psychosocial-Educational Component

The objective of this component was to improve the psychosocial condition of Ukrainian Children Left Behind⁴ through a supportive socio-educational program for schools and to sensitize local communities on the negative consequences on young people of mothers' emigration - or of both parents in some cases.

To this end, a series of activities were carried out in the schools of the Regions of Chervnisti and Ternopil⁵ firstly consisting in informative and sensitization meetings and round tables with local stakeholders⁶; then in Training and Creative Laboratories with students. It also consisted in a field research to investigate on the situation of Children Left Behind with a view to highlight potential measures to reduce the negative impact of the phenomenon.

First of all, a preliminary assessment in the above Ukrainian target locations was carried which initiated the process of capacity building of local institutions in close cooperation with the central ones namely the Ukrainian Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports, and the Ministry of Education and Science.



Preliminary findings highlights that the regional public administrations do not possess statistics on Children of Labour Migrants and official data are missing mainly because women – or both parents - migrate irregularly and do not communicate their departure to local authorities and/or relevant services (firstly the school within the scope of this work) about their plans to leave the country. The fact that children live in incomplete families are later on discovered by teachers or neighbours, who tend to keep this information confidential. *Therefore, a nodal point consists in the lack of information of schools and local authorities on the migration of mothers which has an impact on the capacity of schools and local services to respond to the special needs of Children Left-Behind.*



It emerged that in the compulsory school, the average age of Children of Labour Migrants is between 6 and 17 years-old and that the field works are significantly affected by the phenomenon: institutions and stakeholders involved confirmed the relevance of the project's scope and the need to participate in it at all levels.

The consistent emigration of women, or in some cases of both parents, is changing a lot the Ukrainian family structure: *the lack of parental guidance and the absence of rules and family rituals are affecting young people* thus transforming the Ukrainian family configuration. The question is how much this will negatively affect the future society of Ukraine.

⁴Children Left-Behind are those children - and teenagers – who remain in the country of origin while the mother or both parents emigrate to work abroad. In Ukraine they are also called Children of Labour Migrants.

⁵The specific target locations were the District of Terebovlia and the Villages of Upper and Lower Petrivsti.

⁶They were: headmasters, teachers, school psychologists and social workers; students –including Children Left-Behind, family's members, representatives of local civil society organisations and institutions.



with a tourism visa and after its expiration overstay in the country this way assuming an irregular status. According to local communities in Ukraine, Italian families tend not to regularise them as it is more economically convenient. On the other side, though, this status place women in a position of strong vulnerability.

There are two different conditions of Children of Labour Migrants: those who are left alone just for a few years as mothers return home after a determined period of time and those who are permanently abandoned and eventually receive mothers' remittances. The second situation is evidently more difficult: these children become cynical and cruel and schools are unable to cope with this challenge. *One out of 5 cases relates to a permanent abandonment. Local stakeholders recommend to consider this difference when outlining policies and services to address the special needs of the target group.*

Referring to the psychosocial impact of the separation from parents, teachers and psychologists mention the inclination of Children Left Behind to get ill more easily than the children.

Families of labour migrants have a higher economic status than those who do not migrate. Children Left-Behind are therefore wealthier than the other children. Migrant mothers financially support children enrolment in private schools and provide them with expensive goods.

Children Left Behind usually do not see their mothers for 2 to 5 years following their migration because they live in Italy – especially in the initial phase of the migratory project - without a regular residence permit which do not allow them to travel back home. Women usually migrate

With the migration of mothers, usually grandmothers become the main interlocutor vis-à-vis the school and assume an important role in the education of grandchildren. Though, the generational gap is a constraint in the relation between the grandparents and grandchildren.

The role of fathers is changing a lot: identity crises and stress due to the incapacity of supporting the family because unemployed leads to alcohol dependency and family conflicts. Often, children who go to the psychologist belong to families where the father lost completely his role and mothers took his. The role of fathers is very important in the growth of Children Left Behind and often underestimated.

Preliminary proposals to reduce the negative consequences of women emigration on their children were suggested by local communities and consist:

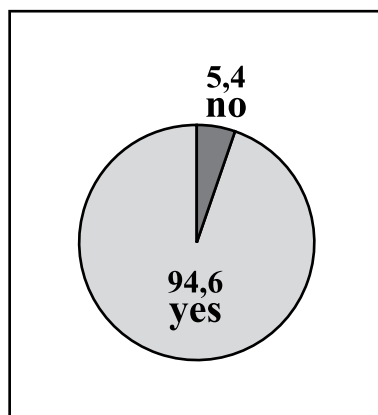
- The creation of a link between local services in Italy and Ukraine in order to facilitate the contact of women in Italy to inform them on the special needs of their children and to find solutions to support them.
- Facilitate the direct contact between children and their mothers in Italy through Internet and communication programmes such as Skype also equipping Ukrainian schools with such devices.
- Organise visits of children to their mothers in Italy. This also allows them to know more about the living conditions of their mothers and avoid mystification.
- Use the seasonal work system allowing mothers to work for a short term basis in Italy and return home to stay longer with their children.
- Use remittances of migrant women to support local community projects benefiting the entire community.
- Consider not only the material needs of the children but also the spiritual and interior ones by emigrated parents.

1.1 The situation of Children Left-Behind in the schools of Chervnisti and Ternopil

The field research was conducted in August 2009 in 24 schools located in the Regions of Ternopil and of Chervnisti which aimed at analyzing the situation of Children Left Behind⁷.

Scope of the research was to identify

- changes occurred in the behavior of children after the migration of their mothers (or both parents);
- problems experienced by Children of Labour Migrants as a consequence of parents' emigration;
- the role of national and local level administrations;
- the way schools deal with the target group;
- the competences and constraints of educators⁸ in dealing with Children of Labour Migrants;
- potential measures to address the issue of Children Left Behind.



The work involved 450 persons among students, educators and families through the use of questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. Considering the delimited caseload, a very high number of families have one of its members working abroad. More precisely, it came up that four hundred and one (401) children had parents working in Italy while a hundred eighty-two (182) are those of the schools of Petrivtsi (Lower and Upper) villages.

Educators highlight that Children Left Behind suffer from emotional and psychosocial distress and have a decrease in their school performances due to the long separation from mothers who migrated mainly to Italy to work principally as caregivers and domestic workers. It is relevant to note 67.5% of educators believe that Children of Labour Migrants need special attention.

More specifically, they refer to a decrease in learning achievements, behaviour

⁷The present chapter highlights the most significant results of the research. For more details on the Study Report carried out by Iryna Kolesnikova (Kiev 2009), please contact IOM Missions of Italy or Ukraine.

⁸We intend by 'educator': headmasters, teachers, social workers and school psychologists.

deviations, aggressiveness, arrogant attitudes to other children and teachers and, more in general, a lack of respect vis-à-vis adults.

"Children become arrogant, poorly controlled..."

On the other hand, it emerges that the distance from their mothers increases their sense of responsibility, of independence and auto-discipline.

Some teachers do not consider necessary to invest additional efforts on Children Left-Behind. Often they expressed opinions like

"I have children of my own who also need my attention",

"I have a lot of other responsibilities and problems, and I do not have time for extra care for children of labour migrants",

"It is the state that should care of such children",

"When their parents left, they did not think about their children; they should return and take care of them or take them abroad with them",

"These children live better than teachers. Do they need care?"

Some headmasters do not see any negative changes. If children had high learning achievements, they continue in the same way after the departure of their parents. For example, a school director in Gumny village says that Children of Labour Migrants are among the best pupils of his school. His view is supported by others. Children of labour migrants maintain good relations with their classmates.

Headmasters of schools located in wider municipalities such as Terebovlia highlight the tendency of Children Left-Behind to assume negative social behaviours (e.g. meet with older people; go to bars). Usually, children from villages are less given into temptation as they are more socially protected than those living in cities who have an easy access to a series of 'services' such as bars, slot machines etc.

They also underline how the high financial availability⁹ of Children Left-Behind change their moral values. They believe that "money can buy everything". To avoid negative consequences in the relation with other students, a headmaster in Krovinska introduced school uniforms as mandatory.

The majority of teachers think that there are no relevant changes referring to learning

⁹It has been reported that Children Left-Behind often have €100 as a pocket money per day.

achievements although a quarter of respondents refer to a substantial reduction of them. Concerning the potential change of behaviour in the inter-relation between Children of Labour Migrants and other school children, although almost half of the teachers do not see any change, part of them believe that Children Left Behind tend to spend more time with other schoolmates; become more reserved, become aggressive, anxious, and more distrustful.

School psychologists and social educators play an important role in the growth of children in the school context and are responsible for a series of activities also addressing the needs of Children Left Behind¹⁰ namely they

- register them as students with special needs;
- conduct preventive measures;
- consultations and corrective measures (if necessary);
- maintain permanent contacts with guardians through individual and collective meetings, and sensitization;
- carry out periodical (compulsory) reports of classes and pupils which include information on children and their families. These reports play an important role in the assistance of Children Left-Behind as they allow educators to know more about the situation and potential problems and elaborate responses to their special needs.

School psychologists and social educators have to face daily constraints to carry out their work such as the lack of workplaces; high bureaucratic workload; limited time available. They usually do not consider Children of Labour Migrants as a particular category and deal with them according to the specific ‘symptoms’ (e.g. behaviour deviations, low learning achievements, conflicts with other people).

According to them, Children Left Behind usually have problems related to low motivation to learn, negative change of moral values (dominance of material values), poor manners, arrogance, insolence and egoistic attitudes. On the other hand, they tend to be more vulnerable than the other children, to be more reserved as well as more independent. According to them, they need more support and understanding from teachers. They also note that they have higher housekeeping duties. Usually Children Left-Behind look for school psychologists support when they miss their parents, feel lonely, need to communicate or have conflicts with their guardians,

¹⁰ These activities are envisaged for all children who need a special assistance.

teachers, and other children. According to school psychologists, guardians of Children of Labour Migrants do not ask for advice or consultation when they experience a problem with them.

Almost half of the school psychologists and social educators believe they are not prepared to assist Children Left-Behind and expressed the need of educational and methodological upgrade also through the use of updated manuals, training, video materials etc. More in general, they expressed a very high interest in dealing with Children of Labour Migrants.

Children Left Behind involved in the work were 35 between 7 to 18 years. Almost all of them have their mothers abroad to work¹¹ while a small part both parents. Only 2.9% of children have only their fathers abroad. They live without parents for many years, the big majority for more than 2 years. Perception of Children Left Behind on the time of separation from their parents tends to be longer than it really is. For example, a 12 years-old boy responded that his parents went abroad 15 years ago while his grandmother said that it was 10 years ago.

They tend to be a bit contradictory on what refer to the material benefits resulting from mothers working in Italy: some list the gifts received and explained how good they are while others clearly express their preference to have their mothers at home. None of them asked for support to teachers and school psychologists when needed.

The family members - including guardians of Children Left Behind - involved in the research were 28 among grandmothers, fathers at home, migrant mothers¹² and aunts. They report on the psychological trauma experienced by Children of Labour Migrants¹³. In a case, after the migration of the mother the children did not speak for 2 years and refused to send letters to his mother. They also report on difficulties in sleeping.

“The child cries at nights and calls his mother”

“After my return, my son is always near me and every day pleads me to stay here”

Although family members agree that “parents are parents and cannot be replaced”, the overwhelming majority believe that go abroad to earn money is a priority.

¹¹ 80% of the caseload.

¹² Migrant mothers participated as they were in Ukraine on vacations during the field work.

¹³ In a dramatic case children could even not attend parents’ funeral abroad.

1.1.1 Conclusions

Departure of parents has a consistent impact on emotions, social behaviours and in learning performances on Children Left Behind. Referring to the negative effects there are closeness, aggression, low respect to others, arrogance, low discipline, declining learning achievements. Also, in absence of their parents, children face a number of household, social, communication and learning problems.

According to the educators, the negative consequences of the migration of mothers - or both parents - on Children Left Behind consist in:

- lack of parental guidance
- family breakdown
- psychological trauma. This is expressed through a series of ‘symptoms’ like: rude, arrogant, reserved and nervous behaviours, anxiety, decrease of organisational capacities, and moral values (which often consist in the idea that money ‘can buy everything’ and that they will be always be supported economically by parents);
- incapacity of grandparents to grow Children Left Behind alone;

Among positive consequences, they refer to the enhancement of financial capacities of families and therefore of family living standards but also to an increased senses of independence, responsibility, self-discipline of the children.

Women form the majority of labour migrants who depart to Italy. They are mainly employed in the care of elderly persons, house cleaning, and service sector (restaurants). Men predominantly work in the road construction.

All groups of respondents face some problems associated with labour migration of parents. As a result, all of them need some assistance.

Referring specifically to teachers’ feedback, they do not feel prepared to cope with the problem and would like to be trained in order to be competent when dealing with the special needs of Children Left Behind. They highlighted that Children Left-Behind need special attention and psychological support.

More in general, educators face many constraints when dealing with children of labour migrants: insufficient practical experience, insufficient supply or lack of methodological manuals; insufficient psychological/didactic knowledge; reluctance of children to establish contacts; insufficient willingness of teachers and guardians to cooperate with schools.

The issue of Children of Labour Migrants should be addressed at the national level by means of provision of reasonable labour and living conditions to Ukrainians and the legislation on labour migration should be improved. Additional measures to improve the situation of Children of Labour Migrants may include the simplification of the visa regime, the organisation of visits of children to their parents on holidays; carry out additional work with these children by psychologists and teachers.

The research work allowed indirectly raising an additional issue namely the many difficulties in the Ukrainian contemporary education system mainly due to the lack of funding to provide to a wide range of needs (equipment, supply etc)¹⁴. The most acute problem is the very low teachers’ wages¹⁵. As a result, teachers have low motivations. Last but not least, especially in village schools, school psychologists and social educators are not enough to supply the needs of Children Left Behind.

¹⁴ School directors revealed that to prepare school to the new academic years they needed parents’ financial contributions. In particular, parents purchased the necessary material, worked in schools themselves or paid to hire workers. District budgets only allocate funding for particularly serious repair works

¹⁵For example, the highest wage reaches about UAH 1800 (about USD 230).

1.1.2 Recommendations

Finally, the following proposals have been elaborated to address the issue of Children of Labour Migrants:

- **psychosocial counselling** for Children of Labour Migrants after the departure of parents to overcome the psychological distress;
- **additional extra-curricular work** consisting in e.g. hobby groups, optional courses and community –based initiatives to sensitise the local community. The use of alternative methods like the use of films and documentaries is also recommended.
- **regular meetings between educators and Children of Labour Migrants**, with a view to share problems, have an advice and communicate, and establish a trustful relationship.
- **regular meetings between parents** (group and individual meetings) **and school psychologists**, in order to discuss on issues such as: the preparation of the children to parents' departure; the support of children in the period of parents' absence, the re-establishment of the relationship between children and parents after their return, etc. Group meetings would allow parents to share their experience with others and find common solutions. On the other hand, individual meetings would allow them to identify tailored solutions for the specific family.
- **regular meetings between guardians** (group and individual meetings) **and school psychologists** in order to support them in the resolution of conflicts with children; to enhance learning performance, to accompany the children in the process of adaptation after parents' departure, etc.
- **upgrade of teachers methodology to cope with the special needs of Children Left Behind**. To this end, consultations with school psychologists and training (e.g. on how to deal with conflict situations in classes or between children and teachers, to motivate children of labour migrants) are needed as well as the use of new educational tools (e.g. interactive learning methods, seminars).
- **professional upgrade of school psychologists** so as to upgrade their methodological approach. This can be done through the provision of methodological manuals; updated didactic material (e.g. videos, information material), and information on the experience of other countries in the same field.
- **organisation of “Saturdays or Sunday Schools”** consisting in meetings of guardians and parents with teachers, school psychologists, medical specialists who should provide guardians with the necessary information and advice on education matters,

psychological support of children and health care.

- **regular meetings at the District centres level** with the involvement of representatives of all facilities that deal with the problem of Children of Labour Migrants. This activity would allow them to coordinate their actions and join their efforts to address common goals.

To address the issue of Children of Labour Migrants, it is also recommended:

- **to address the issue at the national level** e.g. improving relevant legislation and simplifying the visa regime and processing for Ukrainian women who intend to migrate for working reasons. The irregular status of migrant women impedes their travel home and the stay with children.
- to organise **children's visits to parents** working abroad.
- to use schemes such as **seasonal work or short-term employment** to avoid a long separation between mothers and children¹⁶.
- to **foster the use of new communication tools** (e.g. Skype) to enhance communication between children and parents abroad. Such tools also provide an 'emotional sharing' which is very important for both mothers and children¹⁷.

¹⁶ E.g. An old woman from Petrivtsi village takes cares of her 8 years-old grandson whose mother works in Italy. The old woman works herself in Italy. She works for 6 months and returns home for other 6 months. When she is working in Italy, the grandfather take care of his grandson.

¹⁷ For example, the children can show school works and other objects which pertain to his/her day-by day life.

1.2 The Psychosocial training and the Creative Laboratories

In line with the findings emerged during the preliminary assessment and the research, in January and February 2010 a Training of Trainers (TOT) program was conceptualised by the IOM Rome Psychosocial and Cultural Integration Unit and implemented in Ukraine, addressed to teachers and the local NGO “Suchasnik” of Chernivtsi and the NGO “Revival of the Nation” of Ternopil, with a view to enhance the school capacity to cope with Children Left Behind special needs.

The ToT Psychosocial Workshop consisted of 2 training for a group of 24 teachers and psychosocial workers for each training, in Petrivtsi village and in Terebovlia town. The training aimed at providing local educators with new forms of work with Children Left Behind. More specifically, it introduced, in line with Ukrainian cultural values and local traditions, the psychosocial and anthropological approach to internal and international migrations with the use of active and experiential tools pertaining to the field of transnational identities, intergenerational dimension of the migratory experience and intercultural communication and mediation.

Following the ToT session and discussions within the Italian Ukrainian Observatory on Migration¹⁸, the local community of Petrivtsi and Terebovlia expressed the wish to carry



out respectively, in addition to the Creative Laboratories, Sports and Theatre activities.

In addition to the transfer of competences, the above work had the specific scope to promote the cohesion of the community around the issue of Families Left Behind.



Creative Laboratories for children in cooperation with the above-mentioned local NGOs were carried out and intended to support Children Left Behind and the community itself in the elaboration of their distress and in the activation of resilience. The Creative Laboratory should be meant as an alternative methodology to identify the special needs of Child Left Behind and positive ways to establish a new relation with parents living abroad.

¹⁸ In particular, on the Micro projects. For more details, please see the following chapter.

Students from 6 to 18 years-old were divided in small groups and involved in a series of activities which include mask and narrative laboratories, as well as the use of theatre performances, role-playing and other techniques through which the same topics discussed with the teachers in the ToT has been tackled.

The experience not only activated creative abilities of participants but open them to art. In the creation of objects, participants expressed a profound content and their works showed the most intimate and painful feelings, feelings of Children Left Behind or mothers – and fathers - living abroad. Common objects were presented using proverbs and songs. Some inter-relationships were skillfully performed in mini-plays.

The Creative Laboratories were 12 and involved 253 scholars. Children were not only active participants but they open their potential creativity and the possibility to work in the team. The experience gave the possibility to children to share their intimate dimension to the other participants. Even those who initially assumed a closed attitude open gradually to others. Children created mini-plays, concerts and poetic pieces. Some of them expressed their wish to volunteer in the NGOs to conduct the same work in the future. The atmosphere of trust between teacher and pupils established a sincere inter-communication.



The Creative Laboratories achieved their purpose of establishing a connection between children and teens and teachers and creating a harmony among them. They also make sensitized educators on the needs of Children Left Behind to establish a new relation with their migrant parents, with the school and the educators themselves.

The most valuable achievements of the trainings were poems which were written in the process of work:

Хай мама прийде,

Хай мама прийде,
Хай мама назавжди зі мною буде,
Бо так не буває на світі
Щоб були залишені діти!

(Робота групи, що була у ролі залишених дітей).

Мої думки, здається, мають крила
Щодня вони летять до тебе, мамо мила
У сні б я океан переплила
Лише б з тобою поруч, мамочко, була

(Поезія учасниці, що була в ролі залишеної дитини).

*You, my child, are far away from me
I always fly to you
Although I am afraid of the sea because of its deepness
But I swim to you, my dear
Let your angel smile to you
Not be sad, your father is near you*

(Poem written by a participant playing the role of a migrant mother)

1.3 *The Pedagogical Guidelines for teachers*

The experience of the Training and Creative Laboratories put the basis to the outline of Guidelines for teachers which are intended to be guidance to schools affected by the phenomenon of Children Left Behind. Also a ToT session addressed to teachers working in schools not directly involved in the project activities was carried out which contributed to the elaboration of the above methodological tool. More specifically, the ToT session took place in 2010, in the Institute of Post-Graduate Pedagogical Education of the “Borys Grinchenko” of the University of Kiev and involved 24 teachers. The ToT is intended as a mainstreaming activity therefore to replicate and disseminate the experience carried out in the project local communities in Ukrainian relevant institutions.

For details on the Pedagogical Guidelines please refer to the specific IOM publication ‘Transnational Families: pedagogical guidelines for teachers’, carried out in the framework of the present project.

2 *The Institutional Dialogue*

2.1 *The Italian Ukrainian Observatory on Migration and the Cooperation Agenda*

The Italian Ukrainian Observatory on Migration was created with a view to promote a direct and decentralised cooperation between Italian and Ukrainian territories so as to support Ukraine in its effort to reduce the negative consequences of migration on families left behind. More specifically it envisaged:

- discussion on gaps and needs of local institutions and services
- discussion and elaboration of strategies on how to respond to the special needs of Children Left Behind and the situation of Ukrainian women working in Italy
- promotion of the understanding of decentralised cooperation among Ukrainian institutions
- elaboration of new projects on the basis of needs emerged within the forum discussions

Additionally, it intended to track project activities and interim results so as to ensure their sustainability. More specifically it envisaged:

- presentation of results of the analysis on the situation of Children Left Behind carried out in the schools of Terebovlia (Region of Ternopil) and Petrivtsi (Region of Chernivtsi)
- presentation of results of the Training, Creative Laboratories and of the Pedagogical Guidelines
- discussion on the challenges of the Ukrainian community in Italy

Participants of the Observatory are the International Organisation for Migration; the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs; the Ukrainian Ministry of Family, Youth and Sport; the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science; the Region of Chernivtsi and Ternopil (Ukraine); the Villages of Upper and Lower Petrivtsi (Ukraine); the City of Terebovlia (Ukraine); the Italian Regions of Campania, Emilia Romagna, Umbria and Veneto. Among local bodies, the Municipality of Rome and Reggio Emilia. Among CSOs, the Association of Ukrainian Working Women in Italy, Associazione Ucraina Più, CIDIS Onlus, Punto Incontro Madreperla, RECOSOL- Rete Comuni Solidali, Soleterre, Suchasnyk, Revival of the Nation; The theatre Suzirya. The research institute CeSPi

- Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale, the vocational training body ENAIP (Ente Nazionale Acli Istruzione Professionale) and East Europe Foundation.

The Italian Ukrainian Observatory on Migration met 4 times in Italy and Ukraine¹⁹.

The main results achieved by the Observatory are the elaboration of a Cooperation Agenda and the development and implementation of projects based on the needs expressed by Ukrainian territories involved in the forum i.e. the Micro projects²⁰.

More specifically, based on commonly agreed strategic areas, a Cooperation agenda identifying the main gaps and needs in the field of migration has been drafted and signed by the participants the participants of the Italian-Ukrainian Observatory on Migration²¹.

The Cooperation agenda highlights the following areas of cooperation:

A) - Capacity Building of institutions, educational and healthcare bodies as well as third sector organizations to support planning and management of policies and services aimed at families in difficulty (including families in difficulty separated by emigration)

B) - Promotion of local socio-economic development

More specifically, under letter A):

- 1) Strengthen the capacity of Ukrainian public bodies and civil society organizations to plan and manage services for families in difficulty, including those separated by emigration.
- 2) Improve integration between social services that work with the various family members divided between Ukraine and Italy, both to favor exchange of practices and information as well as to find 'transnational solutions' for separated families.
- 3) Reinforce and update training for caseworkers and university students who work with at-risk young people and children with emigrant parents.

¹⁹ The project implemented a total of four meetings of the Observatory: the 1st meeting was held in Rome (14-15 of September 2009); the 2nd was held in Chernivtsi (23-24 February 2010); the 3rd was held in Rome (30 March 2010); and the 4th meeting was held in Turin (19 June 2010).

²⁰ For more details on the Micro projects, please see the following paragraph.

²¹ Please see in annex to the chapter the original version of the Agenda of Cooperation; kindly note that the signatures' process is still under completion.

4) Develop the capacity to define the problem in quantitative terms, creating a national database that indicates the number of young people with emigrant parents, the types of services they use and which they need.

5) Promote the link between remittances (individual and collective) and social services in Ukraine.

More specifically, under letter B):

- 1) Reinforce local income-generating activities through the promotion of small businesses, the social enterprise sector and commercial connections between Italy and Ukraine as well as through the reinforcement of the credit access system. More concretely through:
- 2) Use remittances for the promotion of local social and economic development;
- 3) Promote youth aggregation and support local social and recreational structures dedicated to youth.
- 4) Increase job opportunities in the summer centers with a view to promote exchange visits between Italian and Ukrainian youngsters.
- 5) Maintain active the Italian-Ukrainian Observatory on Migration through the creation of coordination networks in Italy and Ukraine.

The Observatory intends to keep alive the dialogue among the participants - and possibly involve additional entities – in order to foster the achievement of the Agenda of Cooperation's goals.

For details on the Italian Ukrainian Observatory on Migration and the Cooperation Agenda, please refer to the publication: 'Migration and Development between Italy and Ukraine: a road to decentralized co-operation', carried out in the framework of the present project.

COOPERATION AGENDA

between members of the Italian-Ukrainian Observatory on Migration

Introduction

The opening of borders in 1991 and the transformations connected with the transition from a planned economy to a market economy brought about a significant migratory flow from Ukraine to Italy. The fundamental causes of this intense emigration towards Italy were unemployment, low wages, increases in the cost of living, privatization, the lack of housing, and the deterioration of welfare services.

Experts estimate that from 1 to 3 million Ukrainian workers currently live abroad that correspond to app. 5.1% of the working age population. In 2008¹, Italy was the fourth most popular destination country of Ukrainian emigrants after Russia, Poland and the Czech Republic and absorbed 8% of the migratory flow. In 2008, it was the second most popular destination country after Russia and absorbed 13% of the country's migration flow.

According to the Ukrainian State Committee for Statistics, 83% of the migratory flow directed towards Italy comes from four regions: Chernivtsi, Ternopil, Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk. Chernivtsi and Ternopil in particular are the regions of origin of a massive migration chain: almost 50% of the emigrants who depart from Chernivtsi and 33% of the emigrants from Ternopil arrive in Italy. According to the Italian body for Statistics, five regions absorb the majority of the flow from Ukraine: 69.2% of Ukrainians live in Campania, Lombardy, Lazio, Emilia Romagna and Veneto.

Research indicates that emigration from Ukraine to Italy is constituted mainly by women: these are mostly older women (45% are over the age of 40), with dependent children who are mainly employed in the domestic and caregiving sectors. The feminization of Ukrainian emigration to Italy is strongly influenced by high employment demand in the family assistance sector in the Italian market – has created specific opportunities and problems.

One of the most tangible opportunities and the positive impact brought by this migration outflow on the growth of social well-being in Ukraine is money remitted by the emigrant women who earn 7% more than men and direct their earnings to health and education services to the areas where their children reside. Exposure to a different culture, working ethics and opportunities to learn the language should also be stressed.

As far as problems and difficulties, female emigration contributes to the destabilization of families, which in their absence, are deprived of the main caregiving figure. Minors and the elderly, the most vulnerable subjects within the family, experience the greatest difficulty and that, in turn, has an impact on local social institutions and their capacity to respond to the needs of vulnerable individuals. Specifically, services are forced to address increasingly complex situations and to identify new strategies and resources to resolve them.

The condition of Ukrainian women workers in Italy is very difficult due to their strong social isolation, to the hard working conditions (e.g. they are not regularized by the employer; often the workload is higher than the one established by laws) and to the distress caused by the separation from their children left-behind in Ukraine. It should be also highlighted that the mayor push factor to emigration is the need to ensure a future to their children and that the first investment sector of remittances is the education of children.

The project: "Capacity building activity to help local Ukrainian institutions to reinforce migration, social and educational policy targeting children, women and local communities"

The Italian-Ukrainian Observatory on Migration was established under the auspices of the above-mentioned project, in order to promote the creation of an inter-institutional network of decentralized cooperation to favor dialogue between Italy and Ukraine and stimulate real exchange and a holistic and articulated perspective of migration.

During the various meetings of the Italian-Ukrainian Observatory on Migration, the issue of young people whose parents have emigrated appeared particularly complex. Local government departments and services, academic institutions and various NGOs brought significant experience on these themes. *These entities clearly stated the need for continued progress towards improving the conditions of a new generation of Ukrainians living without one or both parents.*

Considering the existence of consolidated migration chains that link specific regions and cities in Italy and Ukraine, as well as the presence in Italian regions of skills and resources that could contribute to the socio-economic development process in Ukraine, members of the Italian-Ukrainian Observatory on Migration chose to collaborate through decentralized cooperation. *In particular, the Regions of Emilia Romagna and Veneto in Italy and the Regions of Ternopil and Chernivtsi in Ukraine work to create a network for the concerted promotion of co-development projects.*

Also considering:

- The need to address the root causes of emigration;¹
- The importance of alleviating the negative consequences of female emigration on their families and children in particular while at the same time promoting the positive aspects of migration and opportunities associated with it;
- Improve the living conditions of women working in Italy by promoting their social inclusion on one hand and an upgrade of their professional skills on the other.

And given:

- The resources of the main Italian cities of destination where Ukrainian communities have settled, the dynamic business structure of the Veneto region and the strength of the welfare system in the Emilia Romagna region;
- The requests of the main representatives from the Ternopil and Chernivtsi regions that identify reinforcing the local socio-economic fabric as the best way to manage international migration and improve its effects on the local contexts.

Participants in the Italian-Ukrainian Observatory on Migration agree on the need to develop cooperation initiatives that support the following:

A) - Capacity Building of institutions, educational and healthcare bodies as well as third sector organizations to support planning and management of policies and services aimed at families in difficulty (including families in difficulty separated by emigration);

B) - Promotion of local socio-economic development.

More specifically, under the auspices of the strand A), participants in the Italian-Ukrainian Observatory on Migration agree on the need to:

- 1) **Strengthen the capacity of Ukrainian public bodies and civil society organizations to plan and manage services for families in difficulty, including those separated by emigration.**

¹ Communication by the Commission to the Council and to the European Parliament on Immigration and Asylum Policies [COM(94) 23].

RK

- 2) Improve integration between social services that work with the various family members divided between Ukraine and Italy, both to favour exchange of best practices and information as well as to find new transnational solutions for separated families.
- 3) Reinforce and update the training offerings for caseworkers and university students who work with at-risk young people and children with emigrant parents.
- 4) Develop the capacity to define the problem in quantitative terms, creating a national database that indicates the number of young people with emigrant parents, the types of services they use and which they need.
- 5) Promote the link between remittances (individual and collective), social services in Ukraine.

More specifically, under the auspices of the strand B), participants in the Italian-Ukrainian Observatory on Migration agree on the need to:

- 1) Reinforce local income-generating activities through the promotion of micro and small businesses, the social enterprise sector and commercial connections between Italy and Ukraine as well as through the reinforcement of the credit access system.

More concretely through:

- a feasibility study on the credit access conditions in Ukraine and on the functioning of the credit system;
- crafting opportunities for young people who intend to start-up a micro/small business;
- the empowerment of the already exiting occupational centres.

- 2) Use remittances for the promotion of local social and economic development;
- 3) Promote youth aggregation and support local social and recreational structures dedicated to youth.
- 4) Increase short term employment opportunities during holiday season with a view to promote exchange visits between Italian and Ukrainian youngsters.

Finally, considering the results in terms of a increased knowledge on the phenomenon and the wide involvement of stakeholders in the process,

- 5) Maintain active the Italian-Ukrainian Observatory on Migration through the creation of coordination networks that establish a parallel connection between Italy and Ukraine.

In both countries, the meetings will be coordinated by IOM and will be open to additional members i.e. regions, provinces and municipalities, as well as NGOs, social enterprises, chambers of commerce, financial institutions, healthcare and academic institutions, universities, and entrepreneurs' associations. The aim of the Observatory is to maintain and extend decentralized inter-institutional dialogue to debate the issues linked to migration, identify the positive aspects brought by migration and address its profound causes and improve its impact in contexts of arrival and origin. Moreover, the Observatory

aims to identify and promote operational strategies with regard to the above-mentioned objectives, serving a project development and fundraising function.

The Emilia Romagna Region declares its availability, in response to specific requests from the Ukrainian counterpart, to contribute with its know-how in the implementation of the activities connected to the strand A).

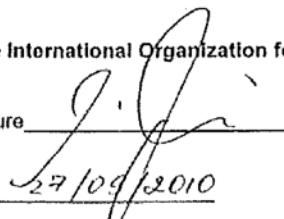
The Veneto Region declares its availability, in response to specific requests from the Ukrainian counterpart, to contribute with its know-how in the implementation of the activities connected to the strand B).

Two versions of the above respectively in Italian and Ukrainian language are enclosed and constitute integral part of the Cooperation agenda.

Under the auspices of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs - General Directorate for Development Cooperation,

The Members of the Italian-Ukrainian Migration Observatory:

For the International Organization for Migration,

Signature 

date 27/09/2010

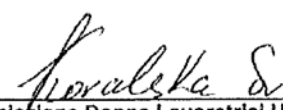
Mission in Ukraine, Manfred Profazi

Signature _____

date _____

Mission in Rome, Carmela Godeau

In Italy:


Signature 

For Associazione Donne Lavoratrici Ucraine In Italia (Association of Ukrainian Working Women in Italy), Svillana Kovalska

date 22/07/2010

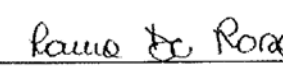
Signature _____
For Associazione Ucraina Più (Association Ukraine More),
Tamara Pozdnyakova

date _____

Signature 

For Centro Studi di Politica Internazionale, CeSPI, Flavia Piperno

date 22/07/2010

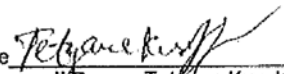
Signature 

date 22/07/2010


For CIDIS Onlus, Laura De Rosa

Signature _____
For Comune di Reggio Emilia (Italia), Daniela Castelli

date _____

Signature 
For Comune di Roma, Tetyana Kuzyk

date 22.07.2010.

Signature 
For Ente Nazionale Acli Istruzione Professionale - ENAIP, Carmelina Nicola

date 22/07/2010

Signature _____
For Punto Incontro Madreperla, Reggio Emilia, Marya Holik

date _____

Signature 
For Rete Comuni Solidali - RECOSOL, Lorenzo Sola

date 22/07/2010

Signature _____
For the Regione Emilia Romagna, Marco Capodaglio

date _____

Signature _____
For the Regione Veneto, Stefano Zucchetta

date _____

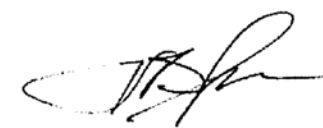
Signature _____
For Solèrre, Alessandro Baldo

date _____

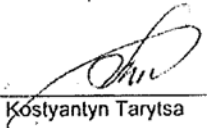
In Ukraine:

Signature 
For Chernivtsi Region, Yuliya Yakivchek

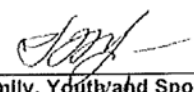
date 22.07.2010

Signature 
For East Europe Foundation, Viktor Liakh

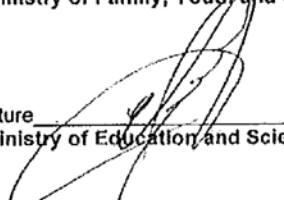
date 22/07/2010.

Signature 
For Lower Petrivtsi, Kostyantyn Tarytsa

date 20.10.2010

Signature 
For Ministry of Family, Youth and Sports, Svitlana Tolstouhova

date 18/08/2010

Signature 
For Ministry of Education and Science, Oleg Ieresko

date 22/07/10

Signature 
For Revival of the Nation, Halyna Kravets

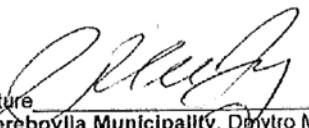
date 22/07/10

Signature 
For Suchasnyk, Elvira Muchakovska

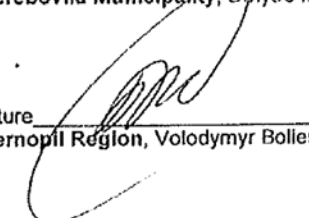
date 22/07/2010

Signature 
For Suzirya theatre, Oleksii Kuzhelnyi

date 22.07.2010

Signature 
For Terebovlla Municipality, Dmytro Mykhailiuk

date 22.07.2010

Signature 
For Ternopil Region, Volodymyr Bolleschuk

date 15.08.2010

2.2 The Micro Projects

An additional result of the Observatory activity is the development of ‘micro projects’ based on specific needs raised during the meetings by Ukrainian local institutions. The micro projects have the characteristic of addressing the issue of Children Left Behind targeting the needs of the local communities as a whole²².

The ‘Skype project’

The ‘Skype project’ aimed at facilitating the communication between separated mothers and children using the popular and simple-to-use internet, the software Skype and the computer.

The project envisaged the supply of Skype equipment to the schools of Petrivsti and the training on how to use it to educators and pupils. Since the preliminary phase, local stakeholders highlighted how the use of such tool is able to facilitate a periodical contact among mothers abroad and children at home.

In the framework of the component ‘Empowerment of Ukrainian women’²³, the same project has been implemented in Italy through the provision of IT and Skype training to Ukrainian women working in Italy. Approximately 45 women were trained in Rome and Turin on how to use the computer and on Skype programme.



²² The local communities are the Municipality of Terebovlia and the Villages of Upper and Lower Petrivsti.

²³ Please see following chapter.

Both in Ukraine and Italy the project has obtained a big success and women in particular expressed their wish to continue the training to acquire a better know-how.



The Sports workshops²⁴

Sport was used as an educational tool for the social integration of children in the school. The project was implemented by ENAIP and is based on the idea that sport is a training and educational tool able to produce a significant change at the level of complex relational systems such as that found in schools; it is based on the theory that sport is an ideal integration tool.

The sports workshop also intended to sensitize the local community as well as to transfer competences local educators can use to strengthen the sense of community within the school.



²⁴ A specific report has been produced on the Sports workshops based on the training of Stefano Farina. For more details on the report please contact The International Organisation of Migration, Missions of Italy or Ukraine.

The Theatre Performance

A theatre performance of the Nobel Prize winner Maurice Maeterlinck “Blue Bird” was played by a professional theatre group for the students of the schools of Terebovlia. The play touched the issue of motherhood at distance.

Within the scope of the project, the theatre was used as a way to sensitize, strengthen the sense of community and as an artistic mean to elaborate the distress caused by the separation from parents.



2.3 *The survey on Labour Migration in Ukraine*²⁵

A survey on Labour migration in Ukraine was carried out with the aim to have an updated overview on the situation Children Left-Behind in contemporary Ukraine, to double-check the existence of specific provisions addressing their needs and to highlight potential measures to meet the above needs.

The problem of Children of Labour Migrants who stay in Ukraine unattended by their parents is rather acute. According to data of the Ministry of Family, Youth and Sport of Ukraine, there are about 200.000 of Children Left Behind in Ukraine. In regions with a consistent labour migration flow, up to a quarter of children are grown up by one parent. In particular, in Ternopil, 25.5% of children going to school have one parent working abroad, while 4.2% of them have both their parents abroad. Children remaining without parental care are mainly adolescents thus in a period of life where the parental guidance for a constructive development of the individual is particularly needed.

It also emerged that Children of Labour Migrants lack consistently of important communication with their mothers for a long time. According to a survey²⁶, 30% of Children Left-Behind communicated with their mothers in the last 6 months; however, 13% of them could not communicate with parents for 6 - 12 month (7% for 1 - 2 years, and 5% - for over 2 years²⁷).

The survey also highlights a potential risk connected to the current change of Ukrainian migration from a temporary migration into a permanent migration. While initially labour migrants intended to get the highest economic benefit in the shortest time possible and return to Ukraine, more experienced migrants tend to settle abroad permanently. Considering that migrants women tend to stay abroad longer and that the country is now facing an economic crisis which affects more women than men, this trend is getting more consistent. In addition, labour migrants that reached a higher

living and social protection standards are less likely to return to Ukraine. This situation would also promote the trend of reunification of migrants' families (in the destination country) thus resulting in a 'double lost' for Ukraine: labour migrants and their children.

Referring to the legal-institutional framework, there are some provisions which refer to Children of Labour Migrants in addition to general laws and regulations pertaining to children's rights. More specifically, the Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of December 25, 2007 on the organisation of socio-educational and psychological work with Children of Labour Migrants which requires that psychologists-practitioners, sociologists and social educators respond to the special needs of these children. Also, the Inter-ministerial Order of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Family Youth and Sport, the Ministry of Labour and Interior Affairs on the approval of procedures for the cooperation among stakeholders in the area of social work to respond to the needs of families in difficult circumstances. The Order seeks to improve coordination of activities of relevant services of the above ministries.

A step forward in the direction of protecting Children Left Behind, is the draft law of 2008 to amend some legislative acts in order to protect children with migrant parent. The draft law proposes to amend the Civil Code of Ukraine and the Family Code of Ukraine in the sense of institutionalising temporary care and guardianship over children with migrant parents. This provision would ensure a minimum institutional protection of minors towards guardians as well as facilitate the latter in the implementation of formal steps relating to the life of the minor.

Although some steps forward has been done, the legal-institutional framework picture needs to be reinforced in order to ensure a substantial protection of new generations left behind by their migrants' parents. In doing so, relevant institutions should take into consideration the irregular way which often characterizes individual migration projects and its impact in the protection of Children Left Behind.

²⁵The research 'Labour Migration from Ukraine: A survey' was carried out, in the framework of the project, by O. Malynoska. For more details on the work, please contact The International Organisation of Migration, Missions of Italy or Ukraine.

²⁶The survey on migrants' children was conducted by La Strada and the Ukraine International Human Rights Women's Centre in 2006

²⁷Problems of Children of Labour Migrants: the Situation Analysis. – Kyiv, 2006.

3 *The Empowerment Of Ukrainian Women In Italy*

In line with the project strategy consisting in the promotion of a real and direct communication between Italy and Ukraine and having in mind a circular vision of the migratory process, this component addressed the needs of women working in Italy. More specifically, the project supported women integration and empowerment through their active participation in the inter-institutional dialogue²⁸ and in the project's actions.

To this end, more than 100 women were involved in focus group discussions in the Regions of Campania and Umbria, Piedmont and Lazio²⁹. In addition, 3 psychosocial focus groups were carried out to investigate the psychosocial impact of migration on Ukrainian migrants' mothers working in Italy and, more specifically, of separation from children.

The experience of Ukrainian migrants in Italy was analyzed through three dimensions: their migratory process, their social-cultural integration strategies and the management of long-distance motherhood.

It emerged a strong sense of responsibility towards their children and their education. Constraints tackled by women relates to the institutional sphere: the conditions to acquire a regular work permit; the access to information and services; the respect of individual rights; the slowness of the bureaucratic machine. Other to the woman's individual dimension: the missing of the family and children; the fear of disappointing them and the ability to find strategies to cope with these difficulties.

Some women describe the relationship with their children as difficult, not only for the impact that the distance has on the mother-child relationship but also for the tiring process of family reunification, for the absence of the father, and/or for the difficult phase which is the adolescence.

There is also a strong feeling that time spent away from children can never be recuperated and of pain and guilt because children do not understand the enormous sacrifice which migration imply. It also emerges that women migratory process has at

²⁸ Many were the associations of women which participated to the Italian Ukrainian Observatory on Migration and contributed to the elaboration of the agenda of cooperation and more in general in the implementation of project activities.

²⁹ More specifically, 15 in Caserta; 15 in Naples; 15 in Foligno; 15 in Giuliano; 30 in Rome and 15 in Turin.

the same time a family mandate and individual motivations.

Finally, the main outcome of the psychosocial focus groups with Ukrainian domestic workers and caregivers is their social and institutional invisibility: an acute emotional and psychological distress is connected to the separation from children on one side and a substantial lack of rights and social support on the other.

An additional action towards empowerment women was the already mentioned basic computer literacy courses carried out for migrant women working in Italy with a view to facilitate their communication with Children Left Behind.

For details on the outcomes of this component, please refer to the IOM publication: 'Life's Stories' carried out in the framework of the present project.

Conclusions

In connection with the consistent labour migration flow of women towards Italy - and the Mediterranean European Union countries more in general - initiated at the end of the 90s beginning of 2000, a social phenomenon in Western Ukraine³⁰ developed consisting in the existence of a huge number of families without women and mothers (or sometimes even fathers) which is negatively affecting the intellectual and emotional growth of children and adolescents.

According to estimates of the Ukrainian Ministry of Family, Youth and Sport of Ukraine, there are approximately 200.000 Children Left Behind in Ukraine mainly adolescents without parental care in a period of their life where parental guidance is particularly needed for a positive growth of the individual. On the long run, the impact of this phenomenon on Ukrainian society is still unknown.

The lack of parental care often results in deviant behaviour, aggressiveness, drug and alcohol abuse, among others. Migrants' children tend to experience psychological problems, consumerism and emigration intentions. At the same time, it increases their sense of independence, auto-discipline and responsibility.

On the other hand, Southern Europe became a major destination area of Ukrainian migrant women. In particular, Italy occupies the second place in the range of preferred destination countries and constitutes the country of destination of a quarter of Ukrainian labour migrants' women³¹.

Ukrainian women, as the other migrants' women, assumed a significant role becoming decision makers in the process of migration and in the elaboration of the migratory project. Sense of responsibility and commitment to family ties make migrants' women more reliable vis-à-vis the special needs of children.

On the other hand, they tend more to accept unstable jobs for a lower salary without social protection although many of them are high-skilled and have a professional experience. In the country of destination - including Italy – many of these women

³⁰ More specifically, the regions of Chernivsti, Ternopil, Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk

³¹In 2001, Italy was located only at the fourth place. From: Ukraine State Committee for Statistics, 2008.

are engaged in the care sector thus losing their human capital. Domestic workers are invisible to society and the fact of working in private houses reduces the possibilities to monitor the respect of the law. *Although gender migration is a wide and significant phenomenon, regulations and policies in place are not sufficient to safeguard migrant women who often work in conditions of total isolation in the receiving countries.*

The project intended to give a small contribution to reduce the negative effects on Children of Labour Migrants of the labour migration of mothers and to enhance the living conditions of migrant women in Italy. Its main results can be summarized as follow:

- The condition of Ukrainian children and teenagers in the target schools was improved thanks to the supportive social-educational program involving the entire local community. The program strengthened the local capacities to improve their self-reliance when dealing with the consequences of women migration.
- Local institutions and school service providers involved increased their knowledge on the complexity of migration and their competences on strategic planning and management of social-educational policies. In this direction goes the decision of the Chernivtsi Regional Administration to set-up a database on Children of Labour Migrants living in region³². The Region will also lobby vis-à-vis the County Governor to grant to this group the status of children belonging to vulnerable groups which would entitle them to access social welfare benefits.
- Thanks to the institutional dialogue within the Italian Ukrainian Observatory on Migration, a Cooperation Agenda containing specific areas of work was elaborated and signed by more than 20 entities among governmental and non governmental bodies in Ukraine and Italy which constitutes a starting point for the future cooperation between the two countries in this field.
- Women involved in the project were empowered through training and their active participation to the institutional debate. From the latter, new collaborative partnerships between Italian entities and Ukrainian women associations started and are giving the chance to women to upgrade their know-how and experience.

³²Although data is still incomplete and relates only to those children whose parents left Ukraine legally, the numbers are alarming: over 10,000 children left behind live in the region, among them over 4,000 children live

Final considerations

Further to the specific results of the project, some final considerations can be outlined:

- Ukrainian school system - in the areas affected by consistent gender migration - needs to be supported referring to the issue of Children Left Behind
- Children Left Behind should be considered as a vulnerable group in order to access social programs and/or other benefits
- Transnational responses involving stakeholders 'here and there' should be strongly supported. In a globalised world also services should be globalised. The activation of a direct cooperation between local services in Italy - or other countries of destination of women - and Ukraine would facilitate the identification of positive responses to the special needs of Children Left Behind.
- Some nodal points should be addressed at the central institutions level:
 - Cooperation between the two countries is essential to improve the living conditions of Ukrainian women in Italy, first of all to ensure their regular presence in Italy. This automatically benefits Children Left Behind considering that mothers and children would meet more often thus allowing women to participate more on children's life.
 - Circular migration schemes could be a very useful tool to increase professional competencies of women and to facilitate their return home (women could invest their know-how locally e-g. starting-up micro business).





IOM • OIM

For more info contact:

International Organisation for Migration
Psychosocial and Cultural Integration Unit
Via Palestro 1, 00185 Rome

Tel. + (39) 0687420967 or 0644231428 Fax + (39) 0687450018
website: www.italy.iom.int email: psycho@iom.int

