

***A REPORT ON STATE OF
RIGHTS AND POSITION OF
ROMA WOMEN IN
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA***



***Roma Women Association
"Bolja budućnost" Tuzla
In Tuzla, 2023***

**A Report on State of Rights and Position of the Roma Women in Bosnia and Herzegovina
Roma Women Association “Bolja budućnost”, Tuzla**

IMPRESSUM

Author:

Saliha Đuderija, MA

Appearance and design:

“OFF SET” Štamparija Tuzla

Proofreading and translation:

Translation agency „prijevodi.ba“

Publisher:

Roma Women Association “Bolja budućnost”, Tuzla

For the Publisher:

Indira Bajramović

Printed by:

“OFF SET” Štamparija Tuzla

Print run:

This document was published with support and in co-operation with:



The contents of this document do not reflect the opinions of the “Kvinna till Kvinna” Foundation. A full responsibility for its contents is born by its author and Roma Women Association “Bolja budućnost” Tuzla. The contents of the document or its parts cannot be copied and used without the prior consent of the publisher.

Foreword

The first Report on State of Rights and Position of Roma Women in Bosnia and Herzegovina was developed by the Roma Women Association “Bolja budućnost” from Tuzla with the support of the “Kvinna till Kvinna” Foundation as part of the project “*Progress in the Integration of Roma, as well as the Progress of Bosnia and Herzegovina on its Way to the European Union*”.

Thanks to this support, we got a wonderful opportunity to encourage Roma women to make their contributions and express their opinions about their position inside the community and inside the Bosnian and Herzegovinian society, and the opportunity to point out the key problems that they encounter every day. The contribution of the donor and other institutions that support these research activities is very important for Roma women. It helps us in developing our capacities and improving the research activities of Roma women associations, the Roma women network “Uspjeh”, and the work of activists on site inside the Roma communities. Projects which ensure the participation of marginalised women, and contribute to their social participation are important for us. We are extremely happy for the participation of 734 Roma women in this survey, as well as for the participation of Roma activists as part of the activities of focus groups, as they contributed to the quality of this report with their onsite fieldwork experiences.

We investigated the rights and position of Roma women, evaluating and confirming the thesis from other reports in which we stated that Roma women are exposed to double discrimination: for belonging to the Roma population, and for being women.

Within the same structure of questions, we decided to apply the method of evaluation of opinions of the Roma women and simultaneously through an on-site survey, we encouraged them for a long-term influence on changes within the community. We offered them a tool to start resolving key issues at the competent institutions in the whole area of Bosnia and Herzegovina, on their own or together with us.

We informed Roma women in the community that their most important attitudes will be publicly represented through the results of the research on the position and rights of Roma women. After completion of the research, a joint representation of the recommendations for authority institutions follows, focusing on obstacles that Roma women encounter, and advocating sustainable solutions in public.

Recommendations are the tool that will help us figure out actions of lobbying, as they are our signpost and tool of advocating at the domestic institutions and international organisations and all other women’s interest groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina, from which we ask for better and more direct support and actual co-operation.

These recommendations contain key guidelines dedicated to domestic institutions, institutions of the European Union and all other stakeholders involved in shaping public policies, strategies and support programmes. Their focus is on regularly addressing the needs and priorities of the Roma women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, ensuring that all these key problems are considered and integrated during the process of decision-making and implementation of the relevant initiatives. At the same time, the recommendations from this Report are orientation and means of advocating with the domestic institutions and international organisations, and all other relevant participants. We aim to get better and more direct support for the Roma women and the Roma community in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Indira Bajramović
Director of Roma Women Association
„Bolja budućnost” Tuzla

C O N T E N T S

Foreword.....	3
1. Introductory Notes	6
2. Methodology.....	8
3. Context.....	9
4. Legal Framework, Policies, Research.....	10
5. Thematic Gender Analysis.....	14
5.1. General Indicators – Living Conditions of the Roma Women	15
5.2. Access to Education.....	18
5.2.1. Roma Women on Children’s Education	20
5.3. Support in Employment.....	21
5.4. Attitude toward Gender-Based Violence.....	26
5.4.1. Attitude toward Family Violence – Children’s Position.....	28
5.4.2. Early Marriages.....	28
5.4.3. Child Labour.....	31
5.5. Health Care – Focus on Reproductive Rights and Children’s Health Care	32
5.5.1. Focus on Reproductive Rights	33
5.5.2. Children’s Access to the Health System.....	36
5.6. Political Participation of the Roma Women	38
5.7. Access to Public Utilities and Services – Attitudes of Institutions.....	41
5.7.1. Contact Point for Roma	41
5.7.2. Informing about Rights	42
5.7.3. What are the obstacles in exercising rights – The perception of the institutional representatives...	42
5.7.4. What are the obstacles in acquiring education – The perception of the institutional representatives	43
5.7.5. Obstacles in health care – The perception of the institutional representatives	44
5.7.6. Obstacles – Protection of victims of violence – The perception of the institutional representatives	44
5.7.7. Advantages of political participation of the Roma women – The Perception of the institutional representatives	45
6. Conclusions and Recommendations	46
6.1. Recommendations for the improvement of socio-economic position.....	46
6.2. Recommendations for the improvement in access to education	46
6.3. Recommendations for the improvement of the education of children.....	46
6.4. Recommendations for the improvement in employment	47
6.5. Recommendations for the improvement in protection from gender-based violence	48
6.6. Recommendations for the improvement in the protection of children	48
6.7. Recommendations for the improvement of the access to health care and reproductive rights	49

6.8. Recommendations for the improvement of children’s access to health system.....	49
6.9. Recommendations for the improvement in political participation.....	50
6.10. Recommendations for the improvement of access to public utilities and services.....	50

1. Introductory Notes

Roma Women Association “Bolja budućnost” Tuzla in all its activities, including this research on the rights and position of Roma women relies on the **Platform for improvement of rights and position of Roma Women in Bosnia and Herzegovina** which represents a definite contribution of Roma women to the antigypsism policy¹¹ and prevention of stereotypes and prejudice in the Bosnian and Herzegovinian society. Declaration of Western Balkans Partners on Roma integration within the EU Enlargement Process² serves as the initial point in the undertaken actions, mentioning several affirmative measures by which a significant status improvement of the Roma in all the Western Balkans signatory countries of this document is required, including Bosnia and Herzegovina too. According to the aim of the project, to which the conducted research belongs, it was important to take into consideration the *Opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina’s EU Membership Application (2022)*³ in the section that refers to the rule of law, competitiveness, and inclusion, i.e. chapters in which Roma inclusion is mentioned as one of the priorities, including the gender equality, and especially fight against any sort of discrimination.

By the above-stated, hereby we mention the activities continued after the adoption of the Strategy on the improvement of the status of Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the level of Bosnia and Herzegovina⁴. This is the moment when the implementation of multi-year activities started, especially through access to the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015. The Decade of Roma Inclusion obliged the states to implement specific but directed inclusive policies to improve the position of Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnia and Herzegovina planned and implemented all those activities through three action plans for Roma in the periods: 2009-2012, 2013-2016 and 2017-2020. Measures and activities within these plans were directed to the integration and inclusion of Roma in sectors foreseen by the above-mentioned Strategy, except for the field of education, which is in the jurisdiction of the entity and canton authorities. A separate action plan was developed for the field of education. Currently, all those activities for the social inclusion of Roma are implemented based on measures and activities contained within the *Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for social inclusion of Roma in the period 2021-2025*⁵, adopted on 20 April 2022, which comprised all the aims set out in the Poznan Declaration.

When it comes to the evaluation of the success of these policies, almost all the available government and non-government reports mainly state that the improvement is still limited, because a large number of Roma is still in an unfavourable position in comparison to the majority population. Most of the sources state that Roma women inside their community are in a worse position in comparison to men, but also in comparison to men and women of the majority population.

Reports in the text below, referring to Roma women point out the following key issues:

1. Enrollment rates on all education levels are lower for Roma, especially in secondary and higher education, and education results are also lower;

¹¹According to the definition of the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) made in 2011, antigypsism is a specific form of racism, an ideology founded on racial superiority, a form of dehumanisation and institutional racism nurtured by historical discrimination, which is expressed, among others, by violence, hate speech, exploitation, stigmatisation and the most blatant kind of discrimination.

² Declaration of Western Balkans Partners on Roma integration within the EU Enlargement Process, Poznan, 2019, available at: <https://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/files/admin/docs/254a1c8f78515efd8cf0a65c8d981160.pdf>

³ Analytical Report Opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU Membership Application SWD (2022) 336 final Report on Bosnia and Herzegovina for 2022 with the document Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on EU Enlargement Policy for 2022. Pg.: 35, 36, 37 and 84.

⁴ Strategy of Bosnia and Herzegovina for Resolving the Problems of Roma (Official Gazette of BiH, 67/05), available at: http://www.mhrr.gov.ba/ljudska_prava/Odbor_za_Rome/Strategija%20BIH%20za%20rjesavanje%20PROBLEMA%20Roma.pdf

⁵ Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for Social Inclusion of Roma for the Period 2021-2025. (Official Gazette BiH, 40/22)

2. Employment rates of Roma women are lower than rates of non-Roma men and women, and they are also lower than employment rates of Roma men;
3. The health condition of Roma women is worse than the health condition of non-Roma men and women;
4. Housing conditions of Roma women are worse than the housing conditions of non-Roma population, but it is similar to the situation of Roma men, although real estate are rarely registered on wife's or mother's name;
5. Roma women participate less in political and public life than Roma men, and by far less than the population from non-Roma communities;
6. Gender-based violence is an issue within Roma communities, just as it is in other ethnic groups, however, there are no data about greater incidence of victims that include Roma women than non-Roma women;
7. Most of the policies referring to the position of women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including those referring to the social inclusion of Roma population do not have developed any specific programmes directed at the support of Roma women inside the community, although they directly include certain measures for improvement of measures for better gender equality and prevention of discrimination.

It is especially important to emphasise that specific baseline indicators in certain fields are missing, which makes research significantly more difficult in certain segments.

When it comes to indicators, we notice further that there are no indicators of good quality to show the direct influence of the relevant policies on the improvement of the position of Roma women. There are few parameters which indicate everyday challenges for Roma women in terms of their position and rights, thus in this report we point out *the most important barriers in terms of gender perspective*:

1. From a gender perspective, we would like to emphasise that sector policies do not always consider gender as the priority;
2. Roma women often do not consider themselves as the target group of strategies/programmes and action plans (not even when certain problems have a direct impact on them, for example not attending school);
3. There is no classification by sex or gender sensitivity, or the existing ones are unsuitable, or the activities of action plans with gender sensitivity indicators are not implemented;
4. There is a similar tendency in the project criteria in which Roma women are not explicitly defined as the target group, and the indicators are not classified by sex or gender. However, there are some positive examples too;
5. Even if they are defined as the target group, there is no guarantee that these activities are really implemented, specific implementation indicators are missing because base tracking forms are not defined.

All the above-mentioned obstacles, among other things, were the base for conducting a gender-concept research (only for Roma women), aiming to prepare the relevant recommendations for lobbying and strengthening influence on government policies and actions for vulnerable Roma groups.

We emphasise the fact that most recommendations were prepared on the base of ***“Roma women perceptions, analysis of their opinions and understanding discrimination and general level of their inclusion in social life.”***

Additional result for the development of recommendations was made based on a survey with key institution representatives, i.e. analysis of their views on the topic: ***“Which and what kind of obstacles do Roma women encounter in institutions in which they exercise their rights or address the most”.***

Accepting this method, Roma Women Association “Bolja budućnost” Tuzla conducted the research with **734 Roma women**, aiming to provide insight into opinions of Roma women in terms of their current position and quality of support provided by the existing systems in the communities in which they live, with an additional survey with 30 representatives of the institutions with the aim to get their opinions on the same topics.

2. Methodology

Since the identification of obstacles which prevent Roma women from exercising equal rights and possibilities in the Bosnian-Herzegovinean society was the primary aim of our research, we used several methods during the process of collection of indicators.

Method of *predicative induction* was primarily used in tracking certain types of phenomena, and *descriptive analysis* which tracks the description of selected rights through various sectors of Roma women protection in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The key focus of the research refers to the quality of enforcement of basic rights defined by Bosnian-Herzegovinean laws, and their compliance with international standards in terms of equality of Roma women.

We investigated:

- a) issues with access to education,
- b) availability of support in employment,
- c) obstacles in the field of gender-based violence protection,
- d) access to health care – focusing on the level of exercising reproductive rights,
- e) possibilities of political participation of Roma women,
- f) and generally access to services and public utilities.

The most important reports made by various institutions, international organisations and civil society organisations with an evaluation of exercising rights of Roma women in appointed fields were analysed.

The starting point of the analysis is the key legal and institutional framework. Further, we will briefly point out laws related to the fields and obstacles in exercising the rights of Roma women. The focus remains on gender equality. Available statistical information and official institutional data were used as much as possible, focusing on the referential period from 2020 until 2022.

The framework of the research is an evaluation method of Roma women's opinion, implemented in the following manner: We have defined a sample, using indicators on a total number of Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina by choosing Roma women for survey according to their total number on the selected locations in the whole Bosnia Herzegovina. Evaluation of opinions was planned on a sample of 650 Roma women, but during the research this number was increased because one more location was added, increasing the number of respondents for processing.

Based on the above-stated, a survey was conducted with Roma women (on the field and through focus groups) on a sample of 734 Roma women, primarily aimed at 650 persons, divided into five age groups: girls between 15 and 18 with total participation of 49 persons, age group 18 to 24 consisting of 127 persons, age group 25 to 34 consisting of 177 women, with the most respondents (277) belonging to the age group 36 to 65, and 58 respondents were belonging to the age group 65 and older.

An indication that a certain number of surveyed Roma women did not state their year of birth (a total 46 of them), in our opinion shows the existence of a long-term marginalisation. These women respondents were not sure about their year of birth, because they received their birth documents afterwards.

The survey covers seven geographic locations: Tuzla Canton, Zenica-Doboj Canton, Central Bosnia Canton, Doboj Region, Banja Luka Region, Bijeljina and Brčko District. In the area of Roma women survey, we also surveyed a small sample of key service providers and asked them about their opinions. We surveyed 28 representatives in the

following institutions: institutions for pre-school, elementary and secondary education, centres for social work, employment agencies, police departments, and health institutions.

3. Context

With the aim to represent the context in which the research was conducted, we provided certain facts about the social system of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the overall indicators of the position of Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We used indicators set out by the Action Plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for the social inclusion of Roma 2021-2025.⁶

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a decentralised multi-ethnic country consisting of two entities – the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter: FBiH) and the Republic of Srpska (hereinafter: RS) – as well as the Brčko District of Bosnia and Herzegovina (hereinafter: BDBiH). FBiH consists of 10 cantons and 79 cities/municipalities (hereinafter: local self-government units). RS is totally centralised, with 66 local self-government units, i.e. BiH has totally 145 local self-government units.

Roma live all over the country of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 88 local self-government units, with a majority populated in 50 local self-government units.

Population statistics: Members of the Roma population mostly did not state their ethnicity on the census in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2013, and only 12,583 persons stated their ethnicity as Roma. According to the data of Roma associations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, this number is significantly bigger, and it is assumed that around 50,000 Roma live in BiH.⁷ According to indicators from the census in 2013, Roma lives in 88 local self-government units in Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the data collected by the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees (Hereinafter: MHRR), municipalities reported that 4,009 Roma families or 19,295 persons require social assistance.⁸

When it comes to the general data in Bosnia and Herzegovina, MHRR states that up to 2020, according to the data of 35 local self-government units, Roma required: **dwelling, employment, health care and education for 8,295 men and 7,767 women.**

When it comes to age, there were 1,855 children up to 5 years, 4,099 children up to 18 years, and 9,320 persons above 18. According to these data, the portion of the female population was 40%.

Possibility of employment of Roma women: When it comes to the possibility of employment of Roma women, we emphasise the indicator of the number of employed women, registered on the labour market (the data of the Employment Agency from June 2020) in which was stated that in FBiH, there were 1,444 Roma women looking for job, **out of which 1,328 were unqualified**, i.e. without elementary education. In RS, 80 Roma women were registered on the labour market, out of which **54 were unqualified**, and in BD there were 182 Roma women registered, out of which **over 70% were unqualified.**

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ A Special Report on the Position of Roma in BiH/Specijalni izvještaj o položaju Roma u BiH, Institution of the Human Rights Ombudsman of Bosnia and Herzegovina (2013)

⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Housing care: When it comes to dwelling, the data of MHRR show that 50 local self-government units delivered the following data: to complete the legalisation of 1,539 housing units of Roma; to build 885 housing units, to do the reconstruction of 1,300 housing units and improvement of infrastructure for 2,480 beneficiaries in 28 local self-government units. *There is no data on the number of women who head the households, i.e. own the housing units.*

Health care: We notice that there are no indicators of the number of persons without health care. This issue is also featured in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the exception that certain cantons established various systems of additional health insurance, whereas, in the Republic of Srpska and Brčko District BiH, this problem is solved.

In our evaluation of the needs, we analysed the data from the Action plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for social inclusion of Roma 2021-2025¹⁰, indicators contained in the Research of multiple indicators (hereinafter as: MIX)⁹ according to which the mortality rate of the Roma children (infants) is 24%, whereas the mortality rate of the total population is 8%. Also, the mortality rate of children under 5 is 27% versus 8% in the total population. The indicator about the total birth weight shows that 14% of Roma children have weight below 2,500 g, and in the rest of the population there are only 3% of children with small weight. Only 4% of Roma children are covered by immunisation and 68% of the total population. The early growth and development index shows a rate of 85%, in comparison to the rate of 96% of the children of the total population. *The rate in terms of early pregnancy indicates that 31% of Roma women give birth before turning 18.*

Exposure to discrimination: When it comes to the case of Roma discrimination, we notice that there is not a great number of court cases, which is the result of insufficient knowledge about legislation in the field of discrimination and available legal protective mechanisms, and problems in access to the rights and free legal help. Furthermore, there are no confirmed court cases, however, there are certain researches¹⁰ and we will mention the report “The Hoop of Antigypsism – Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina”¹¹, i.e. “Discrimination in Bosnia and Herzegovina: perceptions, views and experiences of the public”¹² in which (...) *it is indicated that the acceptance level of the Roma by the general population is insufficient, and there are frequent situations of non-recognition i.e. ignoring of the problems and needs inside the Roma communities, mentioning the problem of different treatment of human trafficking victims, especially women and children, and exercising certain social rights too.*

Children’s education: According to the data of MHRR, education coverage of Roma children is the area in which there is improvement, especially with the decrease in the rate of leaving school and improvement in participation of children at an early age in obligatory pre-education programmes.

However, the collected indicators of MHRR show that the rate of Roma children in pre-education programmes is still low at only 4%, and the rate of children covered by elementary and secondary school is also low at only 35%.

4. Legal Framework, Policies, Research

The Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina contains several international standards related to human rights and gender equality, and we hereby primarily emphasise those referring to gender equality: Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) from 1979 which is directly applied in BiH. Bosnia

⁹ MIX Research conducted in 2011 by MHR and UNICEF.

¹⁰ The Position of Roma Children in BiH / Položaj romske djece u BiH, UNICEF 2013/

¹¹ The Hoop of Anti-gypsism: Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina / Obruč antidipsizma Romi u Bosni i Hercegovini , Civil Rights Defenders 2018

¹² Discrimination in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Perceptions, views and experiences of the public / Diskriminacija u Bosni i Hercegovini: percepcije, stavovi i iskustva javnosti, OSCE 2020.

and Herzegovina is a signatory of other international legal acts and documents, including, international agreements, the Beijing Declaration with Platform of Action from 1995, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR 1325) from 2000, Convention of International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence from 2013, and over 27 other international instruments in the field of human rights.¹³

The above-mentioned international standards in the legal system of Bosnia and Herzegovina need to provide, above all, protection against discrimination, equality and non-discrimination in all segments of the human rights of Roma women and they are to be applied in all situations when domestic regulations do not provide equal treatment including the gender equality.

The Law on Gender Equality of BiH¹⁴ was adopted in 2003, amended in 2009. This Law specifically refers to gender equality in terms of education, employment, work and access to resources, social protection, healthcare, culture and sports, public life and media. It also provides the regulatory framework for roles and functioning of institutional mechanisms for gender equality in law enforcement and its tracking, and it defines gender-based discrimination and prohibits all forms of discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation in all spheres. In that context, there are various types of gender-based violence considered as forms of discrimination and violation of human rights.

The Laws on Discrimination Prohibition¹⁵ defines direct and indirect discrimination on all grounds, including gender and sexual orientation, as well as terms that do not represent discrimination. This law also regulates the system of protection from discrimination in all fields, including labour and employment, social and health care, justice and management, housing issues, public information, education, sports, culture, science and economy.

The Laws on Protection against Family Violence of the Federation of BiH, the Republic of Srpska and the Brčko District¹⁶ established the framework for the prevention of violence against women, and among other things, they define methods of protection from family violence, as well as sanctioning mechanisms.

Family laws of the Federation of BiH, the Republic of Srpska and the Brčko District prohibit violent behaviour of a spouse or any other family members and dedicate special attention to the procedure of protection against family violence, stipulating the protection from violence by the police, guardianship authority and court for misdemeanours, as well as the obligation of the police department to arrest the person that behaves violently or tends to cause such danger and place to the right institution right after receiving notice.

Laws prescribe fines for legal entities, i.e. institutions which do not arrest the person who behaves violently or tends to cause such danger.

Criminal laws: Apart from these laws, *criminal laws* incriminate family violence, as well as a range of other criminal acts, defined in a gender-neutral manner, apart from those acts that can refer exclusively to women as the victims, but provide the basis for the processing of doers and protection of victims in terms of gender-based violence.

Health care – Sexual and reproductive rights are the basic human rights recognised by domestic, as well as international documents on human rights. Access to sexual and reproductive health based on human rights

¹³ A list of international conventions and agreements, available on the website: mhr.gov.ba-ljudska-prava-medunarodni-ugovori UN/VE 16 Law on Gender Equality in BiH (“Official Gazette of BiH” Nr. 16/03, 102/09 i 32/10).

¹⁴ Law on Gender Equality in BiH (“Official Gazette of BiH” Nr. 16/03, 102/09 i 32/10).

¹⁵ Law on Discrimination Prohibition (“Official Gazette of BiH” Nr. 59/09 and 66/16)

¹⁶ Law on Protection against Family Violence, “Official Gazette of the Republic of Srpska”, Number 102/12 and Law on Protection against Family Violence of the Federation of BiH, “Official Gazette of FBiH”, Number 20/13. 19 UN Women (2021), pg. 30.

understands the promotion of protection and equality of all people, in all aspects of their sexual life. Access to sexual and reproductive health is based on internationally agreed and adopted human rights which recognise people as sexual beings with the right to information, education, health services adjusted to their needs, protection and participation in decision-making.

Gender policy: When it comes to policies, the most important are those referring to the rights of women such as the *Gender Action Plan for BiH* (hereinafter: *GAP*), which is the key document of the mid-term public policy adopted by the Council of Ministers of BiH by the Law on Gender Equality.

Agency for Gender Equality BiH is authorised for initiating and coordination of the development of Gender Action Plan in co-operation with entity Gender centres and tracking their implementation and coordination of activities with all relevant bodies in the process of implementation. The main aim of the Gender Action plan is to provide guidelines to ministries and other institutions to employ gender-aware principles in their work by the Law on Gender Equality. Bosnian-Herzegovina institutions are expected to adopt annual operational plans which enable systematic and coordinated acting in the process of employment of gender-aware principles in the work of institutions on the basis of Gender Action Plan.¹⁹

Policy for Roma: *The Strategy and Action plan of Bosnia and Herzegovina for social inclusion of Roma 2021-2025*, relies directly on aims contained in the Strategic Framework of the EU for equality, inclusion and integration of Roma, and the Declaration on Roma integration signed by the leaders of the Western Balkan countries on 5 July 2019 in Poland. Within the action document, a system against discrimination was established for the prevention of “antigypsyism in which Activity 4 prescribes improvement of participation of Roma women and young Roma in all bodies that deal with minority issues, i.e. inclusion of Roma and supported implementation of the Platform for improvement of rights and positions of Roma women in Bosnia and Herzegovina.” In this plan, it was re-stated that the position of Roma in BiH is worse in comparison to the position of other minorities, because of the unemployment rate, low rate of children enrolling in elementary school, low rate of education of adults, low housing and infrastructure conditions and insufficient coverage by health and social services, so that to larger or smaller extent, Roma are marginalised: economically, spatially, culturally, and politically.

Since 2008, *the Election Law of BiH* has ensured representatives for national minorities in the local authorities. If the national minority participates with at least 3% population in the election unit, then at least one position is prescribed for “others”. The Committee for Human Rights invited the state to ensure such an election system which is to guarantee equal enjoyment of rights prescribed by Article 25 of the Convention on Civil and Political Rights, regardless of ethnic belonging. The Election Law of BiH prescribes the obligation of national minority members in the elections at municipal level in a way that ensures their “representation in municipal council, i.e. municipal assembly or city council, i.e. city assembly in proportion of their percentage within the population according to the last census in BiH, and the number of national minority members to be elected for municipal council, i.e. municipal assembly or city council, i.e. city assembly is determined by the municipal statute, i.e. city statute through which all national minority members which make 3% in population in election unit according to the last census, are guaranteed a place on a local government level.” Twelve Roma representatives used this right in the last election cycle.

Research and studies:

*Atlantic Initiative*¹⁷ conducted research in the period from April to June 2020 with the basic aim of evaluating the opinions of the Roma population in terms of access and trust of Roma to security and justice institutions. The study

¹⁷Study “Pristup i povjerenje Roma u institucije sigurnosti i pravosuđa u Bosni i Hercegovini/Roma access and trust in security and justice institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina”, Atlantic Initiative, 2021.

provides insight into issues that Roma men and women encounter in their contact with the judiciary, in which they provided recommendations for the improvement of Roma's position necessary for the enforcement of trust between the Roma population and institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is important to emphasise that within this study, there is a separate chapter that represents the position of Roma women in Bosnia and Herzegovina, showing their unfavourable position in comparison to male members of Roma communities. In this study, it is also stated that the most common reasons for this unfavourable position of Roma women are low education, patriarchal tradition, high level of unemployment, gender-based violence and multiple systematic discrimination.

“Gender Equality Profile in BiH”, made by UN Women in 2021 in co-operation with many UN agencies and civil society organisations from BiH indicates that *“the Regional research on Roma published by the Development Programme of the United Nations in 2018, showing that the Roma in Bosnia and Herzegovina encounter significant difficulties in access and exercising rights in health care, education, housing and employment, with minor improvements of life standard.”*¹⁸

Within the same research (...) it is also stated (...) in the context of consideration of gender issues with the focus on Roma women and starts from the fact that the presence of marginalised women i.e. Roma women, as well as other marginalised women groups such as: women from rural areas, women with disability, are in multiple ways exposed to marginalisation and various forms of discrimination. There is an obviously limited presence in administration, decision-making positions, public life because of multiple exclusion i.e. discrimination to which they are exposed.

In the framework of **UN Sustainable Development Goals**, the following was emphasised:

- the importance of accomplishing gender equality of Roma women in political, public life and decision-making (subgoal 5.5. of Sustainable Development Goals),
- the accomplishment of better gender equality of Roma women in the economic environment (subgoal 8.5. of Sustainable Development Goals),
- protection from violence against Roma women (subgoal 5.2. of Sustainable Development Goals),
- achievement of better gender equality in the education of Roma women (subgoal 4.1 of Sustainable Development Goals),
- strengthening gender equality of Roma women through gender-responsible data collection.

European Union (EU): in their key documents it is stated that gender equality is a universal human right and initiator of growth, prosperity, good management, peace and security, as it is stated in the European Gender Plan 21/25 (EU GAP III) which focuses on gender equality and strengthening women in the EU external acting.¹⁹

In the second part, EU GAP III focuses on the following thematic acting fields:

- Elimination of all forms of gender-based violence,
- Promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights,
- Promotion of economic and social rights and strengthening girls and women,
- Promotion of equal participation and management,
- Integration of programmes about women, peace and security,
- Facing the challenges and opportunities offered by green transition and digital transformation.

Research by Roma Women Association “Bolja budućnost” Tuzla: in the previous period, the Association conducted several research that referred to:

- Research on gender-based violence against Roma women in BiH (2017),

¹⁸ UN women – Gender Equality Profile in BiH (2021), pg. 17.

¹⁹ EU GAP III was adopted on 25 November 2020 for the period of 2021-2025.

- Development of the Platform for improvement of rights and position of Roma women in BiH (2020),
- Research of awareness level and needs for information of Roma women and men about the registration of property and mechanism of solving complaints in eight municipalities/cities with significant Roma population in BiH (2021),
- Social card of Roma women in BiH (2020),
- Research on early marriages in Roma communities (2017),
- The position of Roma women in BiH (2019)²⁰.

All the above-stated sources confirm the multiply endangered status of Roma women, naming the fields in which it happens, which directed our survey to be directed to certain questions enabling a deeper thematic gender analysis on the basis of the surveyed Roma women on selected locations.

5. Thematic Gender Analysis

One of the key elements of gender equality is understanding the context from the perspective of the relationship between men and women. Generally, in every community and society, there are differences inside society, determined by gender, race, religion, social differences, tradition and a combination of all the above-mentioned. Because of these differences, we cannot presume that the development programmes, policy measures or other initiatives will be equally beneficial, influence and reach all members of the society, in this case, Roma women.

Therefore, *gender analysis* is a good tool with the purpose of examining of differences between the roles of women and men, and responsibilities that they have, different authority levels, their different needs, limitations and possibilities, and the way in which all those differences influence their needs. Gender analysis can help understand and see how and why gender differences and inequalities are relevant to this topic. It is a good tool for identification of fields with the possibility of inequality reduction and proposing activities for stronger equality and non-discrimination.

In this research on the position and rights of Roma women, we did not examine gender relations to the end. We directed our research to the identification of the best access in solving harmful norms, structures, behaviours, and other limitations, as Roma women see it. The aim was primarily to initiate and transform the current gender relations inside Roma communities and further, provide special significance to Roma women and their opinions, i.e. problems that they consider important for their position.

Through analysis and classification of information provided by Roma women, we improved our understanding. Of course, there was a great influence of the type of analysed information, area of identified problems, and the manner to make the greatest influence on further development and use of gender indicators.

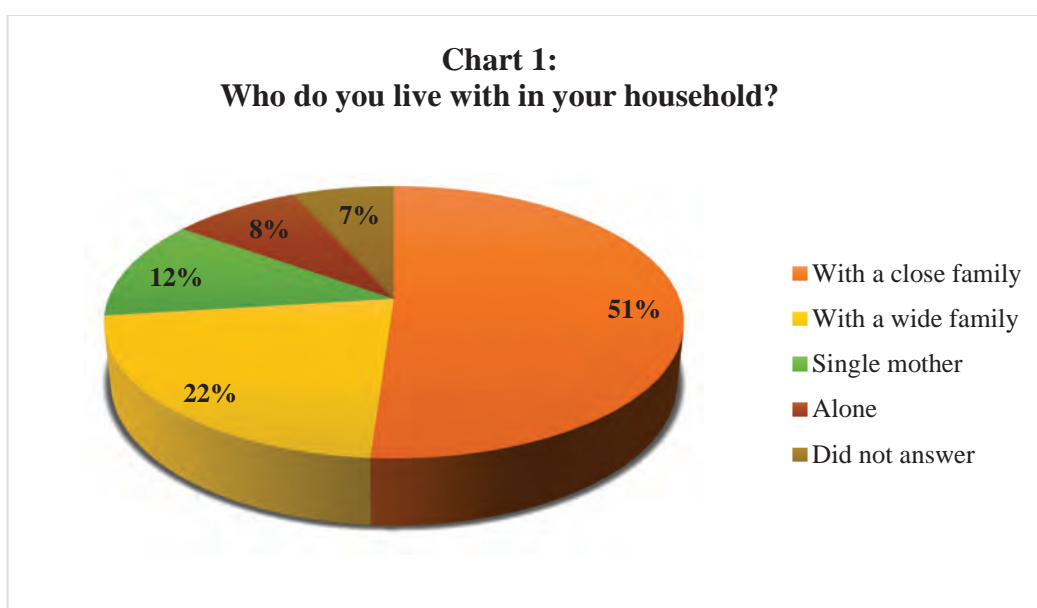
In terms of coverage and understanding certain topics, especially in terms of their answers to certain questions, Roma women had already shown a specific relation (coping or failing to cope, or they were simply unable to provide any answer). This situation influenced the analysis but it did not reduce the relevance of this research.

²⁰ Available on Roma Women Association “Bolja budućnost” website: <https://www.bolja-buducnost.org>

5.1. General Indicators – Living Conditions of the Roma Women

In this part, we separated answers that refer to general indicators regarding: the number of children, form of household (close/wide family), dwelling conditions and manner of support. The household status was examined, i.e. members of the household of Roma women (Chart 1). Totally **51%** live with a close family, and **22%** live with a wide family (husband, children, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law and similar).

It was indicative that 12% of Roma women respondents were single mothers, and 8% live alone. Also, 91% of the surveyed Roma women stated that they have children, 3% stated that they do not have, and 6% of Roma women did not provide any answer to this question. When it comes to the number of children, we notice that 69% of Roma women have between two and five children, and 3% have six or seven children respectively. Regarding the gender of children, 3% of Roma women stated that they have more female children.



It was indicative that 41% of Roma women did not answer about the age of the children which indicates to a problem.

Roma women also answered the question if they are disabled persons, thus making 10% of women answered that they belong to a category of persons with the disability.

When it comes to the housing conditions, of all the surveyed persons, totally 51% have basic housing conditions, 31% live in substandard housing, and 11% live in good conditions. Over 40% of respondents live in housing up to 40 square metres, then 31% live in housing up to 25 square metres, whereas 21% live in housing with 60 square metres and more.

When it comes to the ownership status of the housing unit that they use (Chart 2): 30% of women respondents answered that the housing unit is owned by another family member, 25% answered that it is owned by their husband, 17% answered that they use housing awarded by social service, 12% answered that they are subtenants, and **3% that they live in a collective housing.**

Chart 2:
Is the housing unit that you are using..

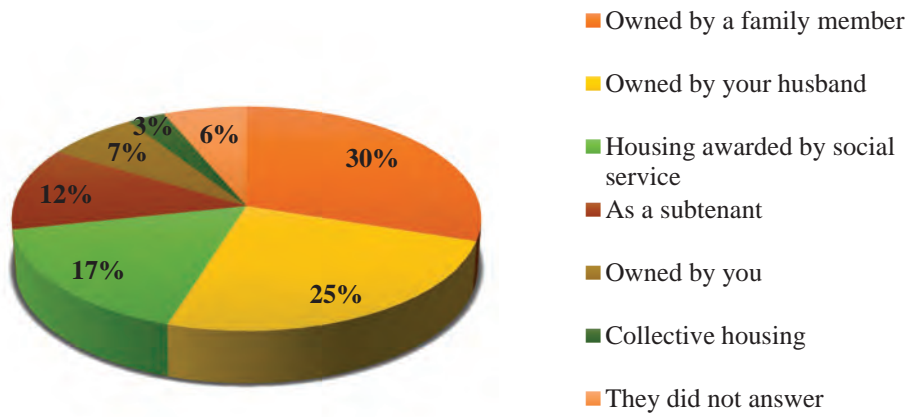
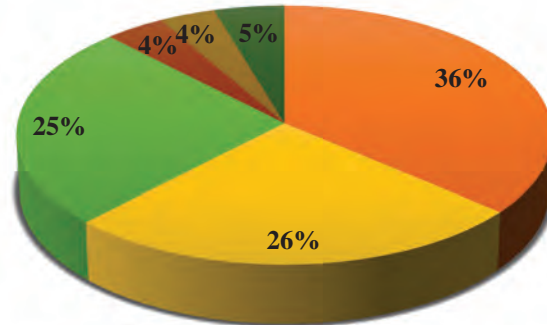


Chart 3: How do you make income?

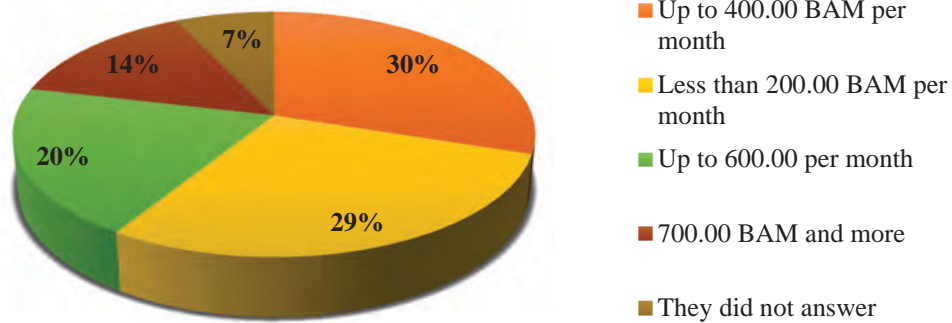


- Support their family by: working non-formal, seasonal jobs, working in agriculture, craftwork and similar.
- Live on social aid
- Support by a family member
- Retiree
- Employed
- They did not answer

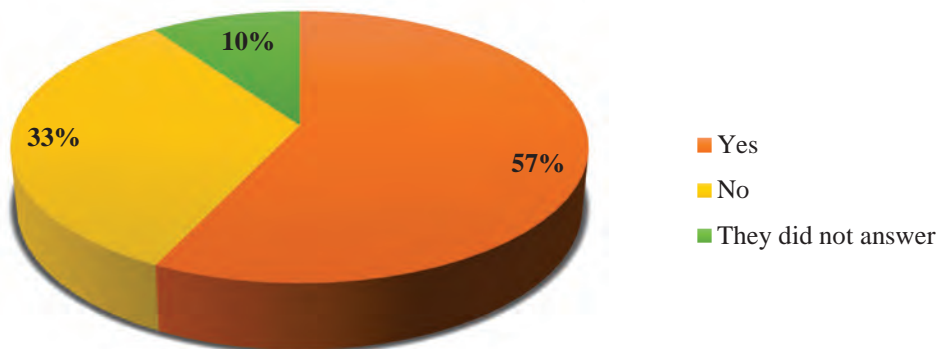
When it comes to the income that Roma women live from (Chart 3), only 4% stated that they are employed, 4% stated that they are retirees, **26%** stated that they live from social assistance, **25%** is supported by a family member, **36% stated that they support their family by a non-formal seasonal work, which indicates to an extreme endangerment economic position of Roma women.**

The economic status of Roma women's families, as well as the status of children in their families, confirmed economically endangered position, as visible in the following charts (Charts 4 and 5). 30% of surveyed Roma families have a monthly income of up to 400.00 BAM, and 29% have below 200.00 BAM. Furthermore, the information that 33% of Roma women do not have a sufficient amount of food for their children is an additional indication.

Chart 4: What income does your family have?



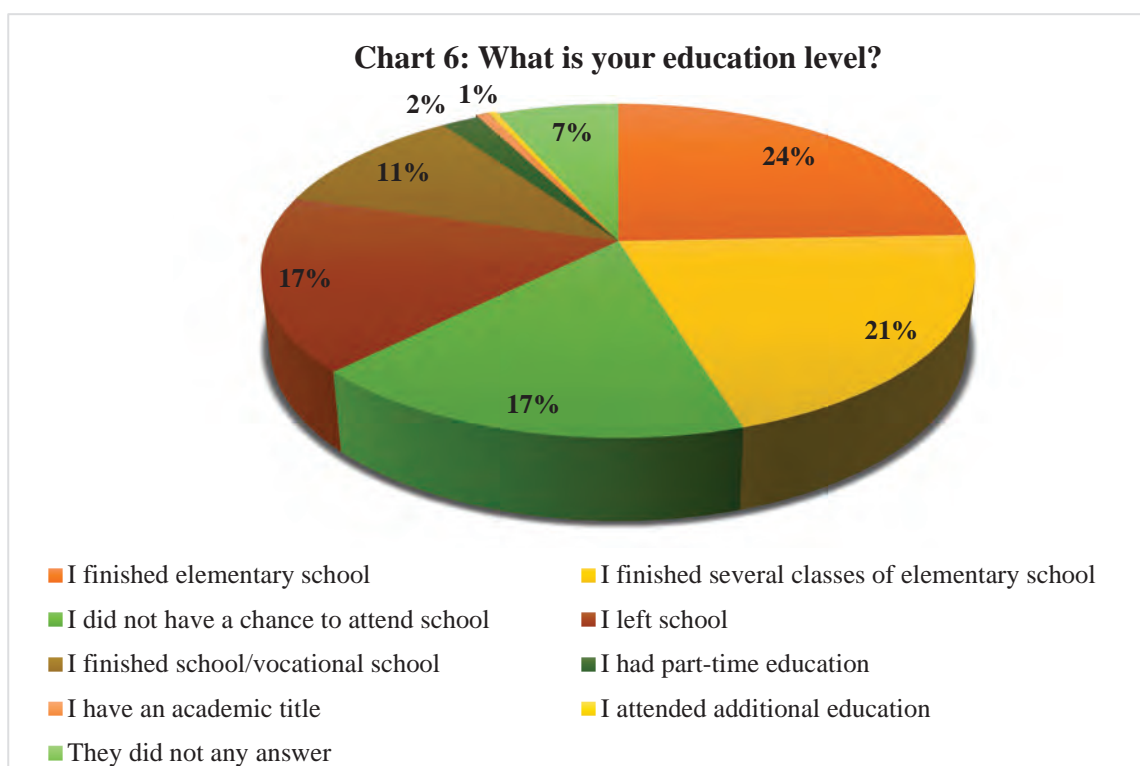
**Chart 5:
Do you have sufficient food for your children?**



The obtained answers from Roma women show a high degree of distrust in the work of institutions because only 24% of Roma women asked for some help. *On the other hand, 11% of Roma women received that help.* There is an extremely high degree of Roma women who did not want to answer (67% and 77%) which may additionally indicate the distrust or lack of information of Roma women about the way of exercising rights that they have.

5.2. Access to Education

The data shown in the Chart 6 show the level of education of Roma women. It is indicative that 55% of Roma women do not have elementary education completed, and only 24% of them finished elementary school.



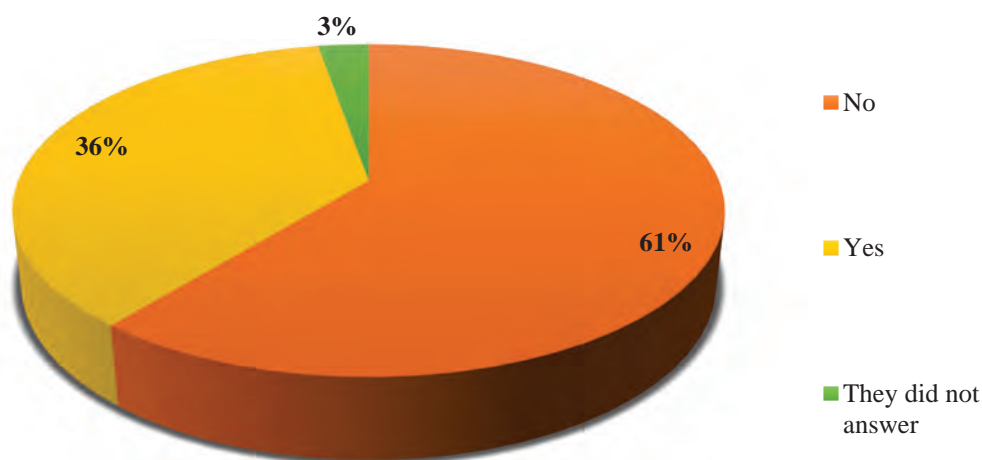
The data in Chart 6 show the following situation

- 24% of Roma women finished elementary school;
- 21% of Roma women finished several classes of elementary school;
- 17% of Roma women did not have a chance to attend school;
- 17% of Roma women left school;
- 11% of Roma women finished school;
- 2% of them attended part-time school;
- 1% of them have an academic degree;
- 7% of them did not provide any answer.

This is a very concerning educational and qualification status of Roma women, which is confirmed by the answer to the questions in terms of education, i.e. acquired vocation. Totally 89% of surveyed Roma women confirmed that they do not have any vocation, i.e. that they did not finish their education, and only 9% of them finished secondary school, with 1% of them having a vocation, and 1% of them with higher education, and 9% of them did not answer.

Most of the Roma women (61%) consider that they do not have sufficient support for education, and only 36% consider that they do have it (Chart 7). This indicator shows that there is an interest in the activation of adjusted programmes for additional education of Roma women.

Chart 7: Are Roma women sufficiently supported in their struggle for education?



When it comes to support in education, Roma women answered in the following way:

- 29% of them consider that they need regular scholarships for all forms of education;
- 20% of them consider that the children should be involved in pre-education programmes;
- 19% of them consider that parents and children who do not attend school regularly need joint support;
- 16% of them consider that parents need support with enrolling children and continuation of education;
- 10% of them consider that additional education is necessary for adequate success in school,;
- 6% of them stated that they need help.

5.2.1. Roma Women on Children's Education

On the other hand, when it comes to regular attending lessons by their children, Roma women answered in the following way: 35% of Roma children do not attend the pre-school programme and another indicator is that 32% of Roma women did not answer this question. When it comes to regular attendance of school, respondents stated that 68% of Roma children attend elementary school, 10% do not attend, whereas those Roma women whose children did not finish school or do not have children did not answer (22%), but it is indicative that 22% of Roma women did not answer to it.

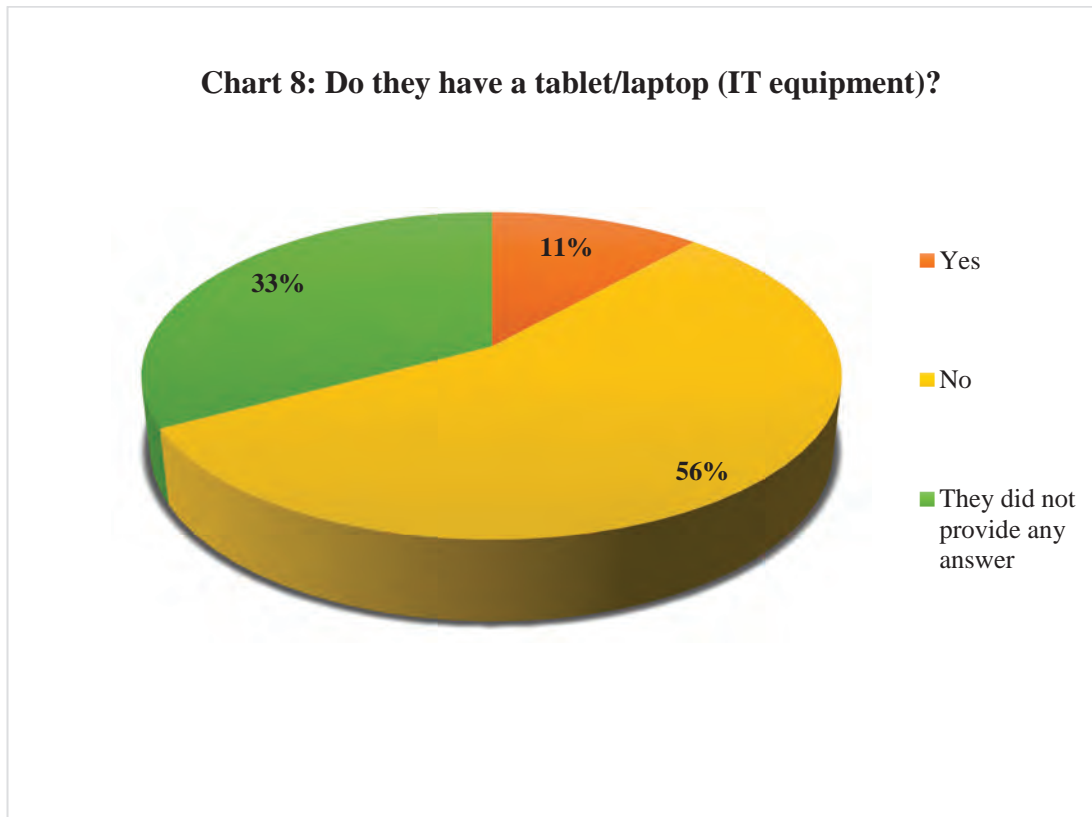
The following reasons were mentioned as possible reasons for not attending school of the above-mentioned 10% children:

- He/she failed class several classes, and then left school;
- They are begging, and none of the children attended school;
- Parents do not have funds to provide education for children;
- She left school because of getting married;

- They do not want to attend school;
- They grew old for school because of living in the EU state.

Questions regarding the support for parents in their children’s education, Roma women answered as follows:

- ✓ 52% of children have school supplies;
- ✓ 15% of children do not have school supplies;
- ✓ 33% of Roma women did not answer, which indicates the problem of leaving and non-attending school.



When it comes to computer literacy (Chart 8), Roma women stated that:

- ✓ 56% of Roma children do not have IT equipment;
- ✓ 33% of them did not answer about it;
- ✓ 11% of them confirmed that they do have IT equipment.

There is a probability that around 34% have some sort of IT equipment if we also take into consideration mobile phones.

5.3. Support in Employment

When it comes to the possibility of employment of Roma women, initially analysed data show that the employment rate of Roma women is very low.

Within this survey, Roma women answered as follows:

- 50% of Roma women are in active search for a job;
- 43% of Roma women are not in active search for a job;
- 7% of Roma women did not answer.

When it comes to registration on Employment Service, 65% of them are registered, 28% are not registered, and 7% Roma women did not answer. These women respondents were mainly retirees or beneficiaries of social giving. When it comes to reasons for registration on Employment Service, it is indicative that in 74% of cases, Roma women did not want to answer this question.

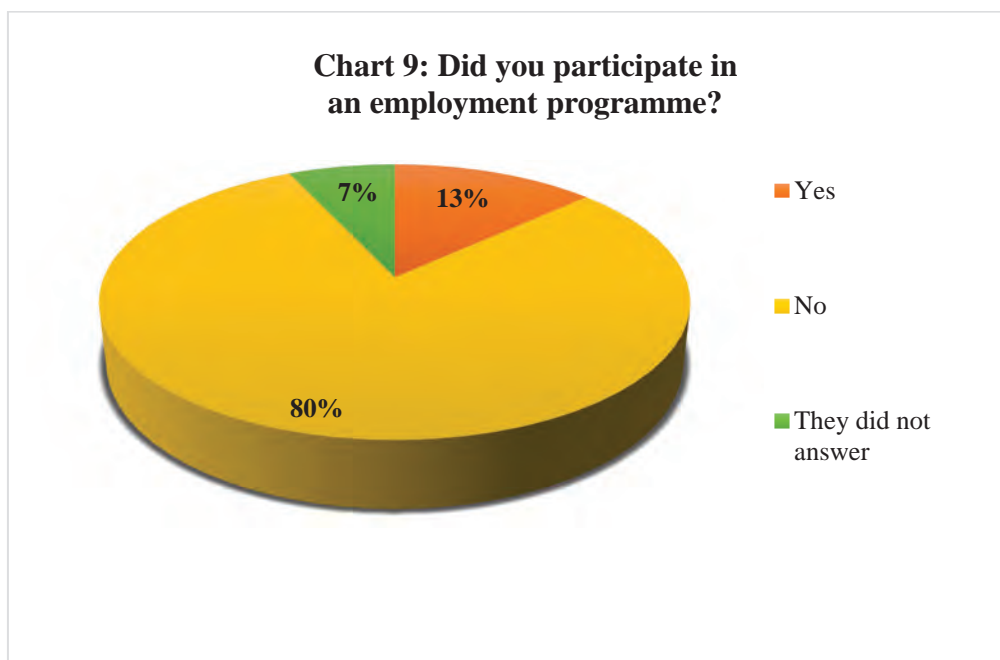
This answer indicates the problem of visibility of their needs in the field of employment.

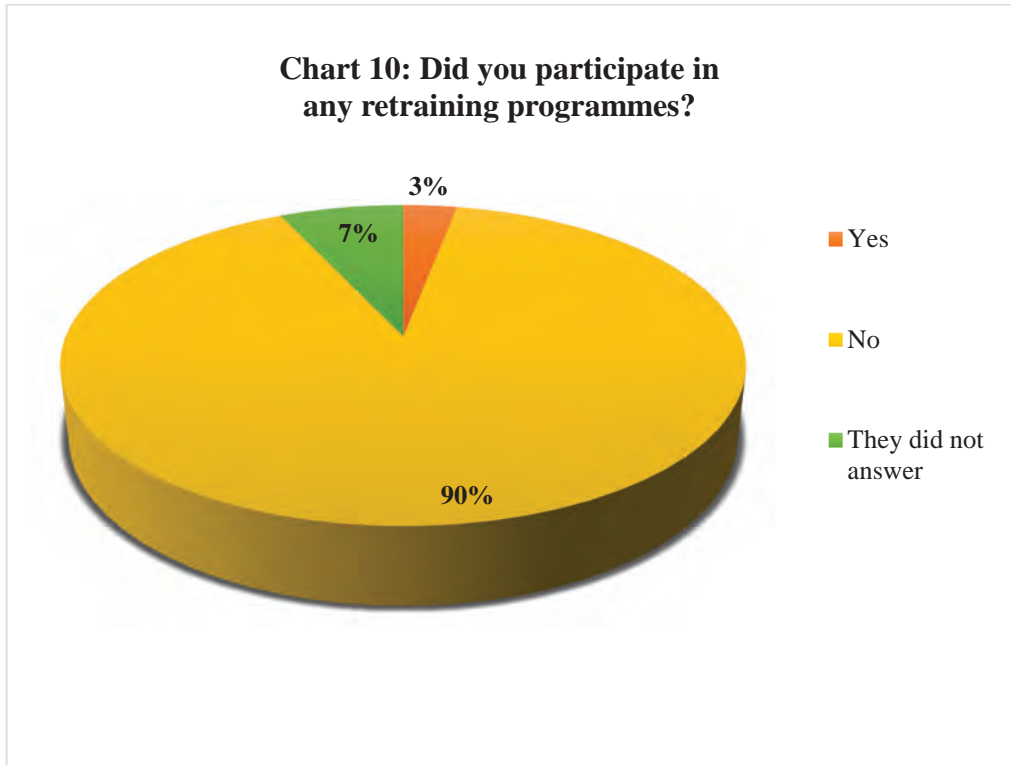
Equally indicative are their answers about “*the reasons for non-registration*” in which they stated: that 13% stated that they did not check in regularly, and 13% of them that it was another reason, which refers to lack of information or lack of interest about the labour market.

Out of 734 surveyed Roma women, **57** are not registered on the Employment Service, or 12%:

- because they are employed,
- because they are over 65,
- because they attend school,
- because they are retirees,
- because they are not able to work.

It is indicative that 37 Roma women, i.e. 5% stated that they are not eligible for Employment Service.





There is indicative information based on the answers about the employment and retraining programmes (Chart 9 and 10) that there is an almost equal percentage of Roma women who stated that they did not participate in any of these:

- ✓ 80% of Roma women did not participate in any employment programmes,
- ✓ 90% of Roma women did not participate in any retraining programmes,
- ✓ Only 13% participated in employment programmes,
- ✓ Only 7% participated in retraining programmes.

This indicator is similar to the indicator that 79% of Roma women do not have any work experience, i.e. only 15% of Roma women have certain work experience, which makes them totally non-competitive in the labour market.

Chart 11: Did you get a permanent employment through the employment programme that you participated?

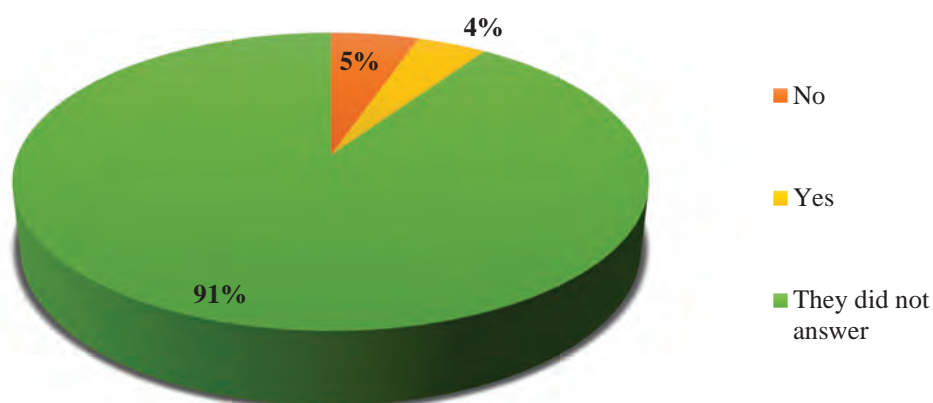


Chart 12: Reason that the employment programme did not provide permanent employment?



It is indicative that employment programmes provided permanent employment only in 5% of cases, and 91% did not answer because they did not participate programmes. As the key reason why Roma women did not keep their jobs in 94% of cases, they state that:

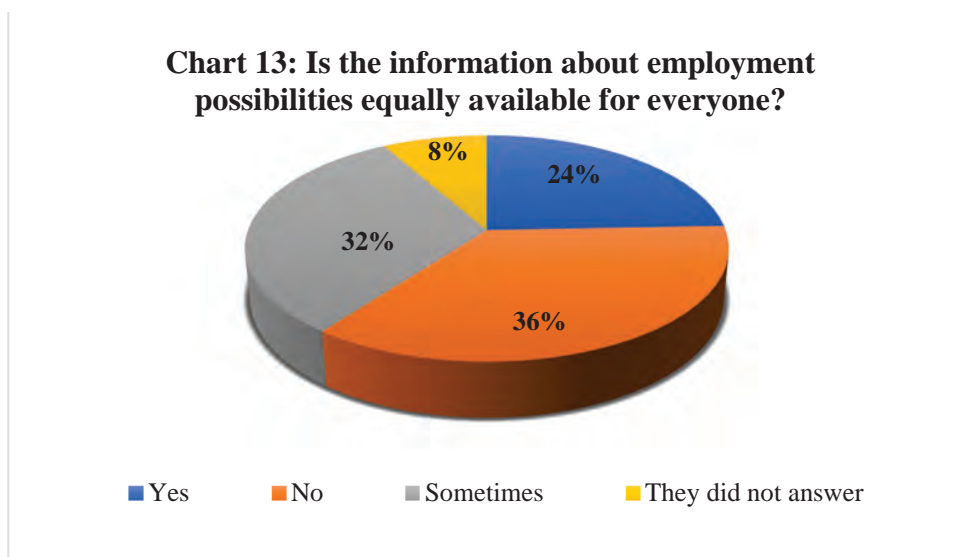
- the employer was not interested in continuing their employment after the expiry of the grant,
- there are no sufficient funds for Roma women employment,
- Roma women do not have enough experience in managing their own businesses.

These questions were multiple-choice questions, and as other reasons, Roma women chose the following options:

- 66% of Roma women stated that the main reason was the fact that they are women,
- 78% of Roma women stated that the main reason was that they were unqualified,
- 75% of Roma women stated that it was a reason of traditional nature,
- 87% of Roma women stated that discrimination was the reason.

Confirmation of these opinions is contained in the answer to the question: “*Is the information about employment possibilities equally available for everyone?*” 24% of Roma women stated that it is available, 36% stated that it is not available, and 32% of them stated that it is sometimes available. Only 8% of Roma women did not answer to this question.

It is indicative that 92% of Roma women, according to their opinion, do not have the right information regarding the employment possibilities.



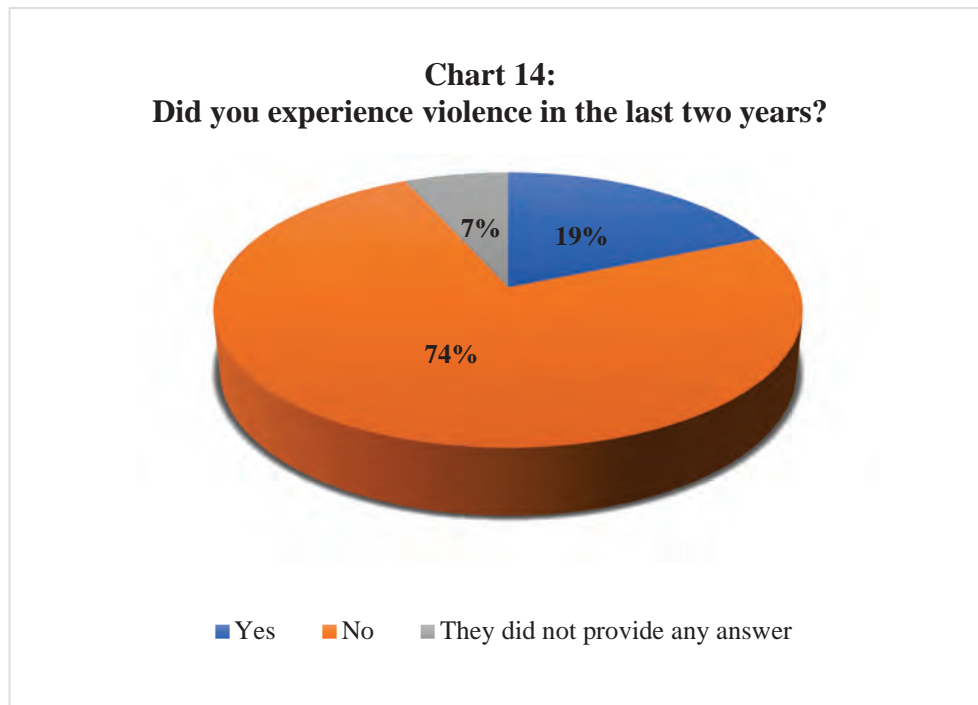
When it comes to the type of work that Roma women and their family members do, Roma women state that those are mainly:

- ✓ seasonal works,
- ✓ collection of secondary raw materials,
- ✓ working at the marketplace,
- ✓ working in non-government organisations,
- ✓ cleaning ladies,
- ✓ daily wage work,
- ✓ utility worker,
- ✓ agriculture,
- ✓ selling used footwear and clothes,
- ✓ begging on streets and
- ✓ working in the hospitality industry.

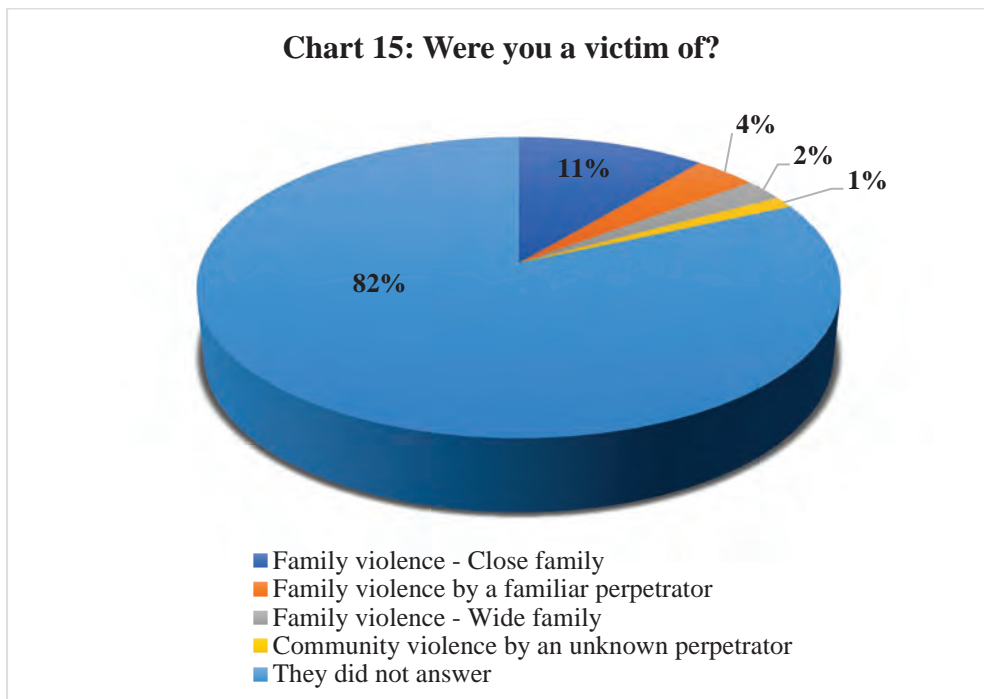
5.4. Attitude toward Gender-Based Violence

When it comes to the field of gender-based violence against Roma women, the survey dealt with the incidence of violence, forms, institutional treatment of Roma women exposed to some of the violence forms.

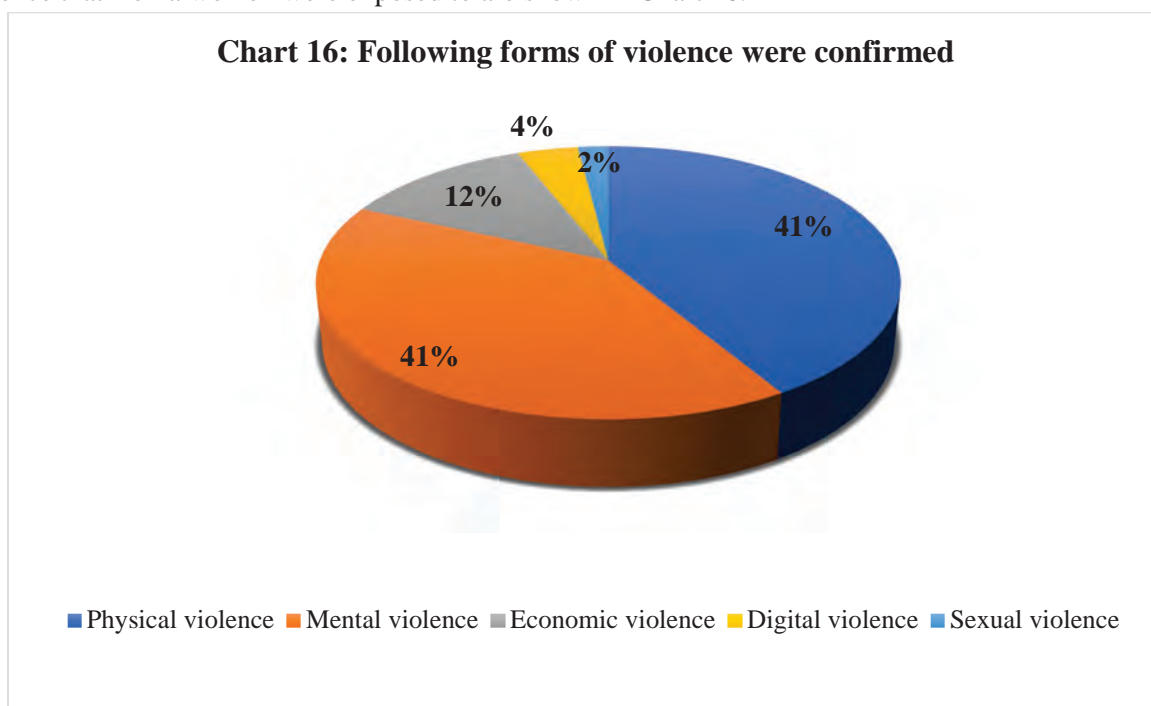
When it comes to gender-based violence (Chart 14), 19% of Roma women confirmed that they were exposed to violence within the last two years, and 74% stated that they were not. It needs to be pointed out that 7% of women did not answer this question.



When it comes to the place (environment in which violence happened), in which violence against women was committed (Chart 15), over 11% of Roma women stated that the violence happened inside their close family, 4% stated that the perpetrator was familiar, 2% confirmed that it was in the wide family, and 1% of them stated that it happened inside the community. It is indicative that 82% of Roma women did not answer this question, which directs us to the fact that women have prejudice to speak about violence in public.



When it comes to the forms of violence, most Roma women answered that the most frequent type of violence was mental and physical, which is followed by economic violence. Only 7% of Roma women stated that they were exposed to sexual violence, and 4% of Roma women stated that they were exposed to digital violence. Other types of violence that Roma women were exposed to are shown in Chart 16.



When it comes to support and assistance inside the community, Roma women stated that in 11% of their cases, they had assistance, and in 7% they did not have any assistance, and 82% of Roma women did not state about the form of help that they were provided.

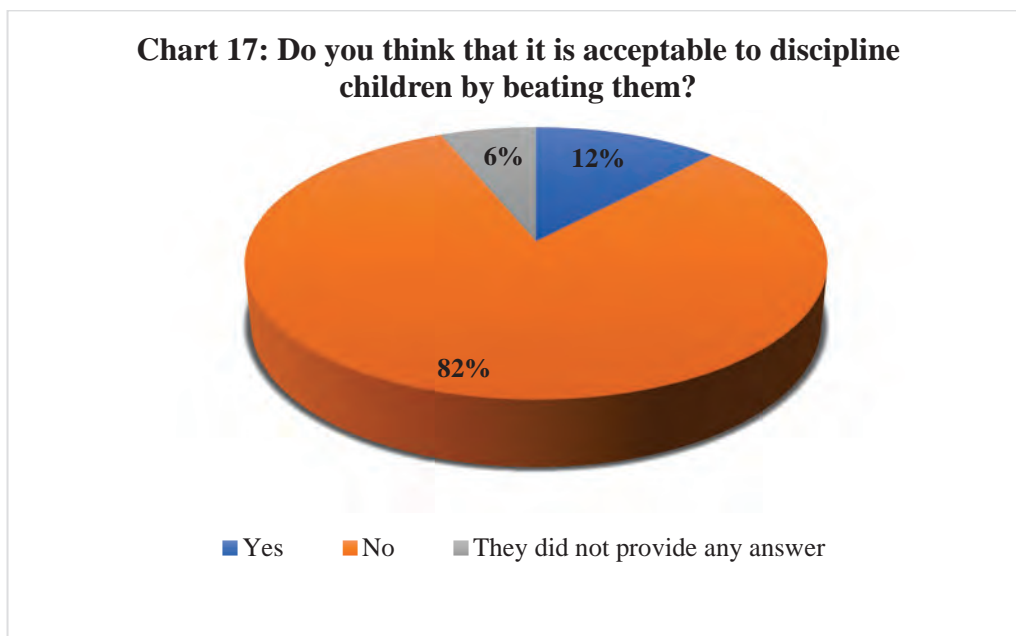
We notice the same rate of answers when it comes to *the reason of not not getting any help*:

- 8% of Roma women stated that they did not report exposure to violence,
- 7% of them stated that they reported it, but they did not get any help from the community,
- and again **85%** of Roma women did not answer.

It is indicative that Roma women have prejudice and they do not want to talk about the violence in public.

5.4.1. Attitude toward Family Violence – Children’s Position

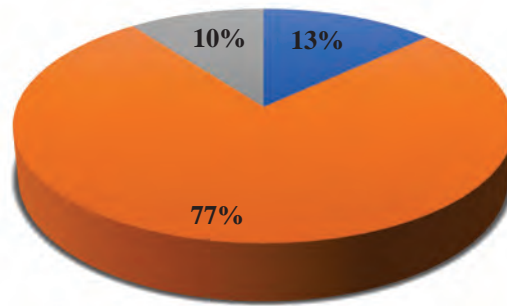
Roma women were asked several additional questions in order to see their opinions in terms of the position of children, early marriages and labour exploitation. When it comes to their views in terms of upbringing methods, a very high percentage of Roma women 82% claim that it is not acceptable to discipline children by beating them, and 12% of Roma women think that it is acceptable, whereas 6% of them did not answer to this question.



5.4.2. Early Marriages

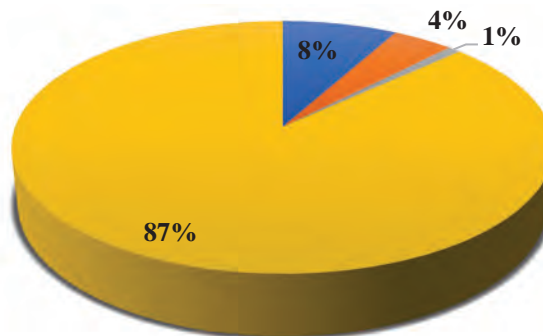
When it comes to early marriages, 13% of Roma women confirmed that they have children who got married early, 77% of them stated that their children did not get married early, and 10% of them did not answer this question. Furthermore, Roma women stated that in 8% of cases, it was done by a daughter, and in 4% of cases it was a son who got married at an early age. Only in 1% of cases, did both children get married at an early age.

Chart 18: Do you have children who got married before turning 18?



■ Yes ■ No ■ They did not provide any answer

Chart 19: Was it a daughter or a son?



■ Daughter ■ Son ■ Both ■ They did not provide any answer

It is indicative that there is a very high percentage of Roma women who did answer, 77% of them, equally to the question if they have children who got married at an early age, where 67% of them did not state if it was a son or a daughter.

Confirmation of attitudes toward getting married at an early age is noticed indirectly through answers to similar questions, based on which Roma women answered as follows:

Chart 20: Do you think it is acceptable that the children get married before turning 18?

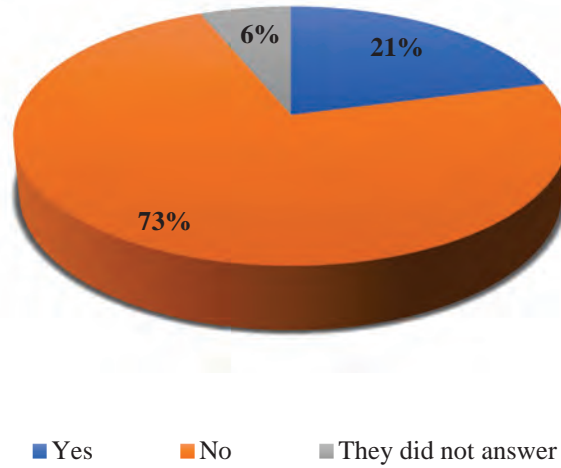
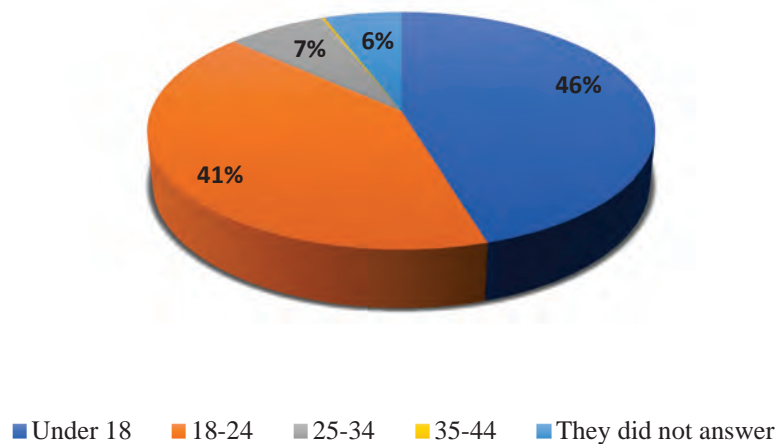
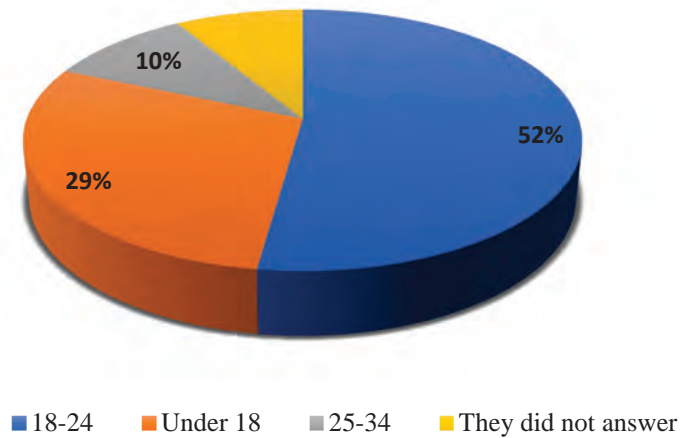


Chart 21: How old were you when you got married?



Totally 21% of Roma women answered affirmative, and 73% of Roma women stated that it is not acceptable to get married at an early age. *It is indicative as shown in Chart 22, that 46% of Roma women got married before turning 18, and furthermore that 52% had their first child at the age between 18 and 24, and 29% of them at the age before 18 (Chart 21 and Chart 22).*

Chart 22:
How old were you when you got your first child?



5.4.3. Child Labour

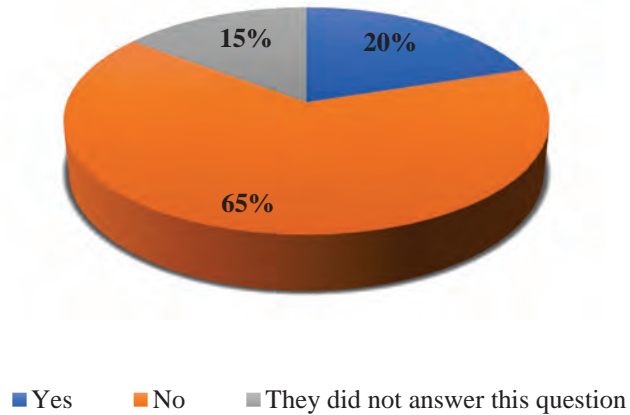
When it comes to child care and their position within the family and child labour, these were the answers of Roma women referring to children's contribution inside the household (Chart 24):

- Children work in order to earn money for themselves or their family, 20% of Roma women answered,
- Children do not work in order to earn money for themselves or their family, 65% of Roma women answered,
- The remaining 15% of Roma women did not answer to this question.

Question: "What could improve the position of children inside their family?" Roma women answered as follows:

- Employment (29%),
- Better support from a Centre for Social Work (23%),
- Support in children's education (20%),
- Placement of children in the kindergarten (17%),
- Education (retraining) for parents/guardians (11%).

Chart 23: Do your older children work in order to earn money for themselves or their family?



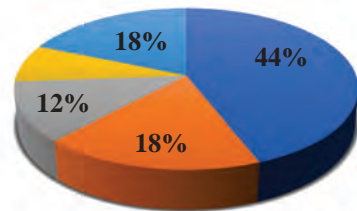
Question: “What kind of future would you like for your children?”, Roma women answered as follows (answers ordered from 1 to 7):

1. Better conditions for children,
2. Employment,
3. Higher allowance,
4. Better housing conditions,
5. To finish school, and find a job,
6. Stabilisation in the country,
7. The only exit from poverty and discrimination is education.

5.5. Health Care – Focus on Reproductive Rights and Children’s Health Care

In the field of health care, in this survey, we evaluate attitudes toward health care. Roma women answered the question if they have health insurance. Totally 83% of Roma women stated that they have health insurance, 10% that they do not have it, whereas 7% of Roma women did not answer this question.

Chart 24: How do they exercise right to the health insurance?



- Through Employment Service
- Through Center for Social Work
- Through an employed family member
- Other

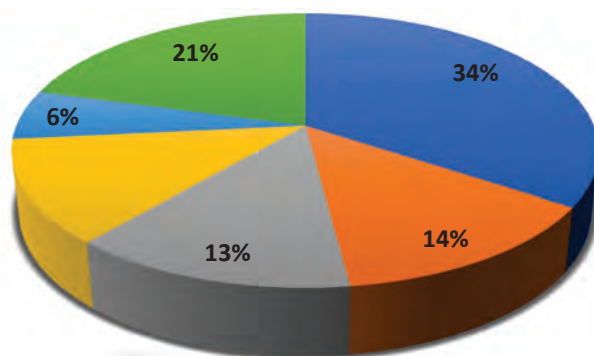
When it comes to the form of health insurance, the largest portion of Roma women (44%) are insured through Employment Service, 18% of them through the Centre for Social Work, and 12% of Roma women through employed family members.

This confirms the fact that the unemployment rate of Roma women is extremely high if we take into consideration the age of 80% of Roma women between 18 and 65.

5.5.1. Focus on Reproductive Rights

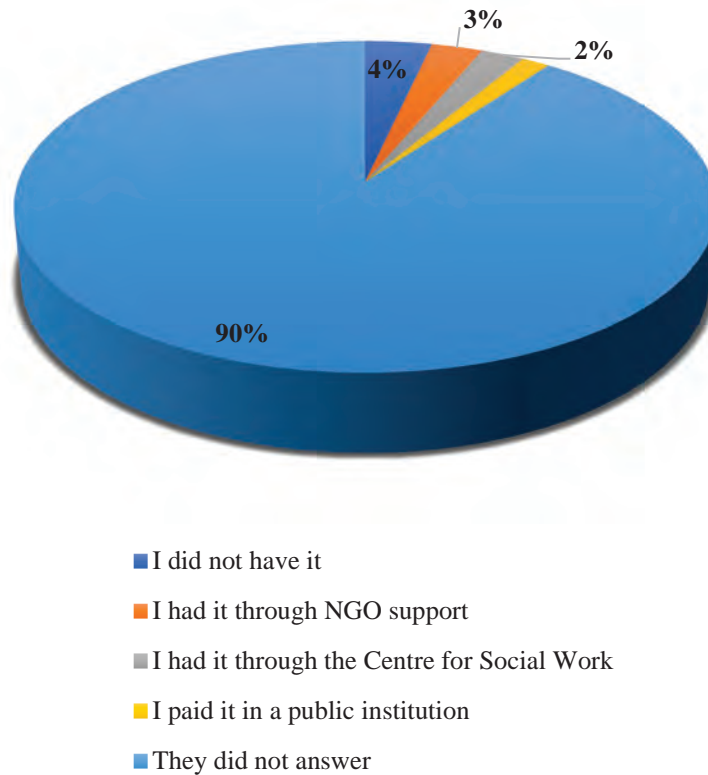
When it comes to reproductive rights, Roma women answered to the questions that refer to preventive gynaecological examination, access to it, especially during pregnancy as shown in Charts 25 and 26.

Chart 25: If she has health insurance, how was she invited for a preventive gynaecological examination?



- Informed by an NGO
- I do not know
- Informed through flyers/notices in the Community Healthcare Centre
- There were no such actions
- Invited through public means of informing

Chart 26: How did you exercise right to preventive gynaecological examination without health insurance?



Totally 34% of them were invited for preventive examination by non-government organisations, and only 13% stated that they received an invitation from a Community Healthcare Centre. 12% of them think that such actions do not exist, 6% heard about it by means of public information, and 21% of them did not answer.

Eventually, 50% of women were informed about preventive gynaecological examinations in one of the above-stated ways.

It is especially concerning that 90% of Roma women did not have preventive gynaecological examination, i.e. only 5% of women had this examination.

When it comes to regular examinations, situation with pregnancy is slightly better. Totally 77% of Roma women stated that they had regular examinations, 10% stated that they did not, and 13% did not answer – this is the case of women over 50.

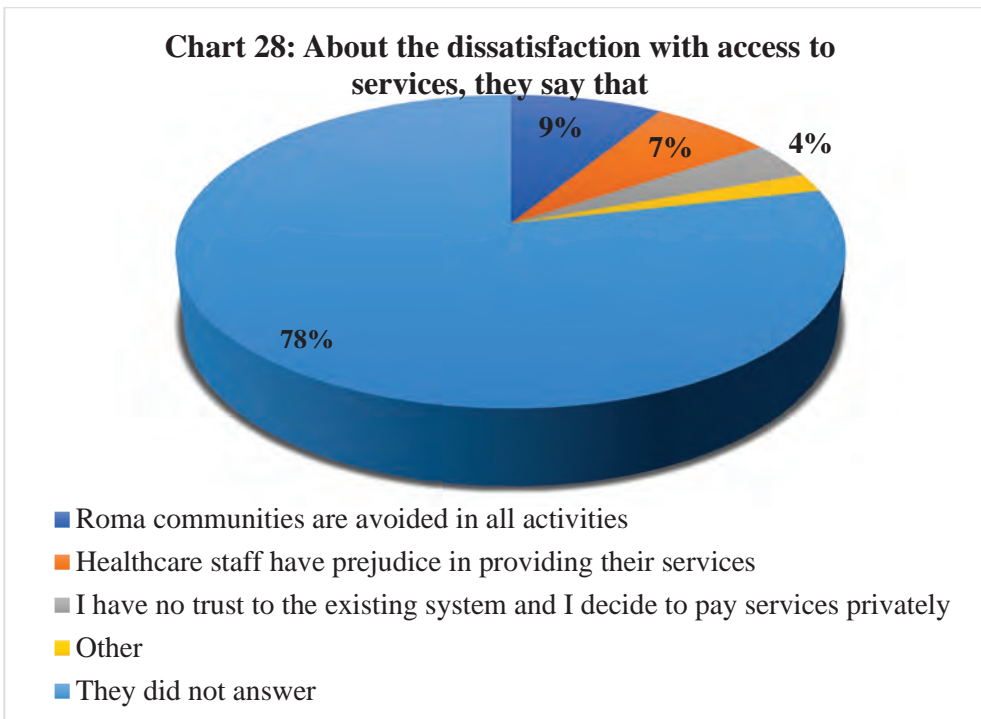
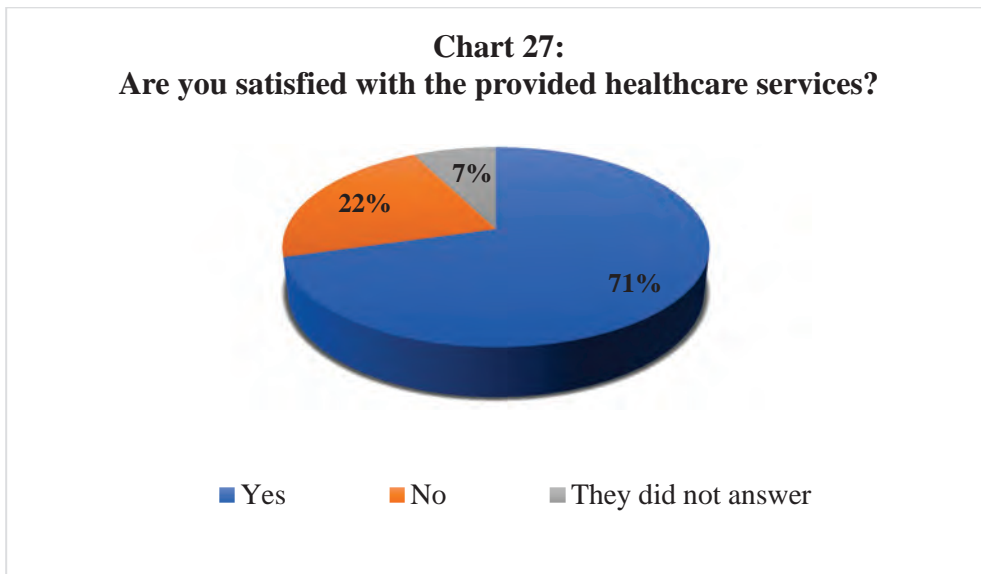
As the reason for not having examination, Roma women answered in the following order:

1. I was not pregnant,
2. I did not have a health identification card,
3. I am not married,
4. I do not have children,
5. I did not have anyone to take care of my children while I am absent,
6. It is a shame,
7. The Community Healthcare Centre is too far,
8. I did not have anyone to take care of my children while I am absent,
9. The Community Healthcare Centre is too far,

- 5. I did not want to go to the doctor,
- 6. I gave birth at home,

- 10. I have no possibilities for personal hygiene,
- 11. I did not complete my residence registration after getting married.

When it comes to access to health services, 71% of Roma women stated that they are satisfied, and 22% that they are not satisfied with the provided healthcare services, and 7% did not answer.



There are indicative data saying that 78% of Roma women think that Roma communities are avoided in the field of health care, as well as 7% of them think that healthcare staff shows prejudice, 4% of Roma women do not have trust in the healthcare system and pays examinations privately.

When it comes to showing prejudice toward Roma women during their examinations, in the column “prejudice” (7%) we cite their answers, as well as answers from the column “Other” (2%).

Roma women, so (9%) of them stated the following:

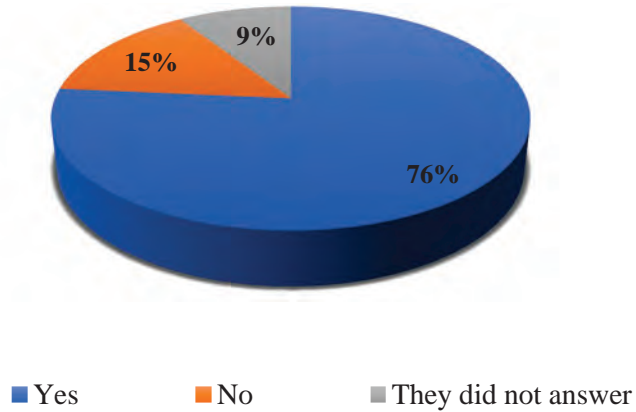
- “I think that the persons without health insurance need to have examinations free of charge. People do not have examinations because they cost a lot, they only have it if a certain NGO organises something, like when we went to Bugojno, and it was paid by the organisation “Bolja budućnost” from Tuzla.”
- “Well, they were somehow disgusting to me, because I was young, they said that I rushed too much with that. Then they said that “I smell”, although I really took care to be neat when I would go to the doctor.”
- “I don’t want to be examined by male doctors and they were rude because I said that, and they don’t have a female doctor for examination, so they did not do examination for me.”
- “They behaved rudely with me... I was at the hospital for five days before giving birth probably because I was a Roma woman, they did not want to visit me and they were rude. At the admission to the hospital, I had a bacteria, and during our stay at the hospital the baby and I got bacteria, and we were administered infusion only at the end of our stay, not before.”
- “They do not accept my health identification card because my residence is registered in another town, and in the place where I live now, I have to pay for everything.”
- “They will not let the person in if they do not have money to pay for the examination or any other way of funding.”
- “The outpatient unit is too distant from the place, and we wait for examinations for too long.”

5.5.2. Children’s Access to the Health System

When it comes to the access of children to the health care, Roma women answered the questions regarding the access to the children’s health care. To the question: “Do you take children to the doctor?”

- 76% of Roma women answered affirmatively;
- 15% of Roma women answered that they do not take children to the doctor;
- 9% of them did not answer – those are women who do not have children.

Chart 29:
Do you take children to the doctor for examination?



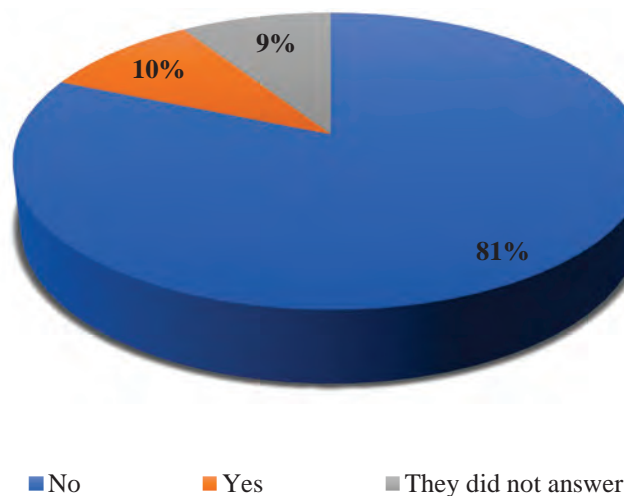
Do children get medical care easily? Most Roma women (66%) confirmed that they do, and 10% answered that they do not get doctor's assistance. The rest of the Roma women did not answer this question.

When it comes to the vaccination of children, Roma women confirmed (79% of them with children) that their children are vaccinated, and 13% of them that they are not. Vaccination was conducted in authorised healthcare institutions and most Roma women are familiar with the schedule of regular vaccinations.

When it comes to the support of children with disabilities, 81% of Roma women stated that they do not have children with disabilities, and 10% of them that they have (Chart 30).

The information that only 5% of children have the support of institutions is another indication.

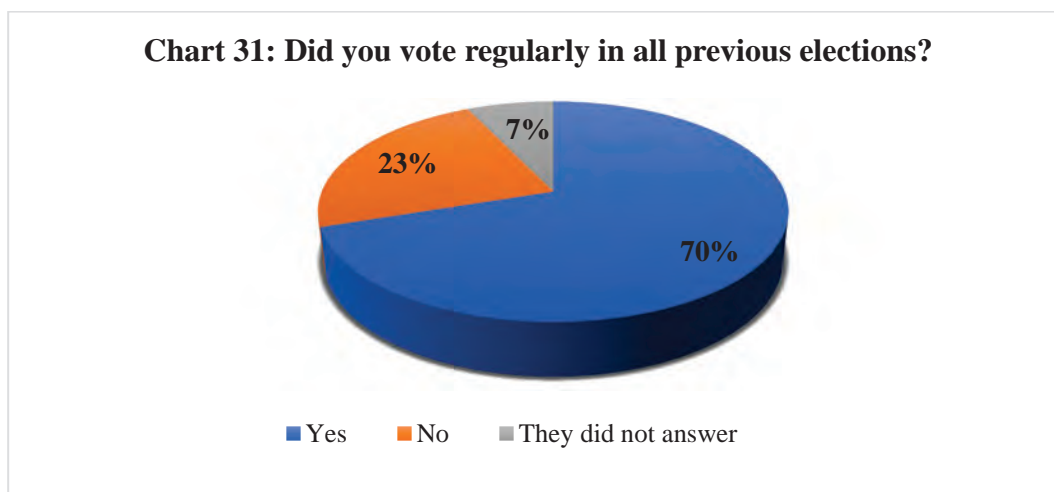
Chart 30: Do you have children with disabilities or developmental delay?



When it comes to the dental care of children, 41% of them visit the dentist, and 44% of them do not visit, i.e. 16% have problems with dental health, and 74% do not have that problem.

5.6. Political Participation of the Roma Women

Although the Law on Gender Equality of BiH defines good and practical standards on the necessary representation of men and women with a minimum of 40% in all governing bodies, the election system in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as patriarchal practices of political parties, and generally non-affirmative social attitude toward participation of women in political and public life still result in extremely low level of women's participation in legislative and executive bodies in almost all levels of governance, especially when it comes to Roma women.



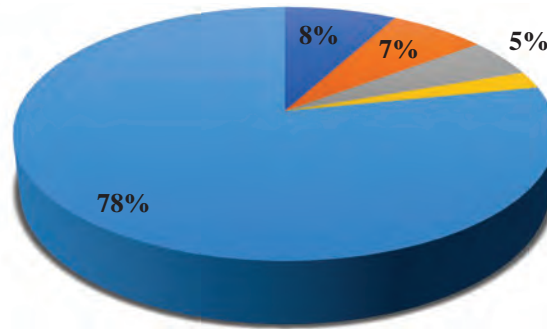
In the survey on election participation, Roma women answered as follows:

- ✓ 70% of Roma women confirmed that they vote,
- ✓ 23% of Roma women stated that they do not vote,
- ✓ 7% of them did not answer.

Roma women who do not vote stated that:

- ✓ In 78% of cases their voting is purposeless,
- ✓ 7% did not want to vote,
- ✓ 5% did not have identification documents,
- ✓ 2% have their residence registered in another town,
- ✓ 8% did not answer.

**Chart 32: Did you vote regularly in all the previous elections?
If your answer is NO, what is the reason for that?**



- I do not see a purpose of voting
- I do not want to
- I do not have identification documents
- My residence is registered in another town
- They did not answer

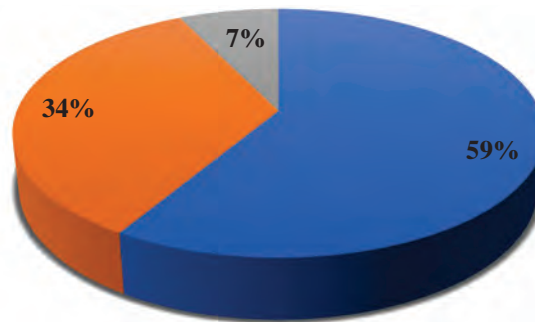
When it comes to voting in the next elections:

- ✓ 69% of Roma women stated that they would vote,
- ✓ 24% of Roma women stated that they would not vote,
- ✓ 7% did not answer.

Being asked about the membership in any of the political parties, Roma women answered as follows:

- ✓ 14% of them are members of some political party,
- ✓ 80% of them are not members of any political party,
- ✓ 6% of them did not answer.

**Charter 33: Are you going to vote in the upcoming
elections for Roma representatives?**



- Yes
- No
- They did not provide any answer

When it comes to voting for Roma representatives, Roma women answered as follows:

- ✓ 59% of them would vote for them,
- ✓ 34% of them would not vote for them,

- ✓ 7% did not answer.

As the reason for non-voting, Roma women stated that:

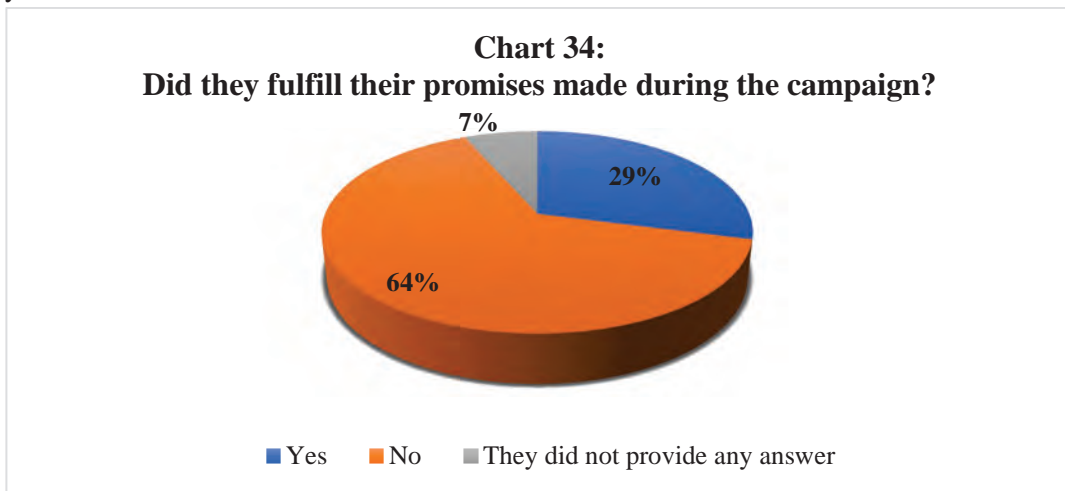
- ✓ they are not sure if they would help the Roma community,
- ✓ previously elected representatives did not provide any significant contribution to the community,
- ✓ they are the minority, and their vote does not mean much.

About the participation of Roma women in political life, how much is it important:

- ✓ 72% of Roma women confirmed that it is extremely important,
- ✓ 22% of them stated that it is not important,
- ✓ 6% did not answer.

As the reason for participation in political life, Roma women stated that:

- ✓ Roma women can help more than men,
- ✓ they fight stronger for women’s rights,
- ✓ they are a good example to other Roma women,
- ✓ Roma women will be more respected inside their community and further,
- ✓ they did not answer.



When it comes to participation in political campaigns, in their answers, Roma women stated as follows: 41% that their local place was visited by a political candidate, 3% that no political candidate visited them, whereas the remaining percentage of Roma women did not answer this question.

Being asked if the political candidates fulfilled their promises during the campaign, as shown in Chart 35, Roma women answered:

- ✓ 29% of them stated that they fulfilled their promise,
- ✓ 64% of them stated that they did not fulfil it, and
- ✓ 7% of them did not answer to this question.

It was indicative that a significant number of Roma women are interested in political participation and that over 70% of them answered that women’s participation in politics is extremely important and that women can provide better assistance than men.

5.7. Access to Public Utilities and Services – Attitudes of Institutions

A survey was conducted with 28 representatives of institutions coming from centres for social work, centres for mental health, police departments, community healthcare centres, public institutions for pre-school, elementary and secondary education, and employment services.

In this survey with representatives of institutions, we asked questions on the same topics as in a survey with Roma women. Based on the same parameters, we obtained attitudes of Roma women that refer to: the existence of contact points for Roma, information of Roma women about their rights, obstacles in exercising rights to education, exercising rights to health care - focusing on reproductive rights, support to Roma women exposed to violence, and influence of political participation of Roma women to the level of exercising their rights.

5.7.1. Contact Point for Roma

It is indicative that 29% of institution representatives did not answer. Also, 32% of institution representatives stated that they do not have a person in charge of that, and 39% confirmed that they have a person in charge of co-operation and support to Roma. If we take into consideration that 29% did not answer, it is indicative that 51% of institutions do not have a person in charge of co-operation and support of Roma.

Chart 35: Is there a person within your institution in charge of the co-operation and support for Roma people?

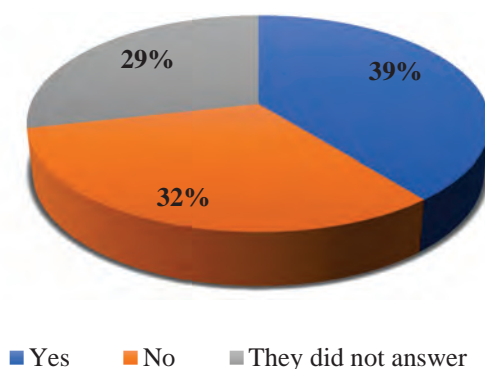
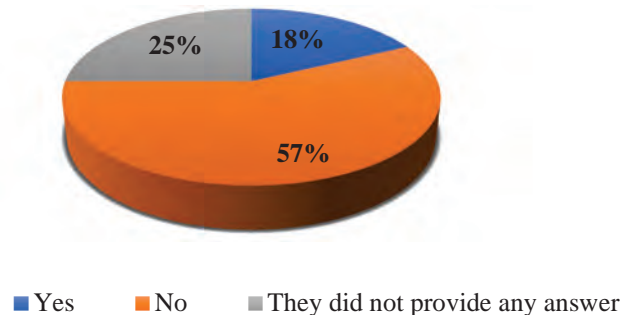


Chart 36: Are there any Roma employees in your institution?

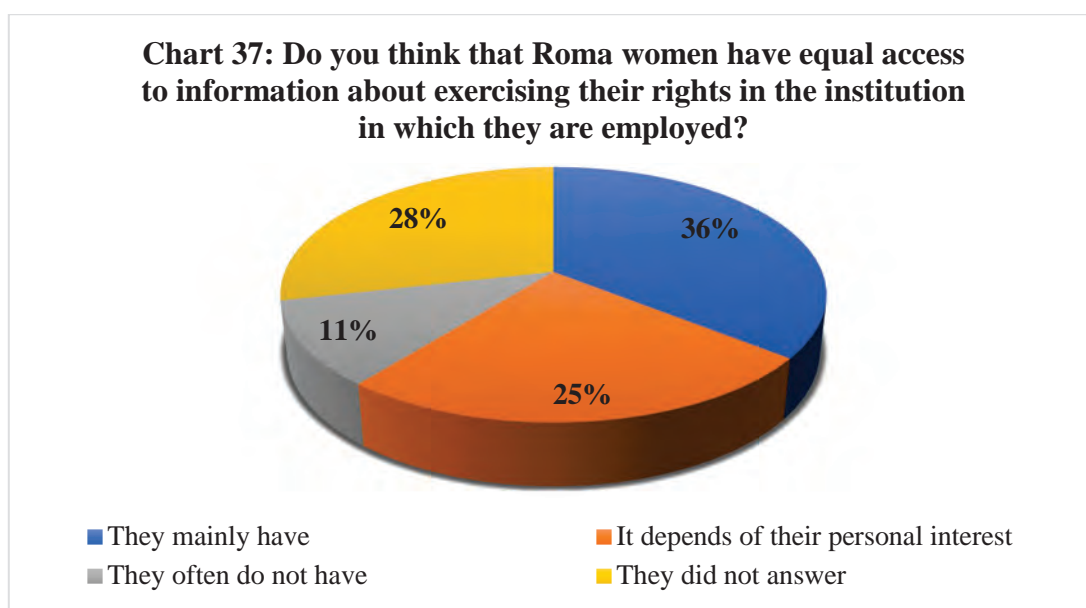


When it comes to the employment of Roma, it is encouraging that 18% of respondents stated that there is a Roma employee in their institution.

5.7.2. Informing about Rights

When it comes to informing about ways of exercising the rights of Roma women: 36% of respondents consider that they have the necessary information.

Two answers are indicative: **11%** consider that they are often not informed, and **28%** of representatives did not answer, we can conclude that **almost 40% of Roma women could have a problem because of lack of information about the way of exercising rights.**

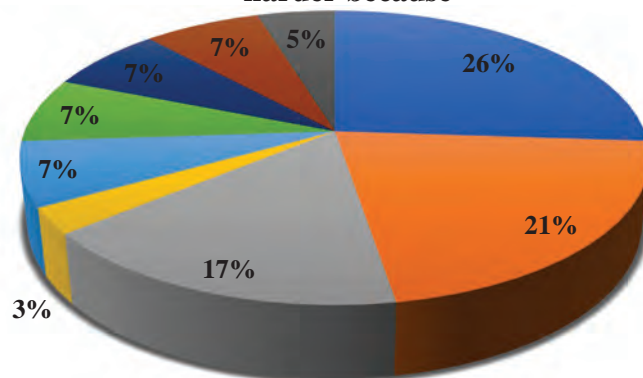


5.7.3. What are the obstacles in exercising rights – The perception of the institutional representatives

When it comes to the reasons that make Roma women exercise their rights harder, respondents state these answers:

- As the most important obstacle, they state the education level of Roma women, the lack of family support and not enough developed and adjusted programmes for Roma women support within institutions;**
- They consider that there is significantly less influence by: insufficient interest of the local community, co-operation level with Roma associations, and the fact that Roma women do not have personal identification documents and other circumstances;
- They think that the least influence is in the lack of means for programmes for the development of adjusted and better comprehensible information (explanations in a more simple language).

Chart 38: Do you think that Roma women exercise their rights harder because



- They are not educated
- There is no sufficient support within the family
- There are no adjusted programmes developed within institutions
- There is a lack of funds for adjusted programmes
- The local community has no interest in solving the problems of Roma women
- The co-operation with Roma associations is not developed
- Other
- They do not have personal identification documents
- Information is not adjusted and comprehensible

5.7.4. What are the obstacles in acquiring education – The perception of the institutional representatives

In the survey, institution representatives were quite indecisive with their answers.

- 36% of them stated that Roma women have difficulties in education;
- 38% of them stated that this is not the case;
- 28% of them did not have any attitude on that.

It is indicative that they do not have a sufficient level of knowledge about the circumstances that prevent Roma women from getting their education.

In the second multiple-choice question, respondents had affirmative answers about the conclusion, i.e. (42%) did not state the reasons that prevent Roma women from getting their education, although they had options to choose.

The remaining 58% answered that the major reasons for difficulties in education of Roma women are the following:

- a) They leave school (19%),
- b) Parents prevent them from getting an education (14%),
- c) They did not have a chance to get their education (12%),
- d) They get married early (9%),
- e) They have such customs (2%),
- f) There are no adequate programmes for Roma women support (2%).

5.7.5. Obstacles in health care – The perception of the institutional representatives

When it comes to providing health care with a focus on reproductive rights, not all institutions provide their answers.

We conclude that institutions authorised to provide services do not share information on how to instruct Roma women to use health care services. On the other hand, there is an encouraging fact that 61% of respondents know that Roma women have access to health care, and 14% of them think that they do not exercise this right, and there is a concerning fact that 25% did not answer.

When it comes to the reason why many of them do not have health care, it is indicative that 42% of Roma women confirmed that they were not informed about it – that they actually did not answer, and 3% of Roma women confirmed that they do not know the reason.

There is a concerning fact that practically 45% of institution representatives actually does not have information on how Roma women can access health care, i.e. that only 23% of them stated why Roma women do not have access to health care.

When it comes to the special programmes for medical preventive examinations dedicated exclusively for Roma women, from the answers provided it is *indicative that according to the respondents from institutions, there is no such programmes (71%), i.e. that (29%) do not know about such programme.*

When it comes to co-operation with Roma organisations in implementation of preventive medical programmes, respondents from institutions stated that 32% have co-operation with Roma organisations, and 7% regularly implements some programmes that include Roma women.

It is indicative that 25% of institution representatives do not know about the programmes of Roma associations, including 36% of respondents from institutions who did not answer this question.

5.7.6. Obstacles – Protection of victims of violence – The perception of the institutional representatives

When it comes to the right support for Roma women exposed to violence, only 28% of respondents from institutions had the experience to get the case of or provide support to Roma women (women and girls) who were exposed to a certain form of violence.

In their answers, they answered that mental violence (39%) dominates, followed by physical violence (38%) and economic violence (23%).

When it comes to the location of violence, institution representatives did not answer about the location (61%), and for other entities, they stated that 18% of violence was committed within close families, 7% in the wider family, 7% was committed by a familiar perpetrator within the community, and also 7% was committed by an unfamiliar perpetrator within the community.

Being asked if they had adequate co-operation with the victim, 53% did not answer, 36% thought that they had adequate co-operation with the victim and 11% that they did not establish adequate co-operation. 89% of respondents did not explain the reason why there was no good co-operation. It is indicative that they do not have experience. Furthermore, they stated that in 7% of cases, Roma women gave up reporting, and in 4% of cases, they stated that they wanted to solve it on their own inside the community.

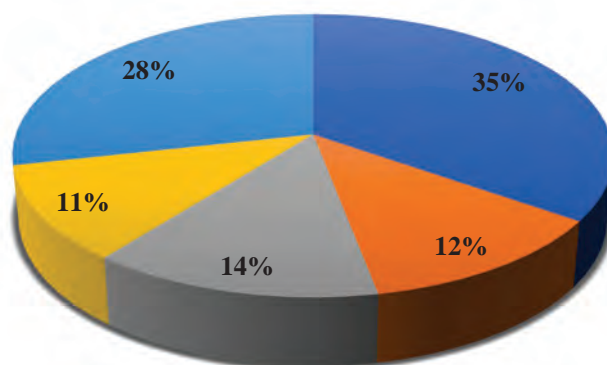
5.7.7. Advantages of political participation of the Roma women – The Perception of the institutional representatives

When it comes to the political participation of Roma women, respondents from institutions confirmed in 75% of cases that their participation is very important.

Roma women think that the political participation:

- a) provides a positive example to other Roma women (30%),
- b) will make Roma women more respected within their community and further (17%),
- c) will enable them to fight stronger for women’s rights (15%),
- d) provides a better position of Roma women in helping more than men (13%).

Chart 39: Do you think that it is important that women (Roma women) participate in political life? If the answer is YES, is it because



- (Roma) women can help better than men
- They fight stronger for women's rights
- They provide a positive example to other Roma women
- Roma women will be more respected within their community and further
- They did not answer

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

On the basis of the conducted analysis, in this part, we singled out questions referring to the key problems that Roma women encounter in their everyday life, primarily considering their attitudes. We divided conclusions and recommendations according to the fields of the research.

6.1. Recommendations for the improvement of socio-economic position

Conclusion:

Considering their age, Roma women are dominantly younger persons and belong to the working-age population with features of the young population. Most of them (73%) live in families (close or wide), and they dominantly (91%) have children with 50% of children aged up to 18. There is only an insignificant portion of female children up to 3%. In the surveyed population of Roma women, there are 10% of persons with disabilities. Almost a quarter (21%) are heads of their households, 12% are single mothers, 9% live all alone. In terms of housing conditions, in 51% of cases, they have elementary housing conditions, 31% live in an unconditioned dwelling, and 31% live in a small social apartment up to 25 square metres surface. Only 4% of Roma women stated that they are employed, 4% are retirees, 26% live on social assistance, 25% are supported by a family member, and 36% are supported by non-formal seasonal work, which directs to an extreme vulnerability of the economic position of Roma women. When it comes to their incomes, 29% live of the amount under 200.00 BAM, and almost 33% of Roma women do not have enough food for their children. They have extremely low trust in the work of institutions, 11% stated that they got assistance, and only a quarter decided to ask for help from institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is necessary to advocate the development of specific programmes which will on the basis of the vulnerability of families of women household-holders, offer a more comprehensive form of economic aid, taking into consideration the overall conditions in which these Roma women live, and offer them a permanent social assistance model through defining of their existential minimum.

6.2. Recommendations for the improvement in access to education

Conclusion:

When it comes to the level of education, 55% of Roma women do not have elementary education, and only 24% finished elementary school. A very concerning educational and vocational status of Roma women, 89% of them confirmed that they do not have a vocation, i.e. that they did not finish education. It is indicative that they do not have sufficient support for education, especially retraining and adjusted programmes and financial support while they are in their education process.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To establish a sustainable programme for the education and training of Roma women in which necessary funds and time continuity in its implementation will be provided.

6.3. Recommendations for the improvement of the education of children

Conclusion:

Education of children is extremely important, especially in solving the problem of regular school attended by Roma children, with a very high degree of children leaving or not regularly attending school. There is a very small percentage of Roma children included in pre-school programmes, there are no available programmes for support of children and parents, and the children who attend school do not acquire enough knowledge and skills and when they attend school, they do not have IT equipment, sufficient school supplies or they do not have an adequate room for learning. They get married early, or they are forced to work on the street.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To establish a sustainable systematic model of providing scholarships in elementary as well as secondary education, regardless of their social status. Also, professional help and additional learning and direction need to be provided within educational institutions in order to accomplish better knowledge.

6.4. Recommendations for the improvement in employment

Conclusion:

When it comes to the possibility of Roma women's employment, the possibility of employment was initially analysed. It is a fact that one-half of Roma women are in search, and the other is not in search of a job, which is confirmed through the survey in two ways, through their age and later through their answers and interest in getting a job, and also a great number of Roma women was almost not included in the existing employment programmes (*80% of Roma women did not participate in employment programme, and 90% of Roma women in programmes of retraining*). *Roma women almost do not have any work experience which makes them totally non-competitive at the labour market.* In the existing programmes, they stated that the employer did not have any interest in keeping them working after the expiry of the grant, because there were not sufficient funds for the employment of Roma women, or because they did not have enough experience in managing an independent business. In the existing programmes that are implemented, Roma women think that they are discriminated against or excluded because they are women or unqualified, and they think that most of the women do not work because of tradition. They also do not have or do not get adjusted or right information on employment possibilities. Roma women are unqualified so they have a chance to work: in seasonal jobs, collecting secondary raw materials, in the marketplace, in non-government organisations, as cleaning ladies, on a daily wage, as utility workers, in agriculture, in selling used footwear and clothes, by begging on street or in the hospitality industry.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Develop a separate programme of retraining for Roma women in co-operation with women organisations and potential employers for more sustainable Roma women employment.

Create a specially adjusted informative package that informs Roma women about the possibilities of additional education and retraining for the purpose of conducting a campaign.

Create a special package of support for Roma women entrepreneurs to start their businesses independently or with other women and establish offices for professional support and counselling within local self-government units.

6.5. Recommendations for the improvement in protection from gender-based violence

Conclusion:

When it comes to the field of gender-based violence against Roma women, we investigated the incidence of violence, forms, and attitudes of institutions toward Roma women who were exposed to some sort of violence, and Roma women who confirmed that they experienced violence in the last two years. When it comes to the place, i.e. the environment in which the violence was committed against women, it mostly happened in a close family environment, by a familiar perpetrator and in a wider family, and the least inside the community. The majority of Roma women avoided speaking in public about violence. Most women were exposed to combined violence, mental and physical, followed by economic violence. Only 7% of Roma women mentioned sexual violence, whereas 4% of Roma women mentioned digital violence. Generally, Roma women did not have any help from the community, and there was a great level of distrust in cases when they asked for help but they did not get it, especially in terms of their further security when they avoided reporting violence.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To conduct specific research focused on the investigation of prejudice against Roma themselves, but also institutions obliged to provide support for them.

To establish counselling centres, i.e. develop a special working place to work with marginalised groups of women in the prevention of violence and provision of support to victims of violence, ensuring the budget that would include working on the field inside the community in co-operation with Roma women's associations.

6.6. Recommendations for the improvement in the protection of children

Conclusion:

The position of children was investigated through several additional questions. Disciplining children is seen as a good method by the majority of Roma women. When it comes to early marriages, around 23% of Roma women confirmed that their children got married at an early age, and in double more cases, those were the daughters. They answered this question reluctantly so that the conclusion of this would be that this appears that there is a much bigger incidence than they stated. We got the confirmation of these attitudes regarding getting married at an early age in the part of the survey when 50% of respondents stated that they got married before being mature, and 30% of them had one child before being mature. When it comes to caring about children and their position inside the family and child labour, 20% of Roma women stated that children work in order to earn money for themselves or their family, and 65% stated that they do not send their children to work on the street or any other places. They think that their employment and child allowance will contribute to a better position for children as well as enable children to stay inside the pre-education institutions and better housing conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Authorised institutions are supposed to establish a sustainable programme for support of Roma children which would enable more massive placement of Roma children inside pre-school institutions, improve the existing and open new free daily centres-playrooms in a local self-government unit for Roma children and other children in the state of need.

6.7. Recommendations for the improvement of the access to health care and reproductive rights

Conclusion:

When it comes to the reproductive rights of Roma women, the research focused on medical preventive gynaecological examinations, and access to these, especially during pregnancy. The best preventive form of support for Roma women is provided by programmes organised by non-government organisations. The general conclusion is that only 50% of Roma women were actually informed about preventive gynaecological examinations. There is a concerning fact that 90% of Roma women did not have gynaecological examination. When it comes to examinations during pregnancy, the situation is slightly better, but there is still a certain problem around 25% of women are outside the system. Roma women state that there are prejudices in terms of exercising this right among Roma women and healthcare staff, Roma women state that some of the reasons for not visiting a doctor are e.g. “I’m not married”, “I gave birth at home”, “I feel ashamed”, “I have no possibility for a good personal hygiene”, “I don’t have my residence registered...”

There is dissatisfaction with the services provided and they mentioned cases of discrimination. The research also showed that the majority, almost 80% of Roma women think that Roma communities are avoided in the implementation of healthcare programmes and that healthcare staff shows prejudices. There is still a problem with access to the healthcare system, especially in FBiH, the majority of Roma women are outside the healthcare system – they do not have insurance policies.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To establish a sustainable programme that would enable Roma women inside the community a free gynaecological examination once a year, and for the purpose of regular visits to a doctor (creating an atmosphere of trust), to create a campaign in co-operation with Roma non-government organisations that would indicate the importance of reproductive rights.

To develop instructions in co-operation with cantonal healthcare bodies about the manner and way of creating a regular right to health care of Roma.

6.8. Recommendations for the improvement of children’s access to health system

Conclusion:

In terms of providing healthcare services to children, the research showed that all Roma children do not have regular medical help, and there is also a great number of unvaccinated Roma children that did not vaccinated. Roma children who belong to the group of persons with disabilities do not have the necessary support. When it comes to dental support, over half of Roma children did not have a chance to visit the dentist.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To create programmes which would provide free systematic examination once a year, including the check-up of vaccination and examination and support of a dentist. It is also necessary to improve and continuously provide support to Roma children with disabilities.

6.9. Recommendations for the improvement in political participation

Conclusion:

When it comes to political participation, it can be concluded that a relatively great number of Roma women, with 70% of them confirming that they vote, and almost the same percentage (78%) think that their voice has no purpose so that their intention is to vote less in the following elections (69%), and almost 24% clearly states that they do not want to vote. A small number of Roma women are members of some political party (14%), when it comes to the decision on voting for a Roma minority representative, 59% would vote for them, 34% would not support a Roma representative, 60% thinks that they did not make any significant contribution to the community, but also that their vote does not mean a lot. When it comes to participation in the elections of Roma women, 72% of them think that it is extremely good and that Roma women can help more than men, that they provide a good example to other Roma women and that they will be more respected in the community. Institution representatives have almost the same attitude in terms of the importance of the political participation of Roma women.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

With the aim of making better participation of Roma women in political life, it is necessary to create a separate programme of education and informative campaign in order for Roma women to learn about the election processes and explain the role, importance of the elections and functions of various levels of authorities.

6.10. Recommendations for the improvement of access to public utilities and services

Conclusion:

When it comes to the improvement of Roma women's access to institutions, most institutions do not have staff for co-operation and support of Roma, and only 39% of institution representatives confirmed that they have, and 18% of institutions confirmed that they have Roma employees.

When it comes to access to information and informing Roma women about their rights, almost 40% of Roma women have a problem because of the lack of information about the way to exercise rights, and they see the level of education as the most important obstacle.

Roma women do not have enough support for their families, and there are no developed and adjusted programmes support to Roma women, they think that there is significantly weaker influence by: insufficient interest of the local community, the level of co-operation with Roma associations, and the fact that Roma women do not have their personal identification documents and other circumstances.

Institution representatives do not have sufficient information about the circumstances that prevent Roma women from getting their education, although some of them named as some of the reasons for leaving school, opposite to Roma women, institutions consider that there is a sufficient number of adequate support programmes for education of Roma women.

When it comes to health care, almost half of the institution representatives do not have information about how Roma women can exercise their right to health care, and when it comes to special programmes for medical preventive examinations exclusively intended for Roma women, there are no such programmes.

When it comes to the implementation of preventive medical examinations and co-operation with Roma associations, institution respondents stated that 32% of them cooperate with Roma organisations, but only 7% implement a programme that includes Roma women regularly.

When it comes to adequate support for Roma women exposed to violence, a very small number of institution representatives had the experience in having subjects or providing support to Roma women (women or girls) who were victims of any form of violence, but they evaluated forms of violence in a similar way, and only a third of institution representatives think that they had good co-operation with victims of violence, but they were unable to state the reason.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

For the purpose of improving access to public utilities and services, it is necessary to ask institutions in co-operation with Roma women and their network to develop a plan for implementation of activities that refer to:

- A. assigning contact point (official) for Roma,*
- B. improvement of informing system on rights in different sectors,*
- C. development of an information package according to the list of rights,*
- D. adoption of additional programmes for education and retraining of Roma women or amendment of the existing ones,*
- E. adoption of sustainable programmes (and financing) for the prevention of reproductive rights for Roma women,*
- F. adoption of sustainable programmes (and financing) of support of Roma women victims of violence,*
- G. adoption of specific programmes for the prevention of early marriages and programmes for the prevention of forced labour of children and begging.*