

## Research on access to socio-economic rights for Roma women in Serbia



**Belgrade, October 2015**

**Praxis is a national non-governmental and non-profit organisation established in 2004 in Belgrade, which protects human rights by providing legal protection and advocating for elimination of systemic obstacles in access to rights.**

**Praxis acts in the area of status and socio-economic rights, antidiscrimination, gender equality, migration and child rights.**

**In addition to providing free legal aid, Praxis achieves its goals and performs its tasks through monitoring of public policies, research, analysis and advocating for systemic solutions and the elimination of obstacles to accessing rights by raising awareness of the problems faced by marginalised and socially excluded communities attempting to integrate, educational outreach, publishing of reports, and providing expert support for reforms, as well as through networking and cooperation.**

The research has been prepared as part of the project entitled *Legal Aid and Advocacy – Access to Rights and Combating Discrimination against the Roma*, implemented by Praxis, in cooperation with the Civil Rights Defenders and with the financial support of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. The content of this report expresses only the standpoints, opinions and views of the author and in no way reflects the views and opinions of the Civil Rights Defenders or the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of the research on access to socio-economic rights for Roma women, conducted by Praxis, is to provide information on Roma women's access to the rights to health, education, employment, social assistance and information on housing conditions. The research also deals with gender perspective, examining the situation of women compared to men in the same community. It was conducted in ten municipalities in southern Serbia: Aleksinac, Prokuplje, Bojnik, Bor, Kuršumlija, Lebane, Leskovac, Bela Palanka, Kruševac and Knjaževac in the period February-August 2015. A total of 100 Roma women and 100 Roma men were interviewed. Data were collected during the visits of Praxis teams to Roma settlements.

The average age of male and female respondents was 37 years, and 78% of them were either married or lived in a common-law marriage. The average age for concluding the first marriage or entering a common-law marriage varies significantly between women and men. The surveyed Roma women experience their first marriage or common-law marriage as early as at the age of 14.7 years on average, but it should be noted that the youngest female respondents who entered the marriage or common-law marriage were 13 years old and such was the case in four of ten municipalities. The surveyed Roma men, on average, enter their first marriage or common-law marriage at the age of 17.5 years. On average, men are underage at the time of entering their first marriage/common-law marriage, but 3% of respondents entered such a relationship at the lowest age of 15 years.

Ninety-eight percent (98%) of women and 100% of men entered the marriage/common-law marriage willingly, while 10% of women and 1% of men are single parents. The results related to a free consent to marry are not significantly different for women and men, but the percentage of single parents among women and men show that women are traditionally seen as parents who continue to care for their children after the breakup with a partner. They are also more susceptible than men to the family will/pressure when it comes to marriage.

In addition, 89% of Roma women have children, three on average, minimum one and maximum ten. The Roma women give birth to their first child as early as at the age of 17 years on average, while the lowest age for giving birth to their first child is 13 years.

## Access to the right to health care for Roma women

As regards the right to health care, the research included questions related to the possession of health cards, situations in which Roma women seek medical attention, as well as the treatment of female members of the Roma national minority by health workers.<sup>1</sup>

Possession of personal documents is a precondition for exercising the rights related to health insurance. The research results show that 79% of Roma women and 73% of Roma men have a health card. This means that there are no significant gender-based differences. The most common reason for not having a health card is the lack of other personal documents required for the issuance of health cards (this is the case of 66% women and 60% men). None of the female respondents stated that they had faced problems at the time of childbirth due to the lack of health card or possession of unverified health card, which points to the compliance with the regulations stipulating that delivery shall be covered by emergency health care and that the cost of delivery shall be reimbursed from the state budget in accordance with law. However, the female respondents are sometimes afraid that the aforementioned regulations will not be applied and that they will be treated differently because of their ethnicity.

“During the first three deliveries I did not face problems for not having a health card. Before the last delivery I did not go to the hospital because I was afraid that I would be charged the costs of hospital treatment, which I was not able to pay, so I gave birth at home.” (*F, YOB 1994, Bela Palanka*)

“I did not have a health card on the occasion of either of my deliveries, although it was requested in the hospital, not because of costs or entry of personal data, but because the information on blood type”. (*F, YOB 1992, Kuršumlija*)

As regards health care of children, 77% of female respondents stated that their children had health cards. Children usually do not have health cards because their parents do not have health insurance as a result of legal invisibility of parents, or the fact that parents are persons without citizenship, permanent and/or temporary residence, etc.

Sixty-five percent (65%) of all surveyed Roma women seek medical attention in cases of influenza, cold or some other illness, 50% in the cases of sick children, 40% in emergency cases, 40% in cases of childbirth, 35% in cases of pregnancy examinations and 31% preventively.

The issue of treatment is closely related to discrimination. Given that discrimination refers to unjustified differentiation or unequal treatment based on personal characteristics, the research included questions related to the treatment of Roma women in health care institutions by medical doctors and other medical staff. As regards the treatment of female respondents in health care institutions, 83% stated that they were satisfied with the way they were treated by medical doctors and other medical staff, while 10% of them expressed their dissatisfaction, usually emphasising that

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on Roma access to the right to health care, see Praxis report [Analysis of the Main Obstacles and Problems in Access of Roma to the Rights to Health and Health Care](#)

medical staff were rude and harsh. When asked if they were given a clear explanation about their illness and further steps they should take, 86% of them responded affirmatively, while 7% of them responded negatively. If we analyse the answers by municipality where the research was conducted, the percentage shows no significant differences, with the exception of Kruševac, where only 50% of Roma women responded that they were satisfied with the way they were treated by medical doctors and other medical staff, and 60% of them stated that they were given a clear explanation about their illness and further steps they should take. It should be noted that further conversation with the female respondents revealed that usually they were not able to recognise discrimination, even when it was direct, and especially when it was a covert form of discrimination. In cases where it was recognised, the women lacked knowledge about the mechanisms of protection.

“Doctors are unkind and constantly angry; I do not know if they behave like that always and with everyone. I am illiterate and do not understand when they talk about the procedures, and they have no patience. When one of my children was sick, we stayed in the hospital ward and I never received a response about the health status of my child, but I was constantly reminded that I had to pay the cost of treatment because we were not insured. Then the Social Welfare Centre helped me.” (F, YOB 1979, Leskovac)

“I am very satisfied with the way I was treated by the doctors who received me without any problems as a pregnant woman without a health card, examined me and issued a pregnancy certificate.” (F, YOB 1999, Prokuplje).

“I am not satisfied with the treatment received by medical staff. When I went to see a doctor last winter, I entered the doctor’s office and she told me that I didn’t need to come since she could see that I was not ill, although I really was ill. She didn’t even examine me and I didn’t complain to anyone.” (F, YOB 2000, Bor)

“I have no objection to the way the doctors and medical staff treat me and my children; they are kind and they treat us the same way they treat other patients.” (F, YOB 1994, Bojnik)

“Doctors do not treat Roma the same way, they are less kind to Roma, yell at them when they go to the health centre.” (F, YOB 1999, Bojnik)

“I am satisfied; they are kind and I have no objection to their work.” (F, YOB 2000, Bojnik)

“I am not satisfied with how I was treated by medical staff. They are harsh and have no patience.” (F, YOB 1967, Kuršumlja)

“I am mostly satisfied with how I am treated by doctors, but I’m not satisfied with how I am addressed by nurses. A large number of them are usually unkind, and many of them are unkind because I am a Roma woman. It happens that we wait for a long time in the corridors and the nurses are irritated with the kids screaming, singing... And it is understandable that they cannot keep quiet for so long” (F, YOB 1988, Bela Palanka)

## Access to the right to social protection for Roma women

The part of the survey about the right to social protection was intended to examine how many people exercised this right, the scope of their needs for social protection, whether there was any difference in the needs of women and men, whether there were more women or men among the right holders and how the staff in social welfare centres treated Roma women.<sup>2</sup>

The research results show that the right to social protection is exercised by 38% of women who are right holders and 43% of men. In addition, 27% of women responded that their spouses/common-law partners were holders of the rights to social protection, while the same answer was given by only 7% of men. This leads to a conclusion that men are traditionally seen as representatives of the family and that they apply to be the right holders on behalf of their families. Both women and men said that the lack of necessary documents was the most common reason for not being able to exercise the rights to social protection. This was the answer of 50% of the women who do not exercise their rights to social protection and 47% of men in the same position. It is interesting that almost identical number of Roma men and women give the absence of need as a reason for not exercising the rights to social protection (9.6% of women and 9% of men). Small differences between women and men regarding their exercise of the rights to social protection indicate that women and men have more or less the same status when it comes to access to the right to social protection.

As regards treatment by social workers, 58% of Roma women responded that they were satisfied with the way the social workers treated them, while 24% expressed dissatisfaction. About 18% of female respondents did not answer the questions about treatment since their spouses/common-law partners visited social welfare centres on their behalf, and therefore they did not have experiences with the employees of these institutions. The most common reason for dissatisfaction is the unkind and harsh behaviour of employees in social welfare centres. In addition, 62% of them said they understood the information provided about the services of social welfare institutions, while 17% said the opposite.

“When I address the social welfare centre, I always get the answer that I am not eligible for assistance and they tell me that they are very busy and don’t have time to explain to me why I don’t have the right to assistance. This is a typical situation that I have faced for years before I was able to exercise the right to financial social assistance. Never before have I received a one-off financial assistance although I requested it repeatedly.” (*F, YOB 1956, Aleksinac*)

“I have no objections to the work and behaviour of employees in the social welfare centre. On several occasions, they helped me to obtain the necessary documents for exercising certain rights. They have always been kind to me.” (*F, YOB 1972, Kuršumljija*)

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<sup>2</sup> For more information on Roma access to the right to social protection, see Praxis report *Analysis of the Main Obstacles and Problems in Access of Roma to the Rights to Social Protection*

“They are always unkind, angry; they don’t have time, etc.” (F, YOB 1982, Leskovac)

“In most institutions, employees are more unfriendly to Roma, even though they do not say it is the reason.” (F, YOB 1988, Prokuplje)

“I do not go often to the social welfare centre. I went there when I collected documents for parental allowance and then they were kind and helped me.” (F, YOB 1994, Bojnik)

“I’m not satisfied with the way the social workers treat me and my family. I have been taking care of my minor granddaughter since her birth because her mother abandoned her, and the social welfare centre has not helped me so far to solve the issue of guardianship over her, so that the child and I who take care of her could exercise the right to child allowance and other stuff.” (F, YOB 1960, Bela Palanka)

## Access to the right to education for Roma women

As regards the right to education, the purpose of the survey was to establish the level of education of female respondents compared to male respondents, determine whether the reasons for termination of education or drop-out from school were directly related to the patriarchal notion of the role of women in the family, as well as to examine how the members of Roma national minority were treated by school staff and pupils.

The research results show that about a third of male and female respondents completed elementary school, that is - 31% of female respondents, which is 4% less than the percentage of the same number of surveyed male respondents.

A total of 17% of female respondents have never attended school, while the same applies to 10% of male respondents. Although it can be assumed that poverty is the biggest cause of non-enrolment in school, 7% of women said that the poor economic situation was the reason of drop-out, while three percent more Roma women (10%) specified other reasons: parents had failed to register them in birth registry books, which is why they thought they could not enrol them in school; distance from schools; obligation to look after younger children; but also the attitude of parents, relatives and community to school.

“In the village where I lived there was no school; there was no school in the nearby surrounding villages either.” (*M, YOB 1958, Kuršumlija*)

“I didn’t attend school classes because I lived in a mountain village where there was no school.” (*F, YOB 1967, Kuršumlija*)

“In the place where I lived with my parents there was no school. The parents could not accompany me to and from school because of work. We often moved in search of work.” (*M, YOB 1982, Knjaževac*)

“That’s how it was in Uroševac, nobody went.” (*F, YOB 1963, Kruševac*)

“In Priština, I lived in a Roma mahala and children from the mahala mainly did not go to school. I don’t know why, simply it was so that children did not attend school, but they had to work. I looked after my siblings, and children of close relatives, while the adults were working.” (*F, YOB 1969, Leskovac*)

Patriarchal understanding of the role of women in the family is present, as evidenced by the fact that 3% of female respondents saw gender as the reason for not being enrolled in school, and 10% of them said that marriage and raising children were the reasons of dropout.

“I completed elementary school, and then enrolled in secondary school, but a week before the end of my second grade I decided to enter a common-law marriage.” (*F, YOB 1994, Bela Palanka*)

“If I had not married, I would have tried to get a job in the police force.” (*F, YOB 1989, Bela Palanka*)

“My parents thought that female children should not go to school; they were expected to look after younger siblings and do housework. They did not enrol me in school so that I wouldn’t be spoiled.” (F, YOB 1982, Bor)

“Education is more important for men, because they need to earn, and for women it is not, since they are not supposed to work, but to be at home with the children and do housework.” (M, YOB 1986, Bor)

A total of 39% of female respondents said that they had been enrolled in elementary school, but had not completed it. This percentage among the male respondents is very similar, i.e. 34% of them said they had not completed elementary education. The reasons for dropping out of school or discontinuing education lie mainly in poverty and migration as a consequence of poverty, as confirmed by 41% of surveyed Roma women and 54% of Roma men.

“We did not have resources for books, transportation to school, snack, clothes, shoes, etc.” (F, YOB 1985, Bela Palanka)

“There were three children in our house and the parents did not have money, so they had to choose whether to buy food for us or to educate us”. (F, YOB 1971, Prokuplje)

“I could not attend classes in secondary school any more because my parents were not able to pay for a monthly ticket for travel to and from school and textbooks.” (M, YOB 1983, Kuršumljia)

A male respondent, who was an excellent student in elementary and secondary schools, said: “I completed two years of secondary school in an enclave in Kosovo. Then my parents moved to a village near Bor from where I had to walk 10 km because there was no transportation to the secondary school.”

Although none of the female respondents mentioned it, 3% of male respondents noted they dropped out of school because of the lack of necessary documents.<sup>3</sup>

“I could not continue education because I was not able to provide a birth certificate, as requested by the school.” (M, YOB 1996, Kruševac)

Although a very small percentage of male and female respondents finished secondary school, there is still a significant difference among them concerning this level of education. In fact, only 4% of female respondents completed secondary school, while it was completed by 13% of male respondents. In most cases these are three-year vocational schools, such as mechanical engineering, trade and so on.

Poor treatment by teachers or peers has not been recorded as the reason of dropout, except in one case:

“My brother’s children went to school, but they are thought to go there only for snacks, which we consider embarrassing and don’t send them any more. They have their food here.” (F, YOB 1973, Kruševac)

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<sup>3</sup> See more about how the lack of documentation affects access to education in Praxis report *Analysis of the Main Obstacles and Problems in Access of Roma to the Right to Education in Serbia*.

A total of 78% of female respondents reported no problems during schooling, whether related to teachers, school administration or peers. Older Roma women remembered with nostalgia "Tito's time", when, according to their words, no differences were made between children. Two percent (2%) of female respondents disagree with this majority attitude and believe that teachers used to pay less attention to Roma children, that other children refused to sit next to a Roma child at school desk, share a snack, and they were not inviting them to their homes because they were believed to be dirty thieves.

It is known that in Serbia, Roma children often attend the so-called special schools, although they have no developmental challenges. Two percent (2%) of female respondents and 1% of male respondents experienced this practice. One female respondent completed the special elementary school *Vidovdan* in Bor, because, as she says, "it was easier for Roma children to go to a special school", which points to discrimination that is so rooted in society that even some members of the Roma community do not perceive it as anything problematic.

The respondents generally believe that education is important because of literacy and opportunities for employment and livelihood, and also because of easier access to information and understanding of procedures and rights.

"When a person has finished school, he or she can communicate better. If you are not educated, you cannot talk, so that officials won't listen to you or cannot understand you or you cannot understand them" (F, YOB 1969, Bor)

"Education is important; I have had problems for being illiterate and not being able to read, which is the reason why I cannot get important information." (F, YOB 1969, Leskovac)

Most respondents think that education is important for both sexes, although there are different views:

"Education is more important for girls because women cannot perform heavy physical labour that is mainly offered to people without qualifications." (F, YOB 1984, Knjaževac)

Only 2% of women and no men used the opportunity to acquire education through adult education schools. However, due to scarce employment opportunities, education loses its importance even among the educated Roma population. A female respondent from Bor said that she had previously thought that education was important, but now felt that it was not so important, because "you can be unemployed anyway." The Employment Service staff used to tell her that they could find her job if she had completed at least elementary school, so she made an effort and completed it as an adult. After that she was disappointed because her efforts had not resulted in finding a job.

"The acquired degree in secondary education in the field of mechanical engineering did not help me get a job, even though the need exists. In addition to a degree, you have to have connections to get a job. The reason for not finding a job is not my nationality, because others face the same situation." (M, YOB 1981, Bela Palanka)

In order to assess to which extent the local authorities have been involved in the promotion of education among the Roma population, we asked the female respondents whether they received some form of assistance from the municipality during schooling, such as free textbooks, supplies, transportation. Only three Roma female respondents answered affirmatively.

## Access to the right to work and employment for Roma women

As regards the part of the survey that relates to the area of employment, our intention was to determine what percentage of surveyed Roma women received some kind of income, whether there was a difference in the employment of Roma women and men, what kind of jobs they did, whether they had a work booklet and how the staff of the National Employment Service (NES) treated this vulnerable group.

Out of 100 surveyed Roma women, 35% of them confirmed that they received some income. It differs significantly from the percentage of the same number of surveyed Roma men, which reaches 85%. In Knjaževac, for example, all surveyed Roma men earned income, while only 50% of women received some sort of income. The difference is large also in Lebane, where the ratio is 100 to 60.

Taking into account these statistics, the results related to the family livelihood are expected. Specifically, we asked the female respondents to what extent they earned in comparison to their spouse or partner, and received a response that in 37% of the cases men provided income, in 24% of the cases both partners provided income, while in 10% of the cases none of the partners worked. We recorded only one case in Bojnik where a Roma woman stated that she was the sole provider and one case in Lebane where a female respondent confirmed that her adult son was the only one in the household who occasionally earned some income.

It should be noted that in most cases the respondents perform difficult physical unregistered work, often done occasionally, such as collecting recyclables, picking fruits and vegetables, agricultural work, cleaning, chopping wood, construction work. Often the surveyed men and women are forced to travel and to migrate to big cities in Serbia and Montenegro in search of work.

“My family is very poor, we lived in an informal settlement in Kosovska Mitrovica and all of us had to work. We were also begging. As a child, I also worked at the market stall in Kosovo. That was common.” (*F, YOB 1979, Leskovac*)

“I do some seasonal jobs in Vojvodina and construction works in Montenegro. During the winter, I provide services related to the preparation of firewood to individual households.” (*M, Leskovac*)

An insignificant number of respondents are employed in accordance with legal regulations, either through cooperatives or on the basis of fixed-term or permanent employment contracts. A total of seven people said that they had a contract, including one Roma woman who works in a public utility company, and six Roma men, one of whom is employed as pedagogical assistant, one as a school janitor and others in public utility companies.

As regards registration with the National Employment Service, 73% of female respondents and 75% of male respondents responded that they were registered. As regards all others, the lack of personal documents is the major obstacle for accessing these rights for 22% of Roma women and 21% of Roma men. The main reasons for the

lack of personal documents are impossibility to register permanent residence or failure to register the fact of birth.<sup>4</sup>

“We fled Kosovo. I didn’t have personal documents, and therefore didn’t participate in the Second Chance programme<sup>5</sup>.” (*F, YOB 1979, Leskovac*)

A high percentage of female respondents who addressed the NES staff, about 90% of them, stated that they were satisfied with their behaviour and with the provided information about the services offered by that institution. Several female respondents noted that officials had understanding when due to seasonal work they were late with the unemployed person’s obligation visit the NES periodically. Only 2% of female respondents complained about the treatment by officials, indicating that they were often unkind and that the institution had never offered a job or training.

When asked whether they felt that they had been discriminated against when applying for a job, about 45% of female respondents explicitly said no, while others did not make any statement. On several occasions they mentioned that a job was obtained "through a connection", regardless of nationality.

“I briefly worked in a hospital as replacement and did not have any problems because of my nationality. I stopped working when my engagement was no longer needed. However, I think that my grandson is a victim of discrimination because he applied for a job in a butcher shop because he is a butcher, but was rejected, and a non-Roma person was employed. In fact, Roma are not employed in food stores or butcher shops, because the community in which I live is burdened with prejudice.” (*F, YOB 1956, Aleksinac*)

Alarming is the data showing that 54% of surveyed Roma women have never applied for a job. As many as 100% of women gave this response in Kuršumlija, while in Leskovac and Prokuplje 90% of female respondents answered this way.

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<sup>4</sup> More information about this problem is available in Praxis reports *Analysis of the Late Birth Registration Procedures and Registration of Permanent Residence in the Republic of Serbia – a brief analysis of the remaining challenges*

<sup>5</sup> Project of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Serbia *Second Chance – Systemic Development of Elementary Practice Based Adult Education in Serbia*

## Housing conditions

The poorest part of the Roma population lives in extremely adverse conditions and the Roma housing problem is one of the most serious problems concerning the respect for human rights and the right to adequate housing. Often, they are faced with the problem of the lack of legal security of tenure and forced evictions<sup>6</sup>. The aim of the survey was to examine the housing conditions of Roma women and to determine which percentage of Roma women or Roma men were owners or lessees of the facilities in which they lived.

The interviews were conducted in fifty-three places (legalised settlements, informal settlements, social housing) in ten municipalities<sup>7</sup> covered by the survey. A total of 92% of the interviewed Roma women, and as many as 97% of Roma men, said that they lived in the house made of solid material. However, in most cases, these were unfinished crumbling brick houses without insulation, and as many as 8% of female respondents and 2% of male respondents lived in the structures made of cardboard and tin.

It is known that the Roma living in informal settlements are in a particularly difficult situation, because they usually live in non-legalised facilities without water, electricity or sewage. As regards the living conditions of interviewed Roma women, it turned out that 88% of female respondents lived in the facilities with electricity. However, this high percentage should be taken with caution because these electricity connections are often illegal. It also used to happen that several houses in a settlement were connected to one electricity meter, and since some residents did not have the money to pay the electricity bill, the Electric Distribution Company would often disconnect all households from the electricity network (Kuršumljija).

Seventy-two percent (72%) of female respondents had access to drinking water, although some of them have to use water from the common water fountains that are installed outdoors or in the immediate vicinity. One female respondent from Kuršumljija said that she had to walk 2 km to reach a source of drinking water because the water from the well in the settlement was not potable.

The biggest problem seems to be access to the sewage system. A total of 45% of female respondents confirmed that the facility in which they lived had no sewage system, which is a serious health problem.

In order to examine the ratio of women and men, we asked all the respondents who the owner/lessee of the facility in which they lived was, where such status was regulated. The results show that out of 200 respondents, only in 8% of cases women are right holders, while in 80% of cases the right holders are men. Out of 8% of cases where women are housing right holders, 3% are the female respondents themselves, i.e. spouses or common-law partners, while the remaining 5% of the cases refer mainly to mothers or sisters. Out of 80% of the cases where men are housing right holders, 41% are the male respondents themselves, i.e. spouses or common-law partners, while 39% are fathers, fathers-in-law or cousins.

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<sup>6</sup> More information about legal security of tenure and forced evictions is available in Praxis report *Analysis of the Main Obstacles and Problems in Access of Roma to the Right to Adequate Housing*

<sup>7</sup> Aleksinac, Prokuplje, Bojnik, Bor, Kuršumljija, Lebane, Leskovac, Bela Palanka, Kruševac and Knjaževac

## **Conclusion**

The research results show that the surveyed Roma women from Aleksinac, Prokuplje, Bojnik, Bor, Kuršumlija, Lebane, Leskovac, Bela Palanka, Kruševac and Knjaževac in 79% of cases have health cards, 73% of female respondents are registered with the National Employment Service, a little less than 40% of them exercise the right to social protection, while about 30% have completed elementary school. As regards living conditions, 92% of female respondents live in dilapidated facilities made of brick, 88% live in the facilities that have electricity, 72% have access to drinking water, while 45% live in the facilities that are not connected to the sewage network.

The most common reason for not exercising social protection rights and not possessing a health card is the lack of necessary documents. Poverty is the major cause of non-enrolment or termination of elementary education, while income is usually earned by performing unregistered work.

As regards the treatment by the employees of the institutions they come into contact with for the purpose of exercising their rights, about 90% of female respondents said that they were satisfied with the treatment and the information provided by officials of the National Employment Service, over 80% were satisfied with the manner of being addressed and service provided by medical doctors and other medical staff, 78% said that they had no problems during their education, either with teachers or with school administration, while 58% of Roma women were satisfied with the manner of being treated by social workers. The most common reason for dissatisfaction is unkind and harsh attitude of the employees of institutions towards them. However, conversations with the female respondents reveal that they usually expect to be treated badly because of their nationality, which is why any different behaviour is a sufficient reason for satisfaction; compliance with regulations is also perceived in such a way although it is a duty of all institutions. In addition, Roma women are often not aware of discrimination or it is hidden.

The responses to the survey are under the influence of patriarchal attitudes of both male and female respondents, especially when it comes to the role of women in the family. In most cases, men are holders of the right to social assistance on behalf of the family; in 80% of cases the owner or lessee of the housing facility is a man, while 85% of Roma men, and only 35% of Roma women, stated that they received income. Although about a third of the surveyed women and men have not completed primary education, the difference is greater when it comes to secondary school (4% of female respondents versus 13% of male respondents). Patriarchal understanding of the role of women in the family is mirrored in the fact that 3% of female respondents chose a response that sex was the reason for not being enrolled in school, while 10% of them responded that the reason for drop-out was marriage and raising children.

The research results show that state institutions and local self-government could undertake further measures to enhance access to socio-economic rights for women in Roma communities, including the elimination of gender differences and emancipation from traditional roles and stereotypes, which would systematically improve their position in society.