BREAKING THE CYCLE OF EXCLUSION

ROMA CHILDREN IN SOUTH EAST EUROPE

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Table of contents

Acronyms and abbreviations

CBOs	Community Based Organisations
COM	Commission of the European Communities
CRC	Convention of the Rights of the Child
EC	European Commission
ESE	Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equity for Women
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRBA	Human Rights-based approach
IDA	International Development Association
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LPA	Local Plan of Action
MICS	Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
MOP	Material Assistance to Families
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
NPA	National Plan of Action
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers
RAE	Roma Ashkali and Egyptian
SEE	South East Europe
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Fund
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organisation

Executive summary

The report calls for immediate action on social exclusion of children in middle income countries. It focuses especially on Roma children and covers eight states/entities in South East Europe: Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kosovo, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia. These middle income states/entities share similar characteristics and UNICEF is present share a programme of cooperation in each one of them.

Exclusion deprives children of their childhood and hinders them from fully developing their capacities to contribute in a substantial way to the economic and social development of their country.

Based on a desk study sponsored by UNICEF's National Committee in Germany, the report highlights the severity and the causes of exclusion of children. It identifies the most critical issues that, if addressed properly in the short, medium and long term, can break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and exclusion and create a new cycle of development, opportunity and inclusion.

Several studies and reports have been developed on Roma and the World Bank has initiated the Roma Decade. This report draws from existing studies and experiences and brings in the perspective on children, which has been poorly covered so far. This is especially critical since exclusion is a de facto violation of the rights of children and it is with children that the intergenerational cycle of poverty and exclusion can be broken.

The report seeks to a) raise awareness of the extent children, especially Roma children, suffer from social exclusion; b) identify the key critical causes of exclusion and the limitations in the capacity of individuals and institutions responsible for enabling children to enjoy their rights; and c) present available information and identify data gaps which need to be filled for the development and implementation of effective interventions.

A major challenge in producing the report was the availability and quality of data. The figures in this report should therefore be seen as indicative, showing trend, since the statistical basis of the excluded population is very weak, by virtue of the same exclusion. Official statistics combined with data from surveys, research and focus groups give a global picture of the magnitude and consequences of exclusion of children.

There are several reasons for making a sub-regional and not a country report. The situation and exclusion of Roma is similar in these states/entities. Therefore more countries can benefit from the report; seminars can be developed and experience and lessons learned can be exchanged. This report can be used as a discussion paper and the existing gaps be gradually filled. Extending the study and report to the sub-regional level has also made it possible to access more data and surveys and complement the poor availability of data. It would not have been possible to reach the results of this report only relying on existing data in one of the countries. At the same time the data has to be handled with care and can in many cases not be compared.

The main body of the report analyses three dimensions of exclusion of the child: the environment, early childhood and education. The "Environment of the Child" explores how exclusion of the community and of the Roma family influences the life and opportunities of the child. The chapter on "Early Childhood" focuses on the mother

and the child from pregnancy until the child starts school. "Education" presents the main challenge and also the opportunity for the excluded child. Education is key to breaking the intergenerational cycle of exclusion and poverty.

In the transition to a market economy, an ever greater responsibility is being passed onto individuals and families and this has affected the poor, especially poor children. The European Union integration process is underway and the states are committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. To achieve these goals the circumstances of Roma people must be addressed. The Decade of Roma Inclusion was launched by the World Bank in 2005, focusing on the four target areas of employment, housing, health and education. Five of the countries covered in this report (Bulgaria, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia) are participating in the Decade initiative.

In the region, there are an estimated 3.7 million Roma, about 1.7 million of them (46%) are children. The World Bank estimates of the Roma population are almost five times higher than the census data. This illustrates the serious lack of reliable data that this report had to handle. While majority populations are declining in the countries surveyed, the Roma populations are rapidly increasing. In Bulgaria, FYRMacedonia, Romania and Serbia the percentage of the population below 19 is between 29 and 22 percent for the average population while it is 41 to 47 percent for Roma. The population increase in these countries is among the poorest and most excluded children

The overwhelming majority of Roma are poor and among the most excluded people in South East Europe. While a minority of Roma have integrated into mainstream society, policies, institutions and individuals have not changed; their perceptions of Roma are based on stereotype and prejudice.

The environment of the child is one of marginalization, poverty and exclusion. Poor housing and poor infrastructure are exacerbated by residential segregation. Residents of slums suffer legal insecurity and often lack property rights and cannot register their home at a permanent address. Because of this, many are unable to access basic services: they are in fact "invisible", living on the margins of societies that do not care. Roma people have not had the same opportunities for education as other members of their home societies. This limits their possibilities to actively participate in mainstream social, economic and political life and leaves them vulnerable to exploitation, unemployment, poverty and abuse. Low education, early marriage, and economic and social dependence of Roma women reinforce the discrimination of women, and limit women's abilities of making important decisions related to their own life and to that of their children.

When living in poverty, loss of income due to sickness is a serious concern and no compensation can be expected for those working in the informal sector. In those cases children might have to take on responsibilities that should be carried by the authorities. This can dramatically affect their schooling, life and future. For Roma children to get a chance Government and service providers must ensure that they are benefiting from good services from they are born.

Available data make it possible to get a picture of how poor, excluded and Roma children are affected by exclusion and gradually are "pushed to the edge of society".

Poverty and exclusion affect children even before they are born because of the conditions of their family and mother. Low birth weight of newborn children (less than 2,500 grams) is often related to low nutritional status among poor pregnant women. The majority of Roma in South East Europe (53%) reported going hungry in the previous month, compared with only 9% of average non-Roma population. Linked to this almost twice as many of the Roma children have low weight at birth compared with the national average population.

This disadvantage increases over the years. Underweight is a measure of malnutrition indicating low weight for height. It is measured in the child from 0 to 5 years old. Six times as many Roma children are underweight, compared to the average national figures in Serbia. In FYR Macedonia three times as many Roma as national average are under weight.

When Roma children reach school age, the effects of the disadvantages they experienced since birth become more visible. A relatively high percentage of Roma children enter school. Unfortunately very few of them are able to complete even primary education. The MICS survey in FYR Macedonia shows that only 45% of the 63% Roma children who entered primary school manage to complete it. In Serbia only 13% of Roma children complete primary education. The data shows that the disadvantage of Roma children is magnified at school age with the result that the chances of Roma going on to secondary and higher education are much reduced in comparison to non-Roma children. Most of these children will become unskilled labourers just as their parents, but in a time with ever more demand for skills.

Pre-school can be particularly helpful for children from families and communities that have traditionally been excluded from education, and for those who only speak a minority language, or whose home circumstances make it hard for them to benefit from early stimulation. It can also be an excellent opportunity to enable children and parents, both Roma and non-Roma, to become acquainted with each other, and learn to understand and appreciate different cultures.

Increasing the participation of Roma children in good quality pre-schools and ensuring that their experience effectively prepares them for primary education requires urgent action. An ambitious target, such as ensuring that 80% of Roma and the poorest children attend pre-school 3 to 5 years from now is not impossible and would have a dramatic effect on inclusion in the educational system. It should be one of the key elements in an emergency strategy with short, medium and long term interventions to ensure all children are included.

When children reach school age they stand at a crossroads: they might go into permanent poverty and exclusion, or with the right support, they might still have another chance to break through the barriers and come out of the intergenerational cycle of exclusion. It is urgent to get it right. Childhood is an opportunity that does not come back.

1. Introduction

The report is a practical study that calls for action on social exclusion of children with a special focus on Roma children in eight states/entities in South East Europe: Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kosovo, FYR Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia.[1]

People are excluded when structures, laws, policies and programmes are not designed with a rights based approach considering the rights of all people, when resources and capacities are not made available and when social norms and people's behaviour are not based on the respect of differences among people, their culture and reality. These failures have to be identified and addressed. There are various underlying causes of exclusion, such as economic, social, geographic and cultural/ethnic. Confronting social exclusion does not mean setting up special parallel systems to address the problems of those who are 'socially excluded'. It is policies, norms and behaviour that have to change, to become rights based and inclusive.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child has been ratified by all the countries included in this report and it is therefore the obligation of their governments to guarantee the rights of all children without any kind of discrimination, in respect of the human rights principle of the universality of rights. Exclusion deprives children of enjoying their childhood and prevents them from developing their potential capacities, to be able to live a full life and as adults, to fully contribute to the economic and social development of their country.

Roma people and Roma children in particular are among the most deprived members of society in the South-Eastern European countries. The exclusion of Roma in Europe and in the region has long historical roots and is characterised by the reproduction of disadvantage across generations. The report argues that children are the key to breaking this intergenerational cycle of exclusion and that society, governments and service providers must act now to guarantee that all children are able to enjoy their rights. Childhood is an opportunity that does not come back. **Inclusion with intercultural respect and understanding** is an increasingly critical issue, and a requirement for maintaining stability, security and development in a globalising world. Inclusion starts with children.

1.1 Aims of the Report

The report aims at raising **awareness** of the extent and the effects of social exclusion of children and of the constant violation of the basic rights of Roma children. It **identifies the most critical issues** which, if **addressed** properly **in the short, medium and long term**, can break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and exclusion and create a new cycle of development, opportunities and inclusion.

Specifically, the report aims to:

- raise awareness of the extent to which children, especially Roma children suffer from social exclusion and are denied their rights,
- identify key critical causes of exclusion and limitations in the capacity of individuals and institutions which have a responsibility for enabling children to enjoy their rights,
- present available information and identify data gaps which need to be filled for the development and implementation of evidence based policies ,
- stimulate relevant actors in the region to adopt a Human Rights-based approach when analyzing exclusion in future studies and when planning and implementing social programmes,
- provide an advocacy tool for setting children as the highest priority in combating poverty and exclusion.

1.2 Methodology

The report is based on a desk study commissioned and coordinated by UNICEF's Belgrade office and sponsored by UNICEF's National Committee in Germany. Data was identified by UNICEF country offices in the region and focus groups, consultations and workshops were held with local Roma partners and government representatives in all countries/entities included in the study. Causes of exclusion were analysed and capacity gaps in individuals and institutions were identified. A research team with Roma experience and Roma background, developed drafts on which government and national partners, including Roma NGOs and CBOs commented. The final revision of the report was made by UNICEF's Belgrade office.

Data availability and data quality are among the major challenges facing this report. Poor and excluded children are overlooked in statistics and official data. This is especially the case for Roma and Roma children. Their low social status and the ambiguity of Roma identity is also reflected in the fact that across the region administrative data is not collected by Roma ethnicity and some Roma children are completely omitted, resulting in a serious lack of information to support policies/programmes and public understanding about the circumstances of exclusion of Roma children. This report presents a variety of available data. Statistics derived from the public administration systems (i.e. administrative data from the National Statistical Offices, NSOs) are combined with data from surveys, research and focus group studies. Some of this data is not strictly comparable, not responding to the same definition, and might give a fragmented impression. However, their combination gives a picture of the magnitude and consequences of exclusion of children, the most critical issues as well as the many information gaps, which are both a cause and a consequence of exclusion.

1.3 Structure of the Report

The report starts by defining main concepts, presenting basic population data and thereafter giving a short summary on the historic discrimination of Roma. The main body of the report analyses three dimensions of exclusion of the child: the environment, early childhood and education.

The chapter on "The Environment of the Child", examines how mainstream society and institutions discriminate against communities in which Roma and other excluded children grow up. The living conditions and life chances of the child are profoundly influenced by poverty, exclusion, discrimination and segregation, experienced on a daily basis by the community, the people and families. Poor communities have limited access to infrastructure and mostly inadequate services including justice, security, education, health and cultural institutions. Alongside their poverty, people have significantly worse housing, worse health and lower education. They are discriminated against by government and by society.

The fourth chapter, "Early Childhood", focuses on the mother and the child from pregnancy until the child joins the outside world when starting school. It examines how exclusion, especially of Roma children begins even before they are born due to the severe disadvantages and exclusion many **Roma women** face. Insecurity among poor and especially Roma people is often high, and they tend to have little confidence in law enforcement and protection bodies which are at times seen as a threat rather than a source of protection. Most Roma women have low if any education and little bargaining power in the family. They often marry early and have more children than they would wish to have. The limited data available supports the assumption that the health and nutrition of poor and particularly Roma children is considerably worse than that of their less disadvantaged peers. Many Roma children are invisible to or overlooked by public authorities and are not provided with the services and support to which they are entitled.

The fifth chapter is on "Education", presenting opportunities and harsh reality. Education is the key to breaking the intergenerational cycle of exclusion and poverty and should prepare all children with the knowledge and skills required to fully participate in the economy and society. Rather than helping to overcome the disadvantages of Roma children across the region, the educational systems contribute to further perpetuate their exclusion. Financial, social and cultural obstacles combined with discrimination hinder their access

to quality education and leave many Roma children in segregated schools and classes, channel them to special needs education, or leave them without any education.

The last chapter summarizes some of the findings and identifies short medium and long term actions which can contribute to breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty and exclusion in the SEE region.

2. Poverty, Exclusion and the Roma Population in SE Europe

2.1 Defining Poverty and Social Exclusion

The report focuses on poverty and social exclusion that embraces material deprivation (income or consumption poverty), as well as obstacles to successful participation in society through the enjoyment of rights. The European Commission defines social exclusion as when people "are prevented from participating fully in economic, social and civil life and/or when their access to income and other resources (personal, family, social and cultural) is so inadequate as to exclude them from enjoying a standard of living and quality of life that is regarded as acceptable by the society in which they live. In such situations people are often unable to fully access their fundamental rights."[2] Social exclusion is "a process whereby certain individuals are pushed to the edge of society and prevented from participating fully by the virtue of their poverty, or lack of basic competences and lifelong learning opportunities, or as a result of discrimination."[3]

The concept of social exclusion is of a relative nature: individuals are excluded in comparison to others, if they are excluded from the minimum acceptable way of life in the states in which they live.

In the widest sense, both poverty and social exclusion refer to lack of access to fundamental rights, lack of employment opportunities, lack of access to health, education and adequate social services, as well as inadequate social participation. The multidimensional approach to both concepts and especially to social exclusion requires an integrated policy approach.

Exclusion does not necessarily imply a lack of income. Discrimination and segregation are also deep-rooted forms of exclusion.

Considering the complexity and importance of discrimination as a factor in social exclusion it is helpful to distinguish between different aspects of discrimination.

- Societal discrimination – reflects the historical legacy of the marginalization of ethnic minorities manifested in poverty, inequality and prejudice
- Institutional discrimination – refers to the systematic failures of public authorities to respect the rights of specific groups of the population
- Direct discrimination – even when services are available to socially and culturally excluded people, their access to them may still be denied by the discrimination of individuals.

2.2 Poverty and Social Exclusion of Children

Poverty sets people at a high risk of social exclusion. "This is especially true for children as poverty affects both their present situation and their development and, as a result, their future life chances (Beisenherz 2002)."[4]

The definition of social exclusion of children used in UNICEF's 2006 "The State of the World's Children Report", relates very well also to this study: *"For the purpose of this report, children are considered as excluded relative to other children if they are deemed at risk of missing out on an environment that protects them from violence, abuse and exploitation, or if they are unable to access essential services and goods in a way that threatens their ability to participate fully in society in the future. Children may be excluded by their family, the community, government civil society, the media, the private sector, and other children."* [5]

A good start in life is critical to the physical, intellectual and emotional development of every individual.[6]

Especially extreme poverty causing malnutrition, ill health, inadequate parental care and psycho-social stimulation can result in damage that cannot be repaired later in life, even if the standard of living improves. Poverty has the direst consequences precisely in childhood, more than in other phases of the life cycle.

Poor, malnourished, uneducated girls grow up to become poor, uneducated, malnourished mothers who give birth to underweight babies; mothers who lack access to crucial information; mothers who are unable to support their own children in the learning process.[7] Thus poverty and social exclusion is transposed from generation to generation. Therefore, reducing child poverty is fundamental for reducing overall poverty, and investment in children today is the key determinant of the success of poverty reduction programmes. The intergenerational transmission of poverty cannot be broken unless children's basic capabilities and skills are developed in early childhood.

Children are indisputably poverty's most innocent victims. The vulnerability of other groups or communities could be attributed to reasons such as "it's their own fault". Children simply cannot be a cause of the poverty they live in; they can only suffer the consequences – hunger, illness, exploitation. The moral argument that reduction of child poverty must be a priority, is indisputable.

Finally, reducing child poverty is a state obligation accepted by signing and ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

2.3 Rights of the Child

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, [8] defines the human rights of children, encompassing all key elements of poverty and social exclusion. Under the Convention, all children have the right to the highest possible health and health care standard; the right to education and social protection; protection from discrimination, abuse and neglect; and protection from exploitive forms of child labour that prevent children from attending school and deny them the right to develop.

Article 27 of the Convention recognizes the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development. The parents are responsible for the child and have the primary responsibility to secure, **within their abilities and financial capacities**, the conditions of living necessary for the child's development. The **obligation of the state** is to take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right, and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes.

All states included in this report have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which obliges them to protect and **guarantee the realisation of the rights of all children on their territory**, including displaced children and those without formal civic documentation. The Convention establishes criteria for children to be given the support, protection and opportunities with which they can fulfil their potential as human beings and citizens. In imposing obligations upon states and other duty bearers, the Convention provides a framework within which the authorities are required to act and are held accountable for its compliance.

The exclusion of children reflects a denial of rights. Policies and programmes which seek to improve the living conditions and opportunities of children must be rights based and **inclusive for all children**.

All the states/entities covered by this report have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child and report relatively good national average child indicators. **As 'middle income countries' they all have the resources to ensure no child is deprived of their basic rights.** The inequality and gross disadvantages of most Roma children represent discrimination on a massive scale which is a violation of Article 2.1 of the Convention which obliges states to respect children's rights "without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status".

One of the European Commission's latest initiatives is to initiate the establishment of a comprehensive EU strategy to effectively promote and safeguard the rights of the child in the European

Union's internal and external policies and to support Member States' efforts in this field.

The EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child is structured around seven specific objectives:[9]

1. Capitalizing on existing activities while addressing urgent needs
2. Identifying priorities for future EU action
3. Mainstreaming children's rights in EU actions
4. Establishing efficient coordination and consultation mechanisms
5. Enhancing capacity and expertise on children's rights
6. Communicating more effectively on children's rights
7. Promoting the rights of the child in external relations.

2.4 Population and Discrimination of Roma

Roma communities in South East Europe do not constitute a single, homogenous population. In fact, there are a huge number of Roma communities which have a greater, lesser or no relationship with each other. Among Roma communities there are many different religious affiliations, cultures and historical experiences. Though many Roma in the region speak one of the many dialects of Romani as their mother tongue, many are also fluent in the national language of their home country. Some Roma have integrated into their home societies, while others have come out of poverty but maintain their culture and traditional values. However, the overwhelming majority of Roma are poor and Roma are grossly over-represented among the poorest and most excluded people in South East Europe. While a minority of Roma have integrated into mainstream society, policies, institutions and individuals have not changed; their culture is not respected and the perceptions about Roma are based on stereotypes and prejudices.

2.4.1 Roma Population

South East Europe is believed to be home to the greatest number of Roma in the world, with an estimated 3.7 million, (about 1.7 million of them being children and representing 46 percent of the Roma in the region), living in the countries covered in this report.

Range of Roma Population

State/entity	Roma Population[10] 2006 (thousands)	Total population (millions)	Roma as % of Total Population
Albania	90-100	3.1[11]	2.9-3.2
Bosnia & Herzegovina	40-50	3.9[12]	1.0-1.3
Bulgaria	700-800	7.7[13]	9.0-10.4
FYR Macedonia	220-260	2.0[14]	11-13
Montenegro	2-20	0.62[15]	0.3-3.2
Romania	1,800-2,500	21.6[16]	8.3-11.6
Kosovo	36-40	2.1	1.7-1.9
Serbia	450-500	7.7	5.8-6.5

Source: WB / UNDP / Statistical offices

The Roma population figures presented above are much higher than the official national census figures for the Roma population presented below.

Census data was not provided by some states/entities; however, these figures illustrate the extensive discrepancies

Roma Population, most recent census data

Country	Roma population	Year of census
Bulgaria	370, 980	2001
FYR Macedonia	53, 879	2002
Montenegro	2, 601	2003
Romania	535, 250	2002
Serbia	108, 000	2003

Source: Censuses

between estimates and official data. The main reason for Roma not being included in the census data is that many Roma are not registered. In some, but relatively few cases, Roma do not wish to conceal their Roma identity or do not consider Roma as their public or national identity. There are also different approaches towards acknowledging the particular circumstances of Roma people. In Albania, Roma are only recognised as a linguistic minority and in Kosovo, Roma and Ashkali communities are included (along with Turks, Bosnians and Montenegrins) in the general category of "other minorities".

The countries in SEE are entering a period of aging of population and

Population pyramids have a story to tell about a country and its people. The shape of the pyramid change with the country's social and economic development. People tend to have fewer children when health and education improves and the pyramid then starts to acquire the form of an onion, as in West European countries. The population pyramid for Serbia can be seen as an example of a country with negative population growth.

Thanks to the Multi Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) that UNICEF facilitated together with counterparts in 2005 in all Programme countries around the world, good recent data on children is available. In Serbia, exceptional data on exclusion was collected by the Serbian Statistical Office. The two pyramids below are

Percentage of population, below 19 years of age

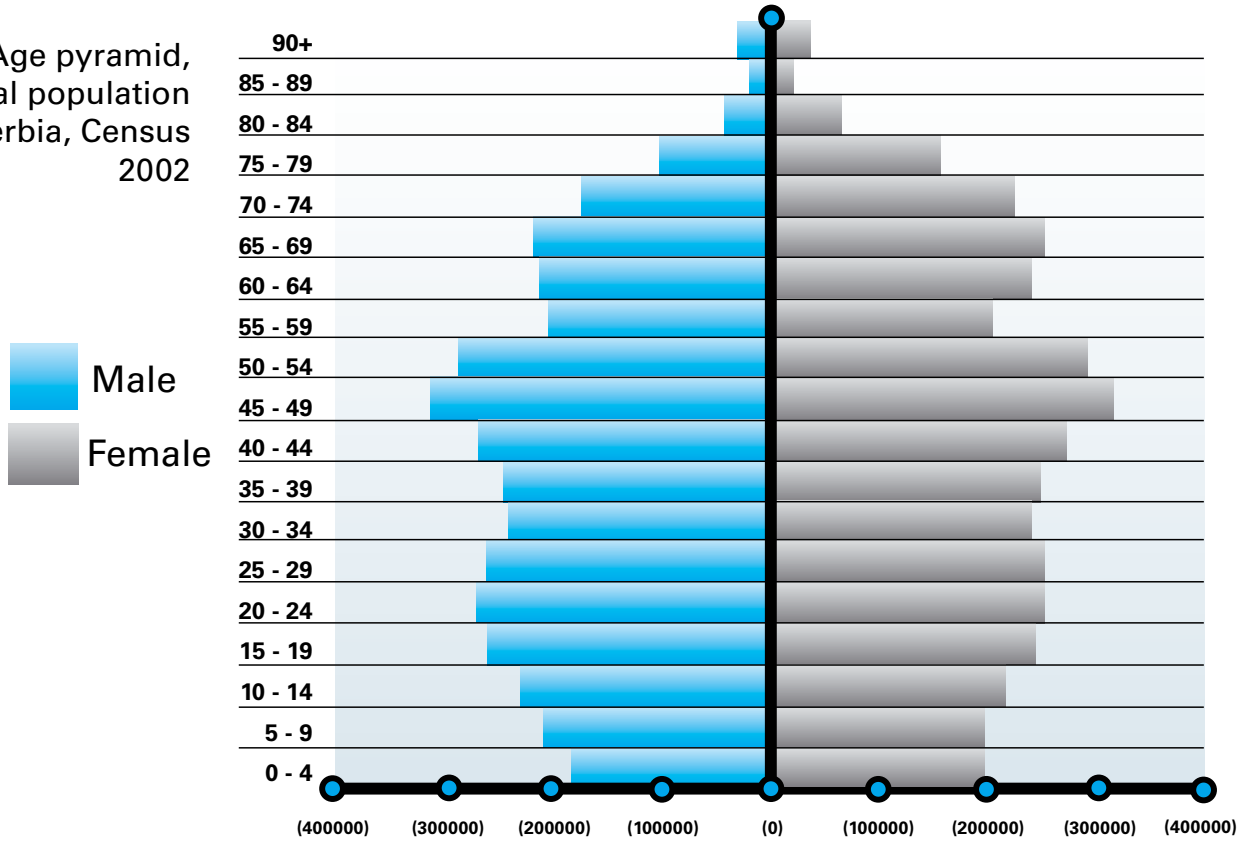
Country	Total Population	Roma	Year of census
Bulgaria	22.6	43.5	2001
FYR Macedonia	29.3	41.5	2002
Romania	25.2	47.3	2002
Serbia	22.3	41.1	2003

Source: Censuses

negative population growth. However, the Roma population is still young with a rapid increase. Census data shows that in Bulgaria, FYR Macedonia, Romania and Serbia, over 40% of Roma are under 19 years old, compared with 22 to 29% in national populations. Though census returns may underestimate the actual size of Roma minorities, they more accurately reflect the age distribution.

not for different countries as it might seem, but they are the pyramids for the poorest people in the same country, the 20% poorest, and Roma in Roma settlements. The 20% poorest population is experiencing a population decrease, especially for the five last years and the shape of the pyramid is similar to that of the average population in the country. However, the pyramid for Roma in Roma settlements shows a strong

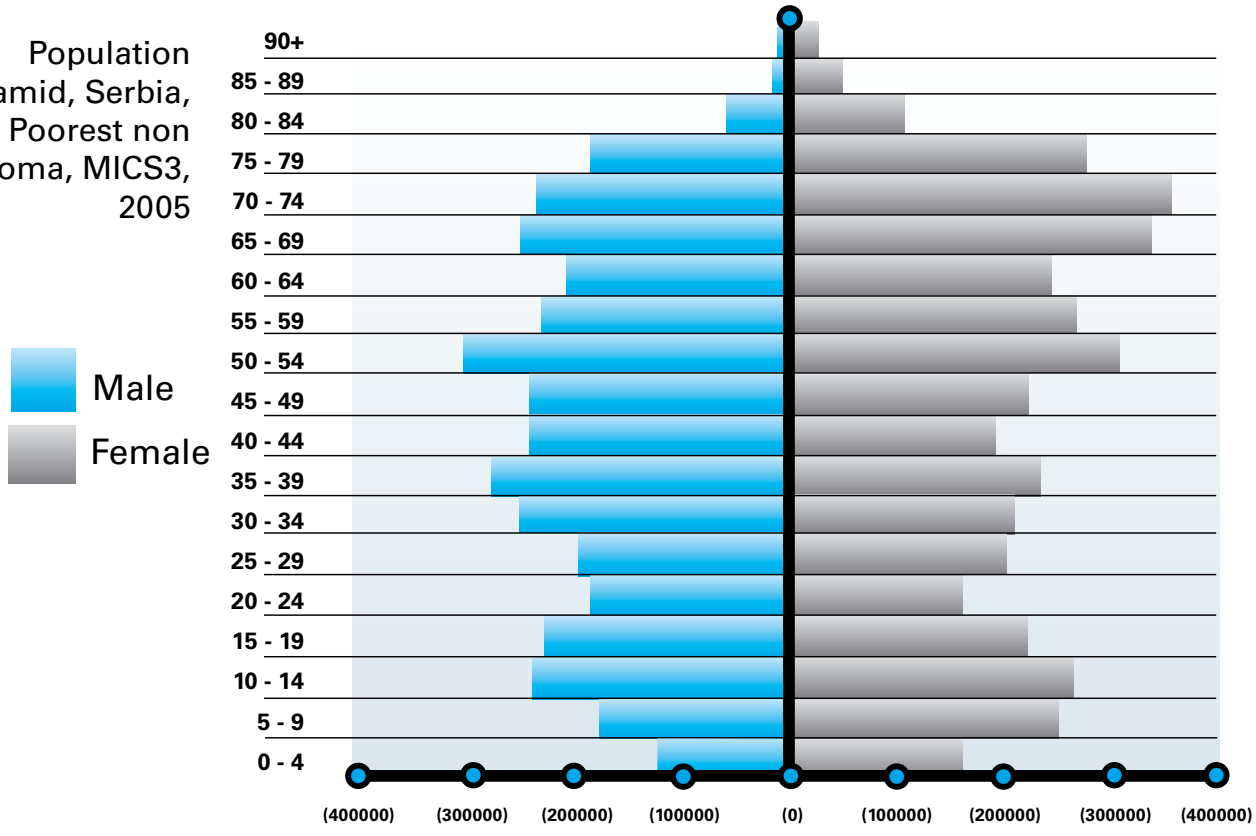
Age pyramid, Total population in Serbia, Census 2002

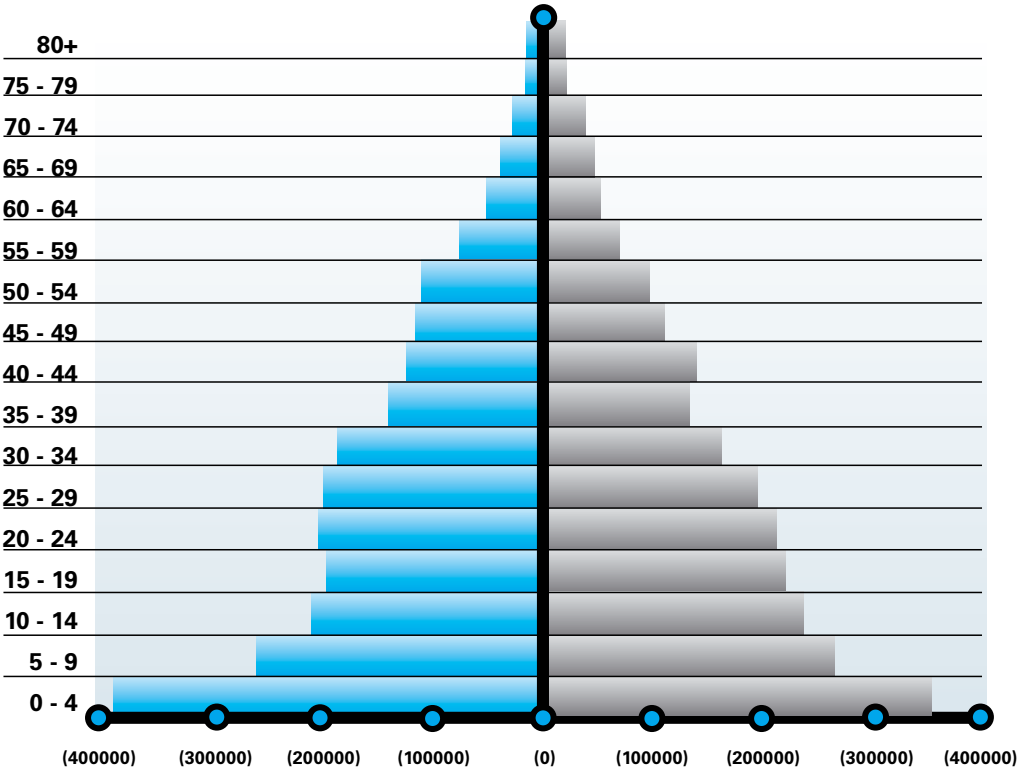


population increase and has the shape of a very poor country. This indicates that despite the overall population decrease of the overall population in Serbia, the poorest and most excluded population is increasing.

Population pyramids – inequality

Population Pyramid, Serbia, 20% Poorest non Roma, MICS3, 2005





Population Pyramid, Serbia, Roma in Roma settlements, MICS3 survey, 2005

Male

Female

Chronic exclusion, including profound discrimination for generations of Roma people have most certainly lead to the differences between these population profiles. The 20% poorest population have had better access to health and education, so women have more control of the number of children they will have. However, it is necessary to study the causes of these differences in depth and to learn what is behind these very different profiles of people who could even be living in the same neighbourhood.

Comparing the percentage of children below 19 in the general population and in Roma population (see table on page 15), it is possible that the contrast between the average population pyramid and the Roma pyramid is similar in Bulgaria, FYR Macedonia and in Romania.

2.4.2 Discrimination of Roma

Since their first recorded presence in the region in the Middle Ages, Roma communities have had low social status (including that of slaves in Romania) and have been widely seen as alien to and excluded from mainstream culture and society. Historically, many Roma communities maintained a nomadic lifestyle, resulting in a tangential relation with mainstream culture and society. Though some communities in South East Europe sustained an itinerant lifestyle into the twentieth century, most have been settled for generations. Under Ottoman rule, some Roma communities were allocated specific residential areas, many of which still survive in Bulgaria. More commonly, Roma were not to be given any rights to settle but had to occupy less attractive, empty plots in the centre or in the outskirts of urban or rural settlements, the forerunners of today's numerous Roma ghettoes.

During the Second World War the Roma population in South East Europe, as elsewhere, was the object of Nazi repression. Many Roma people were sent to concentration camps; in Romania and Yugoslavia thousands were murdered. Under communist regimes, policy towards Roma aimed at assimilation and forced inclusion in the labour market, though this was less rigorously applied in the former Yugoslavia. Over the last two decades, there has been a movement away from viewing Roma as a disadvantaged social category, towards recognition as an ethnic minority and distinct cultural group. This approach acknowledges that Roma people possess a 'legitimate' culture,

with the right to their culture. It is also an attempt to combat prejudice by including Roma people within anti-discrimination protection schemes.

In the last 10 years there has been a reassertion of majority national identities across the region. Roma suffered in the ethnic-based conflicts that accompanied the collapse of Yugoslavia, with many thousands losing their homes and emigrating abroad. The decline in public services and mass impoverishment that followed deepened the social exclusion of most Roma.

The historic discrimination of Roma globally and in the region means that these communities today start at a marked disadvantage compared to other members of society. Prejudiced attitudes are deeply rooted and have affected both the perception of Roma and Roma traditions.

3. The Environment of the Excluded Child

The quality of life and opportunities for children in the studied states and entities are heavily conditioned by the circumstances of their families and communities. Although the economic situation has been improving in South East Europe over recent years, this has not always benefited children. The transition and reform process pay little attention to children, and with increasing disparities, children and especially poor and excluded children tend to be losing out. Child poverty and exclusion are particularly severe among Roma owing to more extensive and deeper poverty and exclusion, the relatively higher number of children in Roma families, and inadequate support from services and the government.

3.1 Economic Exclusion

Material poverty is both a cause and an effect of social and economic exclusion. Since governments are weak and are not giving the required support, lack of financial resources contributes to poorer health and life chances, which in turn limit economic opportunities. Roma people are even more disadvantaged as victims of prejudice and discrimination, which further reduces their chances of escaping poverty and enjoying equality of opportunity. Roma households are highly over-represented in those social categories with the highest risk and rates of poverty; low levels of employment, low levels of education especially among women, a high number of dependent children.

3.1.1 Material Poverty

There is considerable variation in levels of material poverty between and within countries, and income disparities have increased in all countries in the last 10 years. For example, the poverty rate is up to 50% higher than the national average in North-East Romania, South-East Serbia and in the mountains of North and East Albania. Across the region, poverty tends to be significantly higher in rural areas than in cities. In Bulgaria, "the GDP

Poverty Rates [18]

State/Entity	Year	Absolute	Extreme
Albania	2003	25.4	4.7
Bosnia Herzegovina	2003	19.5	
Bulgaria	2001	12.8	7.5
Kosovo	2005	37	15.2
FYR Macedonia	2002/2003	21.7	6.7
Montenegro	2003	9.4	
Romania	2003	28.9	10.9
Serbia	2003	10.6	2.3

Source: World Bank, Human Development Sector Unit Europe and Central Asia Region, Poverty Assessments, World Development report 2006

per capita in rural areas is two times lower than in towns, while the level of unemployment is two times higher (at 25.6%)."[17]

The World Bank conducts regular poverty assessments based on a monetized measure of household consumption. Absolute Poverty is when a household is unable to attain food and non-food services to meet essential needs. Households fall into the category of Extreme Poverty if they are not able to meet minimum food requirements.

Poverty rates are still high in the region. This table should be related to Roma poverty below. In those countries with a higher percentage of Roma, such as FYR Macedonia (12% Roma) and Romania and Bulgaria (10% Roma) the poverty among Roma affects the national poverty rates. This is especially the case when poverty has decreased as in Bulgaria. The inclusion of Roma children would be a condition to achieve the Millennium Development Goal 1; to bring down poverty by 50%.

3.1.2 Roma Poverty

There are few official estimates of poverty among the Roma population and existing data can at times be contradictory. Across the region, Roma communities are the most likely to be missed in national poverty assessments (along with and sometimes part of Internally Displaced Persons).[19] However, despite these shortcomings in data, all estimates clearly indicate that Roma are heavily over-represented among the poorest in the region.

World Bank poverty assessments in the Region indicate that Roma "are almost entirely marginalised" and many "live in conditions below even the most minimal for survival".[20] In Kosovo, 31% of "other minorities", mainly Roma and Ashkali communities, live in extreme poverty, twice the rate for the territory as a whole.[21] In Romania, Roma account for 2.5% of the country's population, yet they make up 7% of the poor and 12.5% of the extreme poor.[22] In Montenegro, it is estimated that over half the Roma population lives in poverty.[23] In Bulgaria, the World Bank estimates that though Roma account for only 8.8% of the population, they make up almost half (46%) of the country's poor.[24] According to the National Statistical Institute in Bulgaria, the poverty rate was 6.7 times greater for Roma than for Non-Roma in 2003 and Roma poverty was far deeper, although in absolute terms, many more Non-Roma than Roma households live below the poverty line.[25]

A survey of Roma and Non-Roma households living in the same neighbourhood testifies to the severe poverty experienced by Roma people in South East Europe. Using a consumption-based poverty line of $4.30 per person per day (adjusted for Purchasing Power Parity) the research found a consistent picture of far higher rates of poverty among Roma, than among their non-Roma neighbours.

Roma, Non-Roma, Poverty (< $4.30 per day PPP) living in same locality (in percentage)

State/Entity	Roma	Non-Roma
Albania	78	22
Bosnia Herzegovina	27	2
Bulgaria	46	5
Kosovo	59	25
FYR Macedonia	34	7
Montenegro	27	1
Romania	66	25
Serbia	57	10

Source: UNDP[26]

The table shows that between one quarter (27% in Bosnia Herzegovina) and almost two thirds (59% in Kosovo) of Roma live in poverty and, in five of the eight entities covered in this study, more than 40% of the Roma population in these localities are poor. Roma are also far more likely to be poor compared to non-Roma living in the same locality, with the rate at which Roma poverty exceeds that of non-Roma ranging from 2.4 (Kosovo) to 13.5 (Bosnia Herzegovina). In Montenegro the majority of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian people live in ethnically more homogenous settlements, which might be a reason for the high rate of 27 for Montenegro. These are all very preliminary figures.

Since these are samples within the respective countries, it can be risky to compare the figures between the countries. However, it seems that the difference between Roma and non-Roma poverty is greatest in countries where overall poverty is lowest and where Roma are not benefiting from economic growth.

3.1.3 Poverty and Children

Poor households tend to have more children than the national average or non-poor households.[27] In FYR Macedonia, 47% of all households with three or more children are poor[28] and 30% of children live in poor families.[29] In Bosnia Herzegovina and Romania, the rates of poverty in households with three or more children are 56% and 66% respectively.[30] Kosovo has the highest rate of both absolute and extreme poverty, but is also the youngest, with half the entity's population under the age of 25.[31] In Bulgaria, households with three or more children are also at a higher risk of being poor.[32]

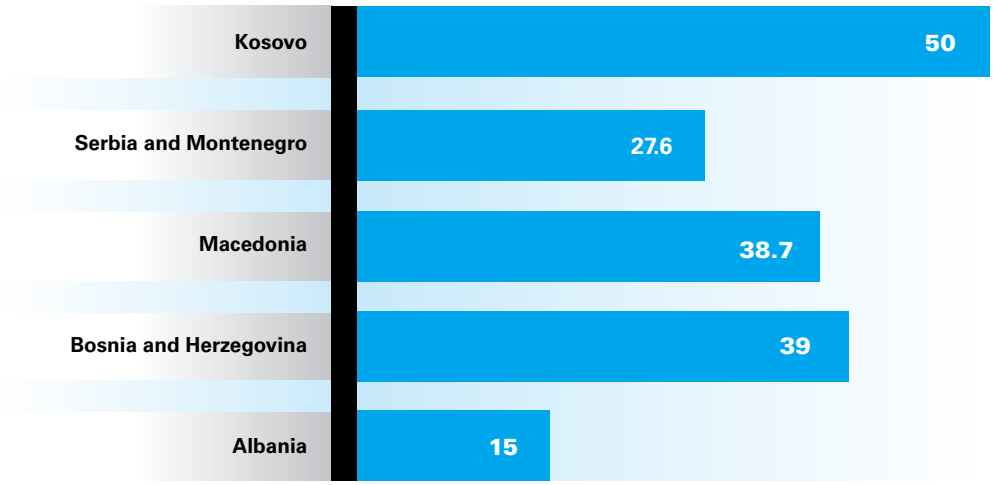
In Bosnia Herzegovina, half of all young children (under 7) and one-third of all children (under 15) live in poverty.[33]

Child poverty among Roma is particularly high, due to far higher rates of Roma poverty and more children per family. There is a continued high population increase among the Roma population despite an overall population decrease in most of the states/entities (see table page 12). This means that the poorest population group is experiencing population increase, while average population is decreasing.

All Roma with whom UNICEF consulted in compiling this report emphasised poverty as a root cause of child exclusion.

areas, registered unemployment is more common in cities.[35]

In these states/entities with high unemployment rates and a relatively well educated workforce it is especially difficult for Roma to get a job. Most Roma people in the region are not in formal, regular, full-time work. Transition to a market economy exposed the vulnerability of those with the fewest employment skills and Roma workers are also severely disadvantaged by widespread prejudice and discrimination.



Registered National Unemployment Rate

Source: Matković, G (2005)[36]

3.1.4 Unemployment

Unemployment rates have increased in scale during the post-communist era throughout South East Europe, but vary greatly between countries. Official unemployment statistics are not a wholly reliable indicator of economic activity. In Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro, the World Bank estimates that around one-third of the unemployed are not registered. Furthermore, many people work in the informal economy, which is estimated to account for up to a quarter of GDP in Serbia and 10% of the labour force in Albania. Lack of employment opportunities has also been a major factor in mass emigration from Albania with almost a fifth of the population leaving the country since 1990, mainly to Greece and Italy, and increasingly to Germany.[34] There is a high proportion of long-term unemployed: for example, in Bulgaria, 64% of those without work are considered long-term unemployed, and though poverty tends to be higher in rural

In Romania, Roma unemployment is estimated to be twice that of Romanians or the country's other largest ethnic minority, Hungarians.[37] In Bosnia Herzegovina, the World Bank reports almost 100% Roma unemployment.[38]

Other survey research found that in the countries covered in this report, unemployment among Roma aged 15-55 ranged from 44% (Romania) to 71% (FYR Macedonia).[39] However, the survey also found that in all states/entities other than Albania (48%), over 70% of adult Roma perceived themselves as unemployed, with the highest rate in Bosnia Herzegovina (92%).[40] The age range used in the survey, 15-55 years, contravenes the rights of the child, assuming children should start work at the age of 15. Unfortunately, this is an age range often used to define unemployment. However, in the case of Roma these figures reflect reality, since so few Roma children have the chance to attend secondary school.

Unemployment among Roma aged 15-55 in the countries covered by the report ranges between 44 to 71%

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Low education, low status and lack of recognition and protection of citizens' rights result in a life of informality. Most Roma have marginal jobs, which do not permit them to benefit from labour rights. The price and the conditions of the purchase of recycling materials and other products of their work are set by the buyer and do not entitle them and their family to any kind of insurance. Roma are left to do work nobody else would like to do; it is mostly hard, done under poor conditions, underpaid and often harmful to their health.

Perception of Roma,
focus groups UNICEF

"Unemployment is the first problem; the second is the education of children, the third is that Roma cannot pay for common public services like electricity and water."

Roma from Vidin, Bulgaria.

"When you have 10 children, how can you survive with 100 Euros?"

Roma from Montenegro

There is a strong perception among Roma people that they experience discrimination when looking for work. In research supported by the EU throughout Central and South East Europe, the European Roma Rights Centre recently concluded that "discrimination is exercised at more or less every junction in the labour market and the already serious barriers that prevent access to employment for many Roma are significantly aggravated by prejudiced behaviour and views that unemployment and worklessness is a situation that most, if not all, Roma have chosen and are happy to live with both now and in the past."[41]

"The companies which offer jobs never announce 'We want no Gypsies', but once you show up, you have no chance…

"The discrimination is very perfidious – impossible to nail down. They don't say 'You are a Gypsy, get lost!', they are polite, but the result is they never call you back with a job offer."

Roma from Vidin, Bulgaria.[42]

This stereotyping of Roma people is especially hard on children. They grow up in communities and families with high unemployment and their parents get low compensation and lack of recognition for their work. This not only leaves children to grow up in poverty and economic insecurity, but the low status of their parents also affects their self esteem and confidence and their relationship with other children and the rest of society. One of the consequences is mobbing of Roma children in school, which is very common and one of the factors for their high drop-out rate.

3.1.5 Lack of opportunities for Roma women

Employment opportunities for Roma women are even more limited than for men. Research shows that female employment among Roma in the region ranges from 17% (Montenegro) to 34% (Romania). There is no figure specifically for Roma in Kosovo, but it is likely to be very low as the entity has the highest rate of female unemployment in the region (24% employed).[43] In Kosovo, rural, Roma and IDP women are often kept at home from the ages of 15-16 to protect them before marriage and to prepare them for their household tasks.

High unemployment among Roma women is closely linked to low levels of education and skills and societal discrimination. Though no specific research has been carried out on the subject, there is evidence that Roma women are often denied jobs because of prejudice and discrimination. Studies in Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia Herzegovina, for example, show that Roma women are rejected openly by potential employers for catering jobs as it is claimed that the customers do not want to be served by Roma women who are perceived by the majority population to be unclean.[44] Throughout the region, there is a resistance to employing younger Roma women owing to the likelihood of pregnancy.

If they work, most Roma women are employed in the grey economy, working for their husbands. The Roma community and family still take on the role of protection of women, which indicates a perceived insecurity and distrust of the police and public authorities who should protect them. This is part of the reality in which Roma children growup. The life of women and girls is still conditioned by disrespect and risks of abuse which affect their opportunities and life chances.

3.1.6 Welfare benefits

All the states/entities covered by this study have long experience in providing social welfare. The proportion of GDP spent on social security ranges from 5.8% in Kosovo to 19% in FYR Macedonia and it constitutes around half of all public spending in FYR Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro.[45] Kosovo has the least generous social security scheme and provides neither unemployment, nor child benefits, yet has the highest rates of poverty and unemployment.[46]

Most social security spending in the region is on pensions, not on children and child welfare. States also provide some form of means tested income supplement and in some countries, welfare transfers are well targeted, but in others the system is inefficient with very limited coverage of the poorest members

State/Entity	Social Security % of GDP
Bosnia Herzegovina	17%
Bulgaria	13%
Kosovo	5.8%
Macedonia	19%
Romania	10%

Source: World Bank

of society. In Bosnia Herzegovina, only 4% of the poor receive targeted financial aid.[47] In Serbia, only 4% of the poor get the main income support benefit (known as MOP),[48] though the social assistance scheme in Montenegro, Family Material Support, is more effective.[49] In Albania, 25% of the poor and 31% of those living in extreme poverty receive income support (Ndihme Ekonomike)[50] and in Bulgaria 28.5% of the poor receive the Guaranteed Minimum Income.[51] In Romania, 36% of Roma who live in extreme poverty receive the Minimum Income Guarantee.[52] In addition, benefit levels are low and in some countries (Romania and Bosnia Herzegovina) the level of benefit has not kept pace with inflation.

"We are always on a knife edge as far as funding is concerned… As a general rule we always receive less money than we ask for… and this applies to all localities." Social Assistance Department employee,

Tirgu Mures, Romania.[53]

"It is only when they receive their social aid that they [Roma] have any money. If we didn't have the aid, God have mercy on us."

Roma man Alunis, Romania.[54]

A survey of poor households in Serbia found that 30% had not heard of the MOP benefit.[55] Many poor, especially Roma families, also suffer from the limited capacity of benefits systems. In poorer districts where the need for transfers is higher, benefits are often paid in kind or late, and there is an incentive for the authorities to restrict who receives support.

Lack of information, complicated application procedures, non registration of Roma, unreliability of welfare

There is insufficient data regarding the collection of welfare benefits by Roma families. Few Roma people qualify for pensions, the major cause for welfare. The higher number of children per family means poor Roma families are in great need of receiving child benefits. Lack of information, complicated application procedures, unreliability of welfare payments, restrictive eligibility criteria, lack of registration and the "informality" in which Roma communities and people live result in Roma, irrespective of their poverty, being to a large extent excluded from access to social welfare schemes.

We neither receive social aid, nor anything else. They don't give us social aid, they don't want to."

Roma from FYR Macedonia.[56]

"We eat from the garbage. We pick up empty bottles and sell them. Nobody in this neighbourhood receives social support. They say there are no funds."

Roma woman from Romania.[57]

There is a widespread perception in the region, including among some public officials, that Roma prefer to live on welfare than to provide for themselves.

"They are not ashamed to beg, to ask for help from the state. They should understand that some people work tirelessly for that money which they get for free, and which they don't do any work for"

Local official, Serbia. [58]

Such a view places responsibility for poverty, hunger, low life expectation and exclusion on Roma people themselves. This kind of perception, the "blaming victims" attitude is common. It indicates a lack of accountability and respect of child rights from an administrative officer who has the mandate and responsibility to protect these rights.

Roma are especially affected by poverty and unemployment, which are consequences of exclusion, generation after generation. Although there are some successful examples in the countries of this study, in most cases the social welfare and security schemes are not able to bridge the economic barriers for poor and Roma people. They rather tend to exclude those most at need.

3.2 Housing poverty and segregation

The most tangible expression of the poverty and exclusion suffered by thousands of poor people in the region is the poor housing conditions in which they live. In the post- communist period, impoverishment and a decline in state capacity further undermined the ability of poor families to obtain or maintain adequate housing. Furthermore, in the former Yugoslavia, violent conflicts during the 1990s resulted in the destruction of property and the displacement of over a million people, many of whom have not been able to return to their homes. Housing poverty, defined as overcrowding and a lack of basic sanitation, affects 10-15% of the population in Serbia and Montenegro,[59] 11% in Bosnia Herzegovina[60] and 7% in FYR Macedonia.[61] In Albania, less than one-third of poor households have running water in their home[62] and in Romania, less than half of poor households do.[63]

Roma are grossly over-represented among those in the region living in the deepest deprivation. The negative effects of poor housing and poor infrastructure conditions are exacerbated by residential segregation, which is a legacy of centuries of physical marginalization that has been a characteristic feature of the Roma in the region and throughout Europe. Poor living conditions and segregation severely reduce opportunities for Roma people to find work and access services, are harmful to health and distance them from the mainstream population. Both historically and today the resulting social isolation is a major factor in the perpetuation of prejudice and discrimination and it is especially hard on women and children.

Poor living conditions and segregation

> **"They live in poverty, no one shows understanding towards Roma, they have no jobs because no one will hire them, they are uneducated, they have no water, electricity, books for their children, they depend on welfare and everybody hates them."**
>
> **Teacher from Serbia.[64]**

3.2.1 Slum settlements

In Serbia, there are estimated to be almost six hundred Roma settlements, half of

© UNICEF Romania / Benno Neeleman

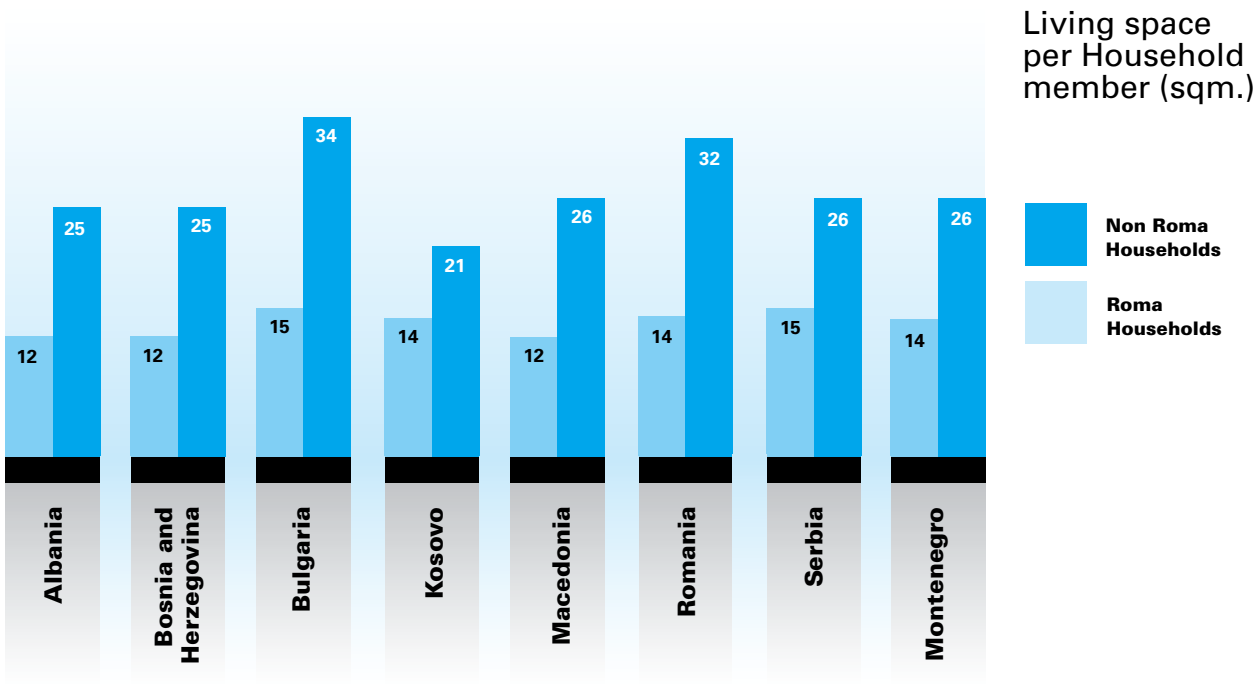
Residents of slums suffer legal insecurity and often lack property rights and cannot register their home at a permanent address. As a result, many children are not called to school when they reach school age and they are not registered with a doctor.

which are categorized as unsanitary slums.[65] In Romania, about one third (29%) of Roma are estimated to live in compact homogenous communities.[66] In Bulgaria, ghetto-like Roma neighbourhoods are widespread in both urban and rural areas.[67] In Montenegro, the majority of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian people live in ethnically homogenous settlements and about half (47.6%) in improvised housing,[68] while in Belgrade, of the 9,000 people living in the 41 registered settlements, about two thirds are Roma.[69] In FYR Macedonia, over a quarter of a million people live in around 100 slums, accounting for a fifth of the county's urban population. It is in FYR Macedonia that the largest Roma settlement in the world, Suto Orizari, is to be found. Home to 70,000 residents, the majority of which are Roma, Suto Orizari is a town in its own right with a relatively developed infrastructure. But still 28% of the population lives in improvised dwellings.[70]

Residents of slums suffer legal insecurity and often lack property rights and cannot register their home at a permanent address. In FYR Macedonia a quarter of the homes in slum settlements are not legally registered and the population is mainly comprised of members of Roma and Albanian ethnic minorities.[71] Research in 2003 in Serbia found that over 60% of Roma living in slum settlements in Belgrade were unable to officially register their residency.[72] As a result, many children are not called to school when they reach school age and they are not registered with a doctor. Often those living in slum settlements are not included in statistics and governmental or social studies.[73] This means they are invisible, and information about their existence - not to mention their needs and circumstances - is not available to administrators and policy makers, upon which more inclusive services could be designed and appropriate programmes developed.

3.2.2 Living conditions

Many Roma live in homes or in settlements with poor infrastructure.



Source: UNDP[87]

One quarter of Roma in the region are estimated to live in dilapidated housing or shacks, compared to only 3% of non-Roma. Over half of Roma homes (55%) are not connected to a sewage system and nearly two-thirds (61%) have no inside toilet or bathroom (66%).[74]

Poverty and discrimination mean that some Roma are forced to live in extremely polluted environments. In Kosovo, high levels of lead have been found in the blood of Roma children at three camps for displaced persons in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica and Obiliq/Obilić. In the settlement Lovanja, in Montenegro, 90 Roma live at the edge of the municipal garbage dump. There are no paved roads to or in the settlement which is exposed to a high risk of flooding. There is no running water on the site and the nearest health centre is 8 km away.[75] Throughout the territory, the World Bank notes that RAE children are "disproportionately exposed to insecure living conditions" and pollution.[76]

"We have been living here for a lot of years, without sewage, or anything. The streets are not paved. The problem lies with the authorities."

Roma from FYR Macedonia.[77]

Millennium Development Goal 7 seeks for states to "significantly improve the lives of slum dwellers" and "to reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water".

In Serbia, 35% of registered Roma settlements have no piped water supply. This figure rises to 75% in Montenegro. In Romania, around 70% of Roma households are without a water supply, while in Bulgaria, it is estimated that 50% of Roma houses are not connected to running water. A study of Roma living in the Bosnian canton of Zenica found that 17% of homes were without water.[78] While there is almost universal access to electricity in Bulgaria and Romania, over 5% of Roma homes in Bulgaria and 12% in Romania are not connected. In Serbia, it is estimated that 10% of houses in Roma settlements have no electricity, and research in the Ciljuge district in Bosnia Herzegovina found that 40%-50% of Roma families did not have access to electricity.[79]

Conditions are particularly severe in Kosovo, where around 130,000 homes were destroyed during the conflict in 1999, though some 60,000 have since been rebuilt. Only 28 of the territory's homes are connected to the sewage system and public waste disposal is rare. Health risks resulting from inadequate infrastructure and services are further exacerbated by environmental pollution which "poses a serious health hazard in Kosovo".[80]

In Kosovo, high levels of lead have been found in the blood of Roma children at three camps for displaced persons in Mitrovicë/ Mitrovica and Obiliq/Obilić.

"There is no sewage and nobody comes to remove the garbage..[this] is a great risk for any epidemics, it is very risky for children in particular."
Roma man,

Gjakova/Djakovo, Kosovo.[81]

3.2.3 Overcrowding

Another aspect of housing poverty is overcrowding and throughout the region the poor enjoy less living space and endure greater overcrowding:

- In Albania, the average poor household comprises 5.7 people, compared to the national average of 4.3.[82]
- In FYR Macedonia, there are 5.8 members per poor household, though only 3.8 for non poor, and poor households have on average 14sqm of space per person, two-thirds of the national average.[83]
- In Romania, 30% of the poor live in overcrowded accommodation.[84]
- In Kosovo, almost 25% of all homes have an average of 3 or more people to a room.[85]
- In Bosnia Herzegovina, 60% have an average of at least two persons per room.[86]

On average, Roma households had half the space per person compared to non-Roma living in the same neighbourhood.

In a comparative survey of Roma and non-Roma circumstances, UNDP found a consistent picture of less living space per person among Roma households. On average, Roma households had half the space per person compared to non-Roma living in the same neighbourhood.

Tackling housing poverty and residential segregation is a priority area of the Decade of Roma Inclusion. Each of the five states participating in the Decade and covered in this report have committed to revising regulations and ensuring enforcement of national standards, including efforts to resolve the legal status of Roma homes and settlements.

FYR Macedonia intends to develop specific urban development plans for areas where many Roma live. Romania has identified a target of improving 10% of Roma homes a year throughout the decade. In Serbia, the state aims to eradicate 15 slums and provide a further 80 with basic infrastructure, as well as to renovate 4000 homes and build an additional 3600 for Roma.
Given the scale of the problems identified above, this will still leave many Roma families in deep housing poverty and exclusion. The Roma population is growing rapidly. Unless the causes of exclusion are identified and addressed in a comprehensive way, barriers taken away, and economic and social opportunities for the poor and especially Roma people opened, there will not be a sustainable solution.

3.3 Health

Poverty, discrimination and poor living conditions since childhood mean that the health of most Roma adults is worse than the national average. Official morbidity or mortality data is not collected by ethnicity and very little research has been conducted which could provide an accurate national picture of Roma health, let alone for international comparison.

"The basic problem in the implementation of the programme [for the improvement of Roma health] is the non-existence of data of services provided in the area of health promotion" and a "lack of data on Roma health conditions is evident".

Action Plan for Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015 in the Republic of Montenegro

To compensate for the lack of data, some countries are developing methods to extract information on the health status of Roma and their use of health services. Roma communities and health mediators participate in monitoring the implementation of targeted programmes. In Bulgaria, for example, research will be conducted into the health of Roma communities, and in Montenegro a Monitoring Team has been established within the Institute of Public Health which will include Roma representatives. Roma health mediators, working closely with primary health providers, are an important source of information in Romania, while, in Serbia, Roma programmes will be developed with the help of the Ministry of Health, the Roma Health Committee of the Minority Rights Centre and other NGOs.

3.3.1 Access to health services

In recent years access to quality health care has become more difficult for the poorest and socially excluded. Throughout the region, public spending on health has declined. Pressure on national budgets means that in most states/entities, public spending on health care is less than 5% of GDP. Informal payments are also common in the region and impose a disproportionate burden on poorer people and increase the likelihood that the poor will get a poorer service. In addition to this, comes the high cost of medicines.

During the 1990s, various types of health insurance schemes were introduced across the region. These schemes are financed primarily through payroll contributions, while health expenses for the unemployed and children are paid from national or local budgets. Health insurance coverage varies across the region with only 39% of the population covered in Albania,[90] but 75% in Romania.[91] People without formal employment are often not covered and face problems covering costs and coping with the complexity of obtaining health insurance. Another factor contributing to the exclusion of many Roma communities from health services is the lack of official documentation regarding identity or residency. At the end of 2001, more than half of all Roma in Serbia did not have a birth certificate or any other document proving their citizenship. Almost one-third did not possess a health card.[92]

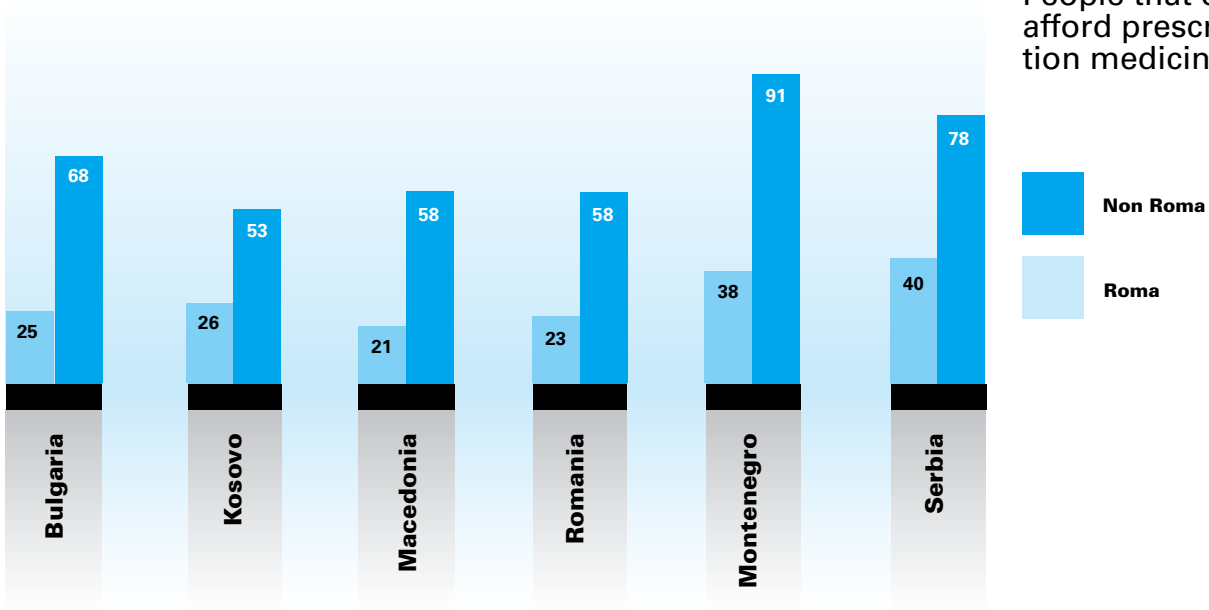
Spending on Health % GDP (2003)

State/Entity	Public Spending (2003)	Private Spending (2002)
Albania	2.1%	3.7%
Bosnia Herzegovina	3.1%	4.6%
Bulgaria	2.9%	3.4%
Macedonia	5.1%	2-3%[88]
Romania	1.9%	2.1%
Serbia and Montenegro	7% (2001)	2-4% (2001[89])

Source: UNDP; World Bank

Health insurance coverage varies across the region with only 39% of the population covered in Albania, but 75% in Romania.

People that can afford prescription medicine (%)



Source: UNDP [97]

In Bulgaria, the Ministry of Health plans to increase the number of primary health centres in areas where many Roma live, as well as to run mobile units promoting preventative health care, and to establish a network of Roma health mediators to liaise between communities and health care providers. In FYR Macedonia, there are plans to open 20 health clinics in Roma areas and to employ almost 500 Roma health care workers.

Throughout the region poorer households are less likely to be insured. In Bosnia Herzegovina, though almost 80% of the total population has health insurance, more than one-third of the poor, 30% of them being children, are not covered.[93] In Romania, only 64% of the rural population have health insurance and the rate is even lower (57%) for those with the least education.[94]

A survey of Roma women in Zenica in Bosnia Herzegovina found that half of them did not have health insurance.[95] In Romania it is estimated that only one-third of Roma (34%) are insured with the most common reason said to be the cost of the scheme.[96]

Health insurance schemes cover the costs of some medicines, but in all countries there is a significant cost to the private individual for prescribed drugs. Household survey data indicates that between only 20% and 40% of Roma households can afford prescription medicine.

In Bulgaria, the Ministry of Health plans to increase the number of primary health centres in areas where many Roma live, as well as to run mobile units promoting preventive health care, and to establish a network of Roma health mediators to liaise between communities and health care providers. In FYR Macedonia, there are plans to open 20 health clinics in Roma areas and to employ almost 500 Roma health care workers. If these initiatives are part of a comprehensive strategy to address exclusion and are based on revised well defined policies, these initiatives can bring about a sustainable change.

In general owing to their precarious living conditions poor people have, in addition to their poverty, worse health than better-off citizens. This puts them in a delicate situation, and a very high degree of insecurity. When living in poverty, there are small margins to manage loss of income when being sick and no compensation can be expected for many of those working in the informal sector. This also affects children who have to take on responsibilities that should be carried out by the authorities when parents fall ill. This can dramatically affect their schooling, life and future.

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3.4 Education

As previously documented by Save the Children, the World Bank, UNDP and others,[98] Roma people have not had the same opportunities for education as other members of the societies in which they live. This limits their possibilities to actively participate in mainstream social, economic and political life and leaves them vulnerable to exploitation, unemployment, poverty and abuse. In the countries covered by this study, Roma people are heavily over-represented among those without even basic literacy skills.

Comparative data from surveys done in the region indicates that in all countries and for all age groups, Roma literacy rates are consistently lower than those of non-Roma, even when they are living in the same neighbourhood. The table below shows that literacy rates among older Roma is low; it also shows that, with the exception of Romania and FYR Macedonia, Roma aged 25-34 have a better rate of literacy than those in the 15-25 age group, indicating that the current situation is not improving. On the contrary, disparities and exclusion in most of the countries are increasing. The figures in this report should be seen as indicative, since the statistical basis of the excluded population is very weak, due to the same excluded.

The literacy rates of Roma women are consistently lower than those of Roma men, indicating that that there is also an issue of gender inequality in access to education. This is especially of concern, since the wellbeing of the family and especially of children is closely related to the level of education of the mother.

The profound difficulties many Roma women face in obtaining a basic education are also illustrated by other research data:

- In 2002, a survey of 209 Roma women in Montenegro showed 86% to be either completely illiterate or to have not completed primary education. Only 6 women in the sample had finished secondary school.[99]
- In Albania, one-quarter of women in

In most of the countries, Roma aged between 25-34 have a better literacy rate than those in the 15—25 age group.

Literacy Rates Among Roma and Non-Roma

State/Entity	Age	Non Roma %	Roma Total %	Roma women %
Albania	15-24	100	65	64
	25-34	99	75	71
	45+	94	55	47
Bosnia Herzegovina	15-24	100	76	74
	25-34	100	79	72
	45+	95	61	40
Bulgaria	15-24	100	82	82
	25-34	100	87	84
	45+	99	71	64
Kosovo	15-24	98	65	56
	25-34	98	76	69
	45+	76	53	38
Montenegro	15-24	99	73	-
	25-34	99	61	55
	45+	99	45	33
Macedonia	15-24	100	90	87
	25-34	100	87	77
	45+	95	78	63
Romania	15-24	95	72	70
	25-34	97	70	67
	45+	95	63	55
Serbia	15-24	97	90	89
	25-34	99	95	92
	45+	98	77	68

Source: UNDP

Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) communities are illiterate, more than three times the rate for men and they have spent an average of just 5.5 years in school, compared to 8 years for men. Almost one-third (31%) of RAE girls of primary school age do not participate in primary education, compared with 19% of boys.[100]

- In Kosovo, 26% of RAE women are illiterate, more than three times the rate among ethnic Albanian women, and six times that of women from Serb communities in the territory.[101]
- A Survey of 5,000 adult Roma in Serbia in 2003 found that 65.8% of Roma mothers had not completed primary school, with the most common time for dropping out being after fourth grade and a further 30.2% had only primary education.[102]

Low education, early marriage and economic and social dependence of Roma women reinforce discrimination of women, and limit women's possibilities to make important decisions related to their own life and to that of their children. The degree of success of children at school is related to the level of education of their mother.

A child that grows up in a community and family in which there is limited - if any - of the kind of preparation expected for formal education, is at a disadvantage when entering school. In addition to this, Roma children have few role models in the family or in their neighbourhood who have higher education and qualified work.

3.5 Conclusion

The excluded population groups are victims of a vicious circle of poverty, exclusion, discrimination and multiple deprivations, whereby disadvantage in one area such as housing, can reinforce disadvantage in another, such as employment or health.

The situation of the Roma people is a combination of exploitation and exclusion, which hinders their chances of progressing.

In this chapter we have examined the economic, physical and social environment in which children grow up. Poverty, exclusion and discrimination of the parents and the community - affect the life and development of children. Roma are often exploited, have limited bargaining power when selling their products, and are not protected by labour laws or security schemes. The welfare system should, in coordination with the other social sectors, play an important role in ensuring children and their parents will not be excluded from the basic services. However, assistance is not well targeted so those most at need are often excluded from these benefits and services. Roma people have worse health, and a literacy rate far below that of the national average. There is a serious lack of capacity amongst authorities, public services, and individuals to respect the Roma people and their rights.

Low and insecure income obliges Roma people to constantly struggle to get enough money for food and basic needs. Parents have little free time to be with their children. This, combined with the low level of education, results in reduced capacities to stimulate the development of small children. The living conditions and housing of the poor and especially Roma population further undermine the situation of children and lead to increased segregation and discrimination.

Low education, early marriage and the economic and social dependence of Roma women reinforce discrimination of women, and limit women's possibilities to make important decisions related to their own life and to that of their children.

4. The Child, Early Childhood

This chapter focuses on poor and excluded children from birth, the respect of their rights, and especially their health and development during the first critical years of life. Their experience and development during these years affect their chances of success when they reach school age. This is the time to lay a solid ground on which the child can gradually build the capacities required to break out from the intergenerational cycle of poverty. In this chapter, some of the critical challenges during early childhood for poor and excluded children will be identified.

4.1 Women and Motherhood

At a time when national populations are ageing and declining, the birth rate among Roma is rapidly increasing and significantly exceeds the national average across the region. There are theories that higher fertility among Roma reflects the value placed on children and traditional gender relations. The focus groups held with Roma women, however, indicate that high fertility results from various forms of exclusion, including limited access for many Roma women to health care and family planning. Women claim that if they could choose they would have fewer children. Globally, it is common that women with no or low levels of education, have more children.

45.9% Roma women in Serbia got married before 18 and 12.4% of Roma girls had married before they turned fifteen

Given the diversity of Roma populations in South East Europe it would be inaccurate and harmful to promote the image of 'traditional' communities maintaining distinct and conservative gender relations. In addition, gender discrimination is not exclusive to Roma but exists throughout the region, to some degree or other, especially in rural and remote areas. Nevertheless, strong patriarchal relations still exist in some Roma communities in which women have a lower social status than men, and roles are focussed on motherhood and the home.

Consensual marriages are common among Roma with 40% of couples in Romania not having taken part in a formal/legal marriage ceremony (compared to the national average of 2.6%), and this seems to be increasing among the younger generation.[103] This can have legal consequences for women and children.

Early marriage has been perceived throughout history as a form of protection of the girl. Value is placed on female virginity, especially in more conservative communities. In traditional communities, wealthy Roma may decide the partner and arrange the marriage of their children when they are still very young (even at the age of 9 or 10). Poor Roma parents encourage early marriage. With a poor schooling system and poor learning opportunities it is not relevant for children to continue in school and parents cannot continue to support them as they reach adolescence. When the government does not fulfil its obligations to provide access to good education, the excluded people have to find their own solutions.

Research by UNICEF in Serbia in 2005 found that 25% of women with less education got married before the age of 18, which is more than three times the national average of 8%. However, among Roma women the percentage married before 18 was 45.9%, and 12.4% of Roma women had married before they turned fifteen.[104] In Montenegro a study of Roma women found that the most common reasons cited for early marriage were Roma customs and tradition (46%) and parental pressure (24%). Almost half of the women polled (48.5% of them) said that their future spouse is most often chosen by the father or the whole family.[105] Another study in the town of Nikšić in 2004 found that 67% had their first child between the ages of 15 and 18.[106]

To give birth at too early an age can be hazardous to the health of both the child and the mother. In addition, the girl loses

part of her adolescence and is not yet prepared to take on the responsibility of being a mother. Access to good quality, relevant education and a positive experience for the girl in school, are important factors to limit drop outs and to increase the girl's age of marriage.

4.1.1 Family planning

The level of abortion is extremely high in the states/entities included in this study. It is especially high among the poorest population. The cost of modern contraceptives and lack of awareness and knowledge are some of the reasons for not using them, but it also reflects gender discrimination, stereotyping and limited bargaining power on the part of women. This is predominant among Roma but could also be the case for some of the non Roma women. Schools in most of the countries studied have some orientation on sexuality and family planning but this is marginal. The poor, excluded and especially Roma children are again the most disadvantaged, since they have less access to school, and risk not getting any orientation and appropriate information about family planning.

The population pyramid for Roma in Roma settlements in Serbia (see pages 16 and 17), shows a very high population increase among Roma. This is very different from the pyramids of the average population and for the 20% poorest population, which show both a negative population growth. The reasons for this difference is not clear. One important factor could be that, unlike Roma women, poor non-Roma women benefit from a better education. A few years of secondary education can be enough to make this difference. This can help them to have more control of the number of children they have. The non-Roma women could also have even more abortions since they have better access to services, provided by the health centres. The access to contraceptives including the impact of the cost should also be further studied. It is possible that both pyramids reflect denial of the woman's right to decide the number of children she has. Roma women desire less children, and other poor women might desire to have more than one child if she could support them.

Surveys show that there is low use of modern forms of contraception and a high rate of abortion among Roma women.[107] A recent study in Albania found that:

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- Birth control was practised by only 10% of Roma and 8% of Evgjit
- Only 46% of Roma and 49% of Evgjit women were aware of a standard birth control method. Many husbands refused to use contraceptives
- 56% of Roma women had had at least one abortion. 77% of these women had had two or more
- 44% of Evgjit women had had at least one abortion, 60% of these women had had two or more
- The majority of abortions had been carried out by a doctor, but, 17% of Roma and 15% of Evgjit women had performed an abortion themselves.[108]

"I have had a lot of abortions, but my husband still does not want to use contraceptives."

Anida, a Roma woman from Tirana, Albania.

"I have had three because I do not have any means of supporting them [children]. I did it because of the bad conditions I'm in. I do not have anything to feed them."

Fidaria, a Roma women from Bregu i Lumit, Albania.

According to a UNICEF study in 1996, less than 30% of Roma mothers in FYR Macedonia, who expressed a wish not to get pregnant in the next 2 to 3 years, used modern contraceptive methods.[109] In Romania, a survey on the use of contraceptives found that less than half of Roma couples employed any methods, with only 16.3% using a modern form of contraception.

Between 10 and 60% of expectant Roma mothers never attended antenatal clinic.

In Montenegro, research carried out for the Roma Education Fund revealed that nearly 70% of RAE women did not take part in deciding the size of their family, with this decision being made by the husband and his family.[111]

There are several initiatives in the region that work with Roma women's groups. The Decade of Roma Inclusion action plan in Bulgaria supports Roma health mediators (as in Romania) to advise women about antenatal care. Services are also to be made more accessible through outreach mobile health care units and the development of a network of family planning advice centres in Roma communities.

4.1.2 Antenatal care

Antenatal care is extremely important to ensure that the expectant mother is in good health and the child is developing well. Available data indicate that the vast majority of women in the region have at least one professional antenatal consultation during pregnancy: in Albania, 91%; in Bosnia Herzegovina, 99%. However, in FYR Macedonia, only 80% of pregnant women receive antenatal care[112] and the World Bank notes that antenatal services in Kosovo are poor.[113]

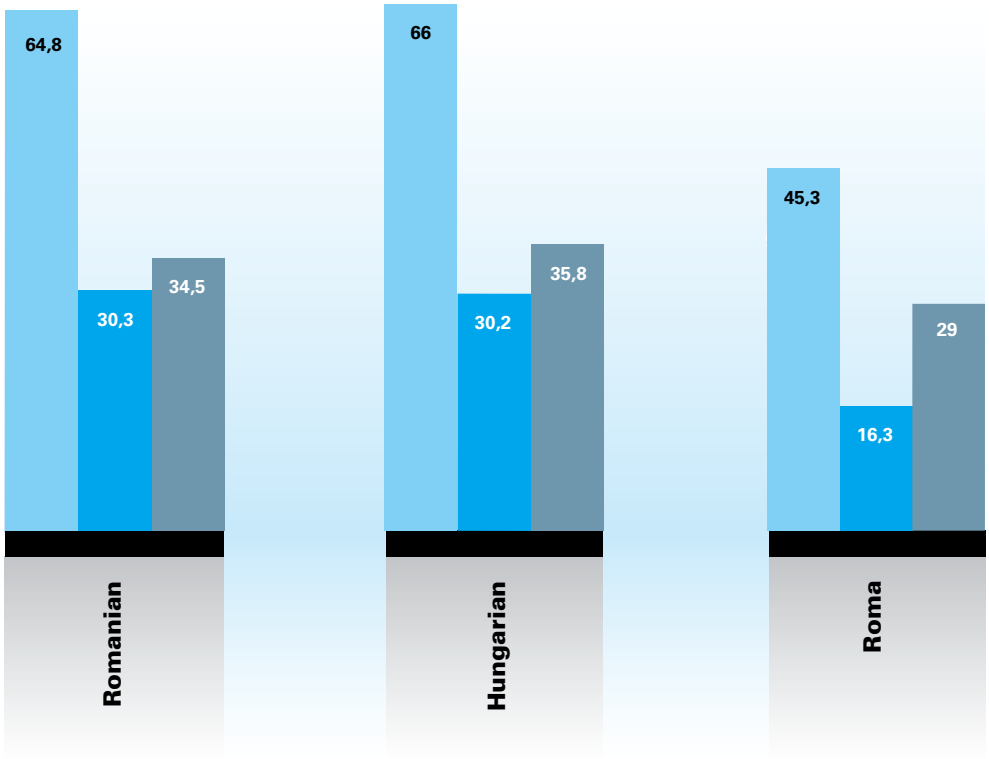
A higher number of pregnancies presents a higher risk for woman, which makes it particularly important that health authorities ensure that Roma women receive adequate antenatal care. Yet, Roma women are less likely to receive the care and advice they need during pregnancy. Studies from the late 1990s show that in Romania, more than 30% of expectant Roma mothers did not attend an antenatal clinic[114], and in FYR Macedonia 38% of Roma women did not receive a single examination by a medical practitioner during their pregnancy.[115] In Kosovo, the situation was even worse with more than 60% of pregnant Roma women never attending an antenatal clinic.[116] A study of RAE women in Montenegro found that only 10% had ever seen a gynaecologist.[117]

The empowerment of women and women groups is an urgent need. The causes behind the low respective high birth-rates should be identified and further studied. Family planning, maternity and parenting skills should be offered to Roma women groups and boys and men should be invited. There are good successful experiences in the region to learn from. The services must adjust to the needs and circumstances of the women and the family. The service providers would need training to acquire capacities and resources.

4.1.3 Birth

National data collected by UNICEF shows a very high rate of births attended by medical personnel in the region (98-100%), though a lower figure for Albania (94%).[118] However, it is likely that these figures do not include all births, particularly those among the most marginalised and unregistered communities, and that the number of home births and those not attended by a trained professional is higher than official figures would suggest.

In Serbia, it has been reported that "In the Roma community a considerable



Contraceptive use in Romania by ethnic groups (%)

Source of data: Serbanescu, F, et al[110]

number of births still take place at home."[119] Research by UNICEF in the largely Roma municipality of Suto Orizari (FYR Macedonia) in 1999 found almost 1,000 Roma children who had been born at home amidst poor hygienic conditions and without the presence of a health professional.[120] A recent study of child abandonment in Kosovo indicated that 17% of all births take place without trained healthcare personnel present, mainly to the poorest women.[121] These figures combined with gaps in registration, especially of Roma women, indicate that there could also be cases of infant deaths, which are not reported.

4.2 Official Identity

An early form of exclusion suffered by some children is the lack of official registration of their birth. The 'invisibility' of non-registered children is of particular concern as the lack of an official identity can hinder them from receiving their other rights to care and support from public authorities and services.

In the spring of 2000, the Commissioner for Refugees of the Republic of Serbia, jointly with the UNHCR, organised a registration of IDPs, of whom 19,000 were Roma from Kosovo. Yet, at the end of 2001, over 39% of Roma in Serbia, including both local Roma and those displaced from Kosovo, were not in possession of the basic Serbian identity document.[122] Research carried out by the UNHCR found that some Roma did not see the advantage of obtaining formal documentation and that they only complied with the system when an immediate need arose,[123] while a study by the Serbian government identified a lack of trust in officialdom.[124] However, this might also be linked to the very complicated and costly procedures to get the documentation. A large number of forms have to be filled in which can be very difficult especially for people with limited education, an address has to be given which some Roma living in Roma settlements do not have and sometimes they have to travel to authorities in other parts of the country. On top of that, fees mostly have to be paid and Roma are often badly treated by the personnel in the establishments.

The mere fact that some children are not registered is evidence of a severe deficiency in the system. It is governments' responsibility to ensure that all children are registered. This is not something that should depend on the parents and their abilities and capacities - even if parents do not have the capacities

At the end of 2001, over 39% of Roma in Serbia, including both local Roma and those displaced from Kosovo, were not in possession of the basic Serbian identity document

that are necessary, the structures and policies should be designed in a way that ensure the inclusion of all children. The failures in the system have to be identified and full coverage of all children guaranteed. In addition, the Convention on the Rights of the Child states that the rights of children must be respected for all children, whether they are a citizen of that country or not. This means for example that displaced Roma children from Kosovo should be registered and guaranteed their rights even if they might be living temporarily in the country.

4.3 Children's Health and Nutrition

We know little about the health of poor children. There are no official studies on their health status and no system to monitor if it is improving or deteriorating. Poor environment, poor sanitation and nutrition, combined with inadequate care, can have harmful effects on the health of children. The health status when the child is small can also influence the health of the person as an adult.

The figures for Serbia show that the under-five mortality rate for Roma children was three times higher than the average figures for the country.

4.3.1 Infant and Under Five Health

The health status of the newborn is closely related to the health and nutritional conditions of the mother. The care women receive during pregnancy affect children physically and emotionally and their chances of survival and development. Throughout South East Europe infant mortality rates are falling, but are still far higher than the EU average.

The health of children, living in the most marginalised communities, especially Roma children, is significantly worse than that of their less disadvantaged peers. Therefore they are more in need of good quality health care. Unfortunately, access to health care is obstructed by exclusion and discrimination. They are not always registered, their parents have to pay costs they cannot afford and Roma children are often not well received by service providers. In addition, in those cases where parents are less educated, they might not be well informed or have the capacities to provide good preventive healthcare to their children.

"I took my grandchild to the doctor and it coughed at the nurse's desk. Because of that she told me to take the kid outside, even though 100 ill people approach her each day. I asked her why she told me to do that, whether [it was] because I'm Roma? If I were Macedonian, I wouldn't have been treated that way."

Roma from FYR Macedonia.[126]

In 2005, some of the countries in the Region included a module on Roma in Roma settlements in the UNICEF sponsored MICS survey. The figures for Serbia show that the **under-five mortality rate for Roma** children was **three times higher** than the average figures for the

Infant (under 1 year) mortality 2003 per 1,000 live births

State/Entity	IMR
Albania	18
Bosnia Herzegovina	14
Bulgaria	14
FYR Macedonia	10
Romania	18
Serbia and Montenegro	12
EU* (2005)	5.2

Source UNICEF, Index Mundi[125]

country. Research by Oxfam found that **30% of Roma children suffered from diarrhoea**, a rate **three times higher** than for children in the general population. More than 10% of Roma children had respiratory infections, four times higher than the national average. Skin diseases and asthma were more common among Roma children.[127] A further study carried out by UNICEF in 2005 found that **20% of the Roma children were in poor health, compared with 7% of the non-Roma children** examined. There was also a higher reported incidence of illness, with 30% of children falling sick at least once over a two month period.[128] Poor health status also affects nutritional status and development and can have a deleterious effect on school attendance.

Vaccination against the most common life-threatening childhood diseases is a central aspect of preventative health care for children. In the countries covered in this report, official rates of immunised children are over 90%. However, this means that there are up to 10% of children who are registered but not vaccinated. Among those not registered, the vaccination coverage is probably quite low. These are the same poor children including Roma children, who are at highest risk of becoming sick, due to their poor living conditions and deficient support from the services. The last cases of polio to be reported in Europe occurred among Roma children in the Burgas region in Bulgaria in 2001.[129] From official figures it is not possible to identify the extent to which Roma children are included in vaccination programmes.

A campaign supported by UNICEF in Serbia in 2002-2004 found that almost **42,000 children from marginalized population groups** (majority Roma) **were not vaccinated**. The majority of them were not registered at a health centre and 10% did not have a birth certificate.[130] Also, MICS showed that **only one in four Roma children is receiving all recommended vaccines on time**.[131] In FYR Macedonia the World Health Organisation estimates that only 50% of Roma children are fully immunised compared to the national rate of 94%.[132]

The 'invisibility' of many children to the authorities due to the lack of an official identity or registration with a primary health provider combined with a lack of effective outreach service and the discrimination against Roma communities are the main causes of this negligence. The lack of awareness and confidence in vaccination on the part of some Roma parents makes it more complicated for the service providers. However, it is the services that remain responsible for finding a way to ensure these children are reached.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child requires states to reduce infant mortality (24.2a), and Millennium Development Goal 4 of reducing child mortality requires improved monitoring of child mortality. To achieve this, the health of all children should become a priority for the governments. It is the duty of governments to ensure that the excluded children are reached.

There is growing awareness among states in the region that more attention needs to be given to improving reproductive and infant health among Roma. In Bulgaria, reducing infant mortality among Roma is a specific goal of its Decade of Roma Inclusion action plan, which includes using Roma health mediators (as in Romania) and mobile health care units. Immunisation is an issue highlighted in the health improvement plans for Roma in the region. These include information, education and outreach immunisation campaigns to be run among parents and communities, and screening services to test levels of coverage.

These are some of several promising initiatives that are being developed in the states/entities covered in this study. Poorly designed and poorly functioning registration and welfare systems, costs and discrimination, limit Roma access to health services. Improving the health of poor and Roma children has to be addressed comprehensively at both national and local levels, in an integrated way. Health, education and social welfare services have to coordinate and remove the barriers that prohibit full access to their services.

The last cases of polio to be reported in Europe occurred among Roma children in the Burgas region in Bulgaria in 2001

4.3.2 Nutrition and parenting practices

Exclusive breastfeeding is the best start in life for a child, but at the fourth, or at the latest the sixth month, the child requires additional nutritious food. Poor hygiene increases the risk of diarrhoea and further decreases the nutritional status. Under-nourishment during the first two to three years of life is very serious as that is the

most important period for the brain to develop; this is when the basis for further learning and socialising is laid. Lack of nutrition and lack of stimulation during this period can have life-long effects.

Low birth wait of Roma in Serbia is double that of national average, and stunting measured at different intervals while the child is growing up is four time as many as national average.

Low birth weight and stunting are key indicators to measure children's nutritional status. The weight at birth of the baby is in most cases related to the mother's health and nutritional status. The first direct effect of exclusion that is measurable in the child is the weight at birth. The MICS survey in Serbia[133] indicates that among children in the 20% poorest families low **birth weight** (less than 2,500 grams) is almost **double that of the national average**; for Roma it is **double the national average.** The nutritional deficiency of the pregnant mother affects the newborn's chances of survival, growth, long-term health and psycho-social development. A UNDP survey in South East Europe of September 2004 makes it possible to relate the low birth weight to the availability of food for the parents. The survey showed that **the majority of Roma (53%) reported going hungry in the previous month,** compared with only 9% of average non-Roma.[134] Research carried out by the FAO Food Security Project showed that in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, 7.1% of the total population is considered "food insecure with hunger," but **for Roma families 84.9% of households are defined as "food insecure" and 68.1% are defined as "food insecure with hunger".**

53% of Roma in SEE reported going hungry, compared only 9% of non-Roma.

We will see throughout this study how the disadvantages of Roma children increase as they grow up, and become so severe that they come to a point when this new generation becomes doomed to a life of poverty and exclusion just as their family has been for many, many generations. Not only is the gap between the average and the Roma population increasing, but also between the 20% poorest and Roma.

Stunting is measured at different intervals while until the child is 5. The same MICS survey shows that **twice** as many among the 20% poorest and now almost **four times** as many Roma children are stunted compared to the average national figures. Stunting is a reflection of chronic malnutrition as a result of a failure to receive adequate nutrition over a long period and recurrent or chronic illness. We can see that the disadvantage the poorest and Roma children had at birth is not improving but getting worse. In Serbia, 8.8% of Roma children are underweight (as opposed to the national average of 1.5%), while 25% are stunted (average 6.6%).

The system has failed to detect and support these children in time. Research by UNICEF in 2005 found that only one-quarter (26%) of Roma mothers obtained advice from a health professional on how to feed their child.[135]

The table below shows the percentage of underweight children in the average population in the studied countries. The percentage of children who are underweight is higher than in Europe but lower than most developing countries.

Health, nutrition, care and early stimulation are the key components for good development. A study by UNICEF in 2005 surveyed Roma and non-Roma mothers in Serbia and Montenegro to learn about their parenting practices. The research found that Roma mothers spent less time with their children than non-Roma mothers, direct communication with children under the age of six was

Percentage of children moderately/ severely underweight

Country	Underweight %
Albania	14.3
Bosnia Herzegovina	4.1
FYR Macedonia	5.9
Romania	3.2
Serbia and Montenegro	1.9

Source: UNICEF[136]

also less and Roma mothers indicated significantly lower levels of satisfaction with their children's achievements.[137] A further UNICEF study in 2006 showed that Roma children under the age of five, living in the most excluded communities, received only half the amount of developmental support from their parents as that enjoyed by non-Roma children and were twice as likely to be left without adult care, or in the care of another child (under ten years old).[138]

It would be wrong to generalise the results of the studies to the hundreds of thousands of Roma families across the region. Roma children might also get other kinds of stimulation that the survey did not detect. However, the pattern is very similar to that in other countries, where poor parents are fully occupied trying to acquire food and the basic needs for daily survival. Parents with less education also tend to communicate less with their children. Nevertheless, this is an area which requires further study. Existing parenting and nutritional practices should be identified and training programmes designed to build on existing practices and further enhance them.

Under-nourishment and lack of stimulation during the 3 first years have lifelong effects and can often not be completely recovered. When the child grows up and has passed that critical stage, inadequate food affects the child's wellbeing and health.

The research carried out by the FAO Food Security Project indicated that when it comes to **Roma children** in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, 47.2% are considered as "food insecure with hunger."[139] For a child to suffer hunger is a terrible experience. A hungry child has difficulties concentrating and following classes in school and feels humiliated when comparing her or himself with other children who are better off.

Family poverty restricts the amount and kinds of food available to children. An investigation by OXFAM in 2001 found:

- 24% of Roma children and young people had never consumed milk or milk products
- 70% of children ate meat less than once a week
- 40 % had never had fresh fruit and vegetables.[140]

Similarly, a study by UNICEF in Serbia and Montenegro found the diet of children in Roma communities to be low in meat, fruit, vegetables and dairy products, and to contain higher than average amounts of potatoes, beans and bread.[141]

Pre-schools and schools should play an important role in addressing the issue of hunger among children. Good coordination between the school/ teachers and the social welfare system should be established at local level and the situation of excluded children closely monitored, ensuring no child is left out.

4.4 Domestic violence

Exclusion, discrimination, uncertainty of not having civil and human rights respected, of living in informality, in overcrowded unhealthy living conditions, relative illegality, poverty and hunger create insecurity and tension within the home too.

Results of a pilot survey done in the region of Niš in Serbia showed that more than 47% of Roma women had been victims of domestic violence, in most cases with their children as either witnesses or victims.[142] A similar finding was reached by a study for the Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equity for Women (ESE), which indicated that almost half of Roma women surveyed in FYR Macedonia had experienced domestic violence.

Almost half of Roma women surveyed in FYR Macedonia had experienced domestic violence.

An indication of the acceptability of violence towards children comes from the UNICEF study of family practices in Serbia and Montenegro. Almost one-third of Roma respondents (30%) considered corporal punishment appropriate in the upbringing of children, compared to 11% of non-Roma. Nearly two thirds (64%) of Roma parents admitted hitting a child in the week prior to the survey (twice the rate among non-Roma) and the frequency of beatings was also higher.[143]

Violence is considered as an internal family issue in the states/entities covered in the study. Laws are being passed that define interfamily violence as a criminal act, though social norms and traditions are still prevalent. According to Roma women activists, it is difficult also within Roma communities to talk openly about violence and violence against women and children. A Roma woman who reports

violence faces possible exclusion from her community for exposing a private family matter outside her community and for harming her husband.

Violence in the home can be traumatising for a child and have a major effect on their physical, social and emotional development. Public authorities, teachers, health workers and social services providers have the responsibility of identifying cases that require attention and ensuring they are acted on or referred to relevant institutions. However, the states and entities covered in this report are in a process of transition and reform of social and other services. Budgets are being cut, salaries are low and outreach services and referral systems are very weak. In addition, prejudice against Roma and the greater 'invisibility' of many Roma children mean that many are not being provided with the support, care and protection they need. Ombudsman's systems are being developed in the states and entities of the study and interfamily violence is just starting to become recognised as an issue of public concern. The UN Secretary General's study on Violence, launched in 2006 has helped to bring the issue of violence against children forward, although most people are still not aware of the scale and extent of the problem. To protect children and women against violence is a big task that is just starting. It will require awareness and institution building, including well functioning referral systems, policy development and changes in social norms and behaviour. Violence against children is not especially linked to poor and excluded people; it occurs in all groups of society.

4.5 Conclusion

Exclusion affects children directly and indirectly even before they are born because their community, family and mother are excluded. Up to 68% of Roma in the countries of the former Yugoslavia face hunger. The low birth weight of newborn children is often related to low nutritional status among poor pregnant women. The states/entities in the region are failing to fulfil their obligation to provide "appropriate pre-and post natal care for Roma mothers and their children". Children require special attention to ensure good nutrition and stimulation during the first most sensitive years of their life. Prohibitive costs, lack of support for parents, registration deficiencies, physical inaccessibility of services, lack of outreach services and discrimination mean that poor, especially Roma, children are in many cases left out. States are not fulfilling their obligation to "ensure the provision of necessary medical assistance and health care to all children", and parents are not provided with basic health knowledge with regard to their children.

Support to pregnant women and to parents to ensure health and nutrition of the woman and nutrition and stimulation of their small children, must become top priorities in combating poverty and exclusion.

Children must be set as a priority concern, especially during this period of transition and reform of services and structures. A sick child cannot wait until the economy in the country has improved or until her/his parents get a job. Short, medium and long term targets should be set for ensuring excluded children get the best possible health, nutrition, care and stimulation, seeking immediate results.

5. Education

When Roma children reach school age the effects of the disadvantages they experienced since birth are more visible and some of them are not even called to enrol in school since they were never registered.

Although Roma children face serious challenges throughout their first years of life because of the poverty, exclusion and discrimination, they grow up in a family and community environment that they belong to and that protects them and helps them to develop their personality. However, when they start school they have to confront the outside world. Will they be sufficiently prepared for school and will they get the support they need from teachers and classmates and from the surrounding society, to have a successful experience? In most cases they will not. Roma children who, in addition to the challenges of being in a strange environment, will most probably experience harsh discrimination.

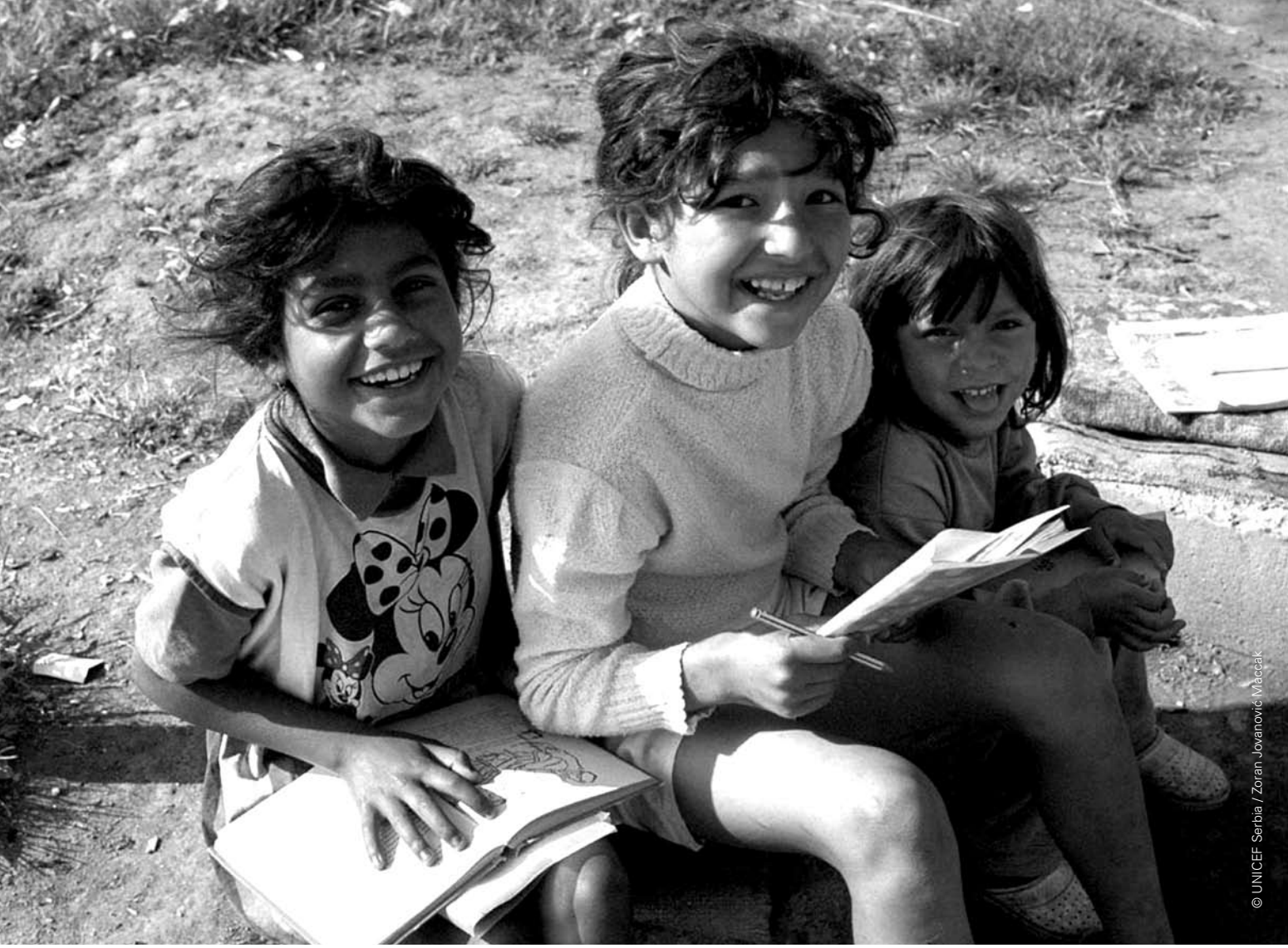
Children have the right to their culture and identity and to be proud of themselves and their family. However, school systems in the region rarely promote appreciation of diversity or practise intercultural learning and understanding. Teachers have limited capacities and tools to facilitate such learning. The Roma culture is often seen as negative and of less value by teachers, school personnel and by non-Roma children and their parents. Diversity is not seen as an advantage, to be different is negative. This is the kind of hostile environment small Roma children confront when they start their first year in school.

In all states/entities covered in this report, there is some state provision of pre-school education, and primary schooling is compulsory and nominally free of charge. During the state socialist period, efforts were made to achieve universal education. As a result, the region has high literacy rates among the present adult population. Although the possibility for Roma children to attend school in that period was somewhat better, it was in most cases to the level of getting basic reading and writing skills, and less so for Roma women.

Spending on Public Education

State/Entity	% of GDP (2002/3)
Albania	**2.6**
Bosnia Herzegovina*	**4.3 (2005)[144]**
Bulgaria	**3.6**
Kosovo*	**6.1 (2003)**
FYR Macedonia	**3.5**
Romania	**3.6**
Serbia and Montenegro	**3.8 (2004)[145]** **5.4 (2004)[146]**

Sources: UNESCO; *World Bank, OECD.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Roma preschool coverage is worryingly low, ranging between 0.2 % in Kosovo to 17% in Romania.

Expenditures in Education are very low in most of the countries and the efficiency is also a concern. With this level of investment in children it will be difficult to overcome poverty and exclusion.

Over the last fifteen years, major challenges have arisen regarding the primary services, health, education and social welfare, in South-East Europe. Systems are reforming to the demands of the market economy, political pluralism and European integration. Public spending on education has fallen and the costs of education have also been increasingly passed on to individuals. This is having a negative effect on children from the poorest families.

5.1 Pre-School Education

Pre-school education is important for preparing children for school. Those children who attend some kind of kindergarten or nursery have an advantage over those who do not, when starting primary education. Pre-school can be particularly helpful for children from families and communities that have traditionally been excluded from education, and for those who only speak a minority language or whose home circumstances make it hard for them to benefit from early stimulation.

Pre-school can also be an excellent opportunity to orient both children and parents and lay the ground for an inclusive inter-cultural school environment, to enable children and parents, both Roma and non Roma, to become acquainted with, and learn to understand and appreciate different cultures.

In South-East Europe, pre-school coverage is very low, except in Bulgaria and Romania where three-quarters of young children enjoy some degree of pre-school. However, even in these countries the enrolment rates for Roma are worryingly low at 16% and 17% respectively. Pre-school provision is lowest in Bosnia Herzegovina and in Kosovo, which has only 34 nurseries throughout the territory. In Kosovo in 2001, only 49 children from Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities attended pre-school.[147]

Pre-School Enrolment

Country	National %	Roma %
Albania	47[148]	No data
Bosnia Herzegovina	4-5 [149]	No data
Bulgaria	76 [150]	16[151]
Kosovo	4-5[152]	0.2[153] (RAE), 49 children[154]
FYR Macedonia	12[155]	No data
Romania	76[156]	17[157]
Serbia and Montenegro	22[158]	3.9 in Serbia[159]
		3.9[160] (Roma, Askhali, Egyptian)

Sources: UNESCO, World Bank, Council of Europe

This table contains different sources of data and should not be seen as indicative.

There are very few pre-schools in rural areas. In the cities, priority is usually given to children of working parents resulting in poorer children with unemployed parents being left out.[161] The limited information that exists shows that the participation of Roma children in pre-schools is especially low. Those children, who have already started to fall behind and are most at need of good quality preparation, are those with less access to pre- school.

> **"It could be good if pre-school programs were introduced. When they start the primary school they'd know Serbian better."**
>
> **Roma man from Belgrade, Serbia.[162]**

Children who are native Romani speakers but manage to enter a pre-school, suffer additional institutional discrimination through the lack of support provided. Very few pre-schools offer help to enable Roma children to acquire skills and confidence in the language they need in primary school. Inter-cultural learning and understanding depend more on individual initiatives than on institutional capacities and policies. There are some exceptions which are private initiatives.

Research in the year 2000 found that almost all (97%) of the Roma children who had attended NGO-run pre-school programmes in Serbia were proficient in Serbian and almost all subsequently completed the first year of primary school. Only a third of other Roma children who had not participated in the programme had Serbian language skills and only 40% of them passed the first year in primary school.[163] This indicates that it can be possible to overcome language and other learning barriers if good quality pre-schools are available.

> **"Education is the problem. My child is unable to keep up with other white children no matter how bright he is because he doesn't know the language well, and we all talk in the Gypsy language at home."**
>
> **Roma father from Niš, Serbia.[164]**

Education is a priority theme of the Decade of Roma Inclusion. A Roma Education Fund was established, and each of the five states covered in this report, that are participating in the Decade, has identified initiatives to increase the involvement of Roma children in pre-school education. Alongside the development of greater

Research in the year 2000 found that almost all (97%) of the Roma children who had attended NGO-run pre-school programmes in Serbia were proficient in Serbian and almost all subsequently completed the first year of primary school.

State/Entity	Net Enrolment
Albania	95%
Bosnia Herzegovina	95%[165]
Bulgaria	90%
Kosovo	96%[166]
FYR Macedonia	91%
Montenegro	97%[167]
Romania	89%
Serbia	98%[168]

Enrolment in primary education (2002/3)

resources regarding the language, history and traditions of Roma, governments have undertaken specific monitoring of the level of Roma participation in pre-school, with Romania adopting a target of a 5% increase per year. Community focussed initiatives are planned to encourage parents to send their children to pre-school and Romania has already developed such a programme in cooperation with UNICEF.

Existing attendance of Roma children in pre-schools is 3,9 % in Serbia. With an increase of 5% coverage per year for the total population it will take almost 15 years (considering the population increase) until 80% of Roma children are able to attend pre-school. This means that a new generation of children will have lost this crucial opportunity. Not having access to pre-school was identified in the consultation for this report by Roma NGOs, as a major factor in the educational failure of Roma across the region. Increasing the participation of Roma children in pre-school education and ensuring that their experience effectively prepares them for primary education requires urgent action if children, especially Roma children, are to have a chance of breaking the intergenerational cycle of exclusion. An ambitious target, such as ensuring that 80% of Roma and the poorest children attend pre-school 3 to 5 years from now, is not impossible and would have a dramatic effect on inclusion in the educational system. It should be the key element in an emergency short term strategy for inclusion. The return of such an investment could be extraordinary.

5.2 Primary Education

Throughout South-East Europe, net primary enrolment rates are high at around 90% and there is negligible difference between the enrolment of girls and boys.

Since these figures are relatively good, and data is not disaggregated by income groups, ethnicity or other disadvantaged population groups, there is little concern about the increasing disparities and too little attention is given to primary education. The grown-up generation had a relatively good education and decision-makers often do not recognise that the situation for children of today is not the same.

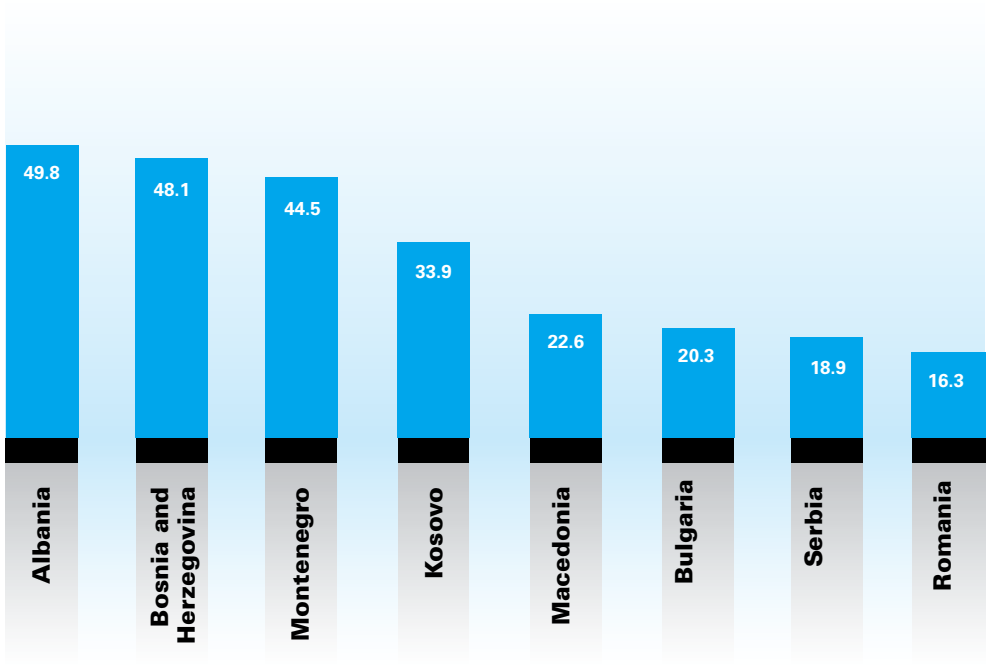
"Our children will be more illiterate than we are. In this neighbourhood, most families in the past had secondary, and many [a] university education, but nowadays the majority are unemployed, and hardly manage to survive from day to day... When one has to go hungry, so that there is some food for the kids, there is no money for schoolbooks, forget it..."

Roma from Sliven,Bulgaria.[169]

As with pre-school, it is children from the poorest and the most socially excluded

It would take almost 15 years to cover 80% of Roma children with preschool education with an targeted increase of 5% per year.

Enrolment gap between Roma and non Roma for the age group of 7 to 15 years (%)



Source: UNDP

families and communities who are least likely to enrol in primary school. In all the state/entities covered in this report primary school attendance is intended to be compulsory for children aged between 6 or 7 and 15.

Research shows that Roma children account for a large proportion of children not enrolled in primary school. Studies indicate the vast gap in enrolment even between Roma and non-Roma living in the same neighbourhood. The gap is severest in Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina and Montenegro.

UNICEF estimates that two-thirds of Roma children are enrolled in Romania.[170] An investigation by the UNHCR in 2000 found only 9% of Roma returnee children enrolled in school in the canton of Tuzla.[171] Up to 80% of Roma children in Bosnia Herzegovina do not attend school[172]

- Research by the Agency for Social Analyses in Bulgaria estimated that 20% of Roma children never go to school.[173]
- In Kosovo in 2002, just under 3000 RAE children were enrolled in primary education from a total estimated RAE population of 45,000, that is less than 10%, a rate four times lower than among the Albanian community.
- Save the Children has put the figure of Roma children never going to school in Serbia at around one-third,[174] and UNICEF data chimes with this, indicating a net enrolment rate among Roma of 66% (compared to the national rate of 93%).[175]

We can see a large fluctuation in the figures of enrolment and attendance of Roma children in primary schools since the figures available are those collected for different studies. The lack of good data reflects the low priority there is of monitoring the school attendance of Roma as well as other excluded children.

Not having the capacity to cover all costs, inadequate preparation, discrimination and low quality education are the main causes of exclusion from school. Even though primary education is formally free of charge, schooling entails costs which can be prohibitive for poor families, particularly those with more than one child of school age. Costs can include clothing, books, equipment and travel, and informal payments to teachers are not uncommon in the region. According to a Vulnerability Assessment study carried out in Albania, 54.7% of Roma families stated that they "could not financially support the education of their children", compared with only 11.5% among the non-Roma population.

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Over one-third of Roma families could not afford books and school materials. In Bosnia Herzegovina, the World Bank notes that most Roma live "in conditions below even the most minimal for survival, and often without the resources to support their families and ensure their children can receive an education."[176]

"Poor children have many problems as far as their education is concerned. Even if their family receives Minimum Income Guarantee benefits, the social aid cannot sufficiently cover the needs of 3, 4, 5 children enrolled in school. It is impossible to buy school supplies for them."[177]

Employee of the Inspectorate for Child Protection in Romania.

"We have to choose whether to eat or to buy some school materials",

Roma parent, Serbia.[178]

Despite the perception among some people that Roma are not interested in education, qualitative studies demonstrate that most Roma consider education important for their children, but that they face significant obstacles caused by poverty and discrimination. There is wide recognition among Roma that poor education is a root cause of poverty and marginalisation, but also that poverty prevents many Roma people from participating fully in education.

Governments have the ultimate responsibility to ensure children attend school during the years for which it is compulsory. Parents should not be expected to cover education costs that they cannot bear. Government must ensure that these children get the subsidies and the support they require to have a chance to succeed.

Millennium Development Goal 2 requires states to achieve universal primary education for both girls and boys. If this is to be achieved, governments must effectively address the non-enrolment of Roma children and Roma girls in particular. The Convention of the Rights of the Child obliges state parties to "make primary education compulsory and free to all" and to "take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates", Articles 28 1a & d.

To address educational disadvantages resulting from poverty and poor upbringing conditions experienced by many Roma children, Bulgaria proposes the development of semi-boarding schools as part of its contribution to the Decade of Roma Inclusion. In Serbia, greater support will be given to poorer pupils to cover the costs of school equipment and materials, transport and meals. In Montenegro, the government undertakes to guarantee that all Roma pupils are provided with the required textbooks.

Many important initiatives are being developed through the Roma Education Fund, although there is still a long way to go before governments make the education of Roma and other excluded children a priority.

5.2.1 Quality of Education

Education systems are in general not based on inter-cultural understanding and do not respect the rights children to their mother tongue and to their culture. Many Roma in the region have Romani as their mother tongue. Traditionally, Romani has not been a literary language and it is only very recently that some schools and educational authorities have started to provide materials and teachers able to work in Romani. In addition, the non-Roma children get little chance to learn to appreciate Roma and other cultures. The negative perception of Roma culture is also transmitted to Roma children and can have serious effects, such as loss of esteem of their culture and family. Through generations, Roma communities have learned to handle this but it has also created additional barriers of self-defence and isolation.

Roma parents are often highly critical of the quality of education provided to their children and consider discrimination, both within the school and in wider society, to be a major factor in undermining educational progress. Discrimination is perceived as coming from teachers and children, ranging from humiliating treatment, lack of attention and harsher punishment to bullying and ostracism.[179]

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'Many times have I heard Bulgarians warn their kids "Take care, dear, these are Gypsies!" How can one, after that, convince those kids that we are equal? There, the young [Roma] now go to school, want to socialize with their Bulgarian peers, but they are rejected.'

Roma from Vidin, Bulgaria.[180]

"No matter how hard he studies, the kid knows that he will be criticized because he's Roma."

Roma parent, FY Macedonia.[181]

Qualitative research by UNICEF among Roma children also indicates considerable concern about the treatment they receive in school, not only from fellow pupils, but from teachers themselves. Schools and teachers have a professional obligation to help children learn to the best of their abilities. However, for many Roma children prejudice and discrimination affect their school experience and undermine their education.

"My teacher has never come to my desk to see what I have written."

Roma pupil, Serbia.

"I didn't feel good, everybody beat me.. I told my teacher and she said it was nothing…My parents went to see her but she just said 'so what, they are children'."

Roma pupil, Serbia. [182]

Focus groups with Roma in Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia and FYR Macedonia have also pointed out that school systems took little or no account of the culture of Roma children.[183] This institutional failure represents a breach of article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child to direct public education to "the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living…and for civilisations different from his or her own".

Though some initiatives have been taken in recent years in Romania, Bulgaria and FYR Macedonia to recognise Roma history and culture, the Decade of Roma Inclusion has prompted governments to address this absence more comprehensively. In Bulgaria, Serbia and FYR Macedonia, university level departments in Romology will be established to provide research and contribute to the development of knowledge of teachers and teaching materials. Governments have committed themselves to making textbooks and material available for teaching about Roma, as well as for training of teachers. In Romania, all pupils will have the chance to study Roma history and culture, and Romani language tuition will be made available in pre-school and at primary level.

To improve the quality of education and achieve its goal of 100% enrolment of Roma, Romania has introduced a General Inspectorate for Roma Children at the national level and set up county level inspectorates to monitor and support schools with Roma pupils. In addition, materials on Roma history and culture and in the Romani language have been developed and teacher training adapted to take account of the needs of Roma children. Initiatives to increase the number of Roma personnel in schools have also been adopted, including the setting up of a network of Roma teaching assistants and support for Roma who wish to work in education but who do not have a formal teaching qualification.

As part of the Decade of Roma Inclusion, similar initiatives have been proposed across the region. In Bulgaria, the Ministry of Education plans to establish a special fund to support Roma-oriented initiatives. In FYR Macedonia, the government has proposed a unit to deal with problems and conflicts related to the education of Roma in schools. Each of the five states/entities participating in the Decade will also institute regular monitoring of Roma in order to overcome the lack of disaggregated data.

In FYR Macedonia, Romania and Serbia, reform of the way teachers are trained is planned to explicitly include the rights of children and the meaning and

importance of combating discrimination. In Bulgaria, the government proposes to require schools to make a formal commitment to promoting tolerance and educational inclusion, and to include a similar commitment in teachers' job descriptions. In order to improve the accessibility of school for Roma children, as well as to promote positive role models, efforts are being made to employ more Roma people in schools. All five states/entities have also announced the development of programmes for the training and employment of Roma teaching assistants to provide additional support to both teachers and Roma children in primary schools and to adopt affirmative action measures to support Roma into higher education with the aim of increasing the number of Roma graduates who may wish to join the teaching profession.

Educationalists and teachers need to be aware and take advantage of existing cultural diversity in the school and community. Both Roma and non Roma children should get the chance to learn about the culture of the other. In the context of widespread prejudice towards Roma and desire to "help" Roma children, there is a risk that 'education for Roma children' with special schools or systems for them become another form of cultural discrimination and alienation.

5.2.1.1 Segregation

Many Roma children in South East Europe learn in ethnically segregated schools and classes. Research by the Open Society Foundation in 2001 in Bulgaria identified 419 segregated schools where Roma pupils make up 50-100% of the student body. Such schools were more poorly resourced with shortages of equipment, as well as less skilled and motivated teachers. Only 5% of pupils graduated to secondary school, illiteracy in the fourth grade was common, and just 0.3% of the Roma pupils took part in national examinations for high schools.[184] In 106 pre-school and primary schools, all students were Roma.[185] In recent years, the number of such schools has declined as the Bulgarian government has sought to promote desegregation and will continue to take measures to reduce segregation as part of its commitment to the decade of Roma Inclusion.

"The [Roma and non-Roma] children should get an opportunity to be together at school, because our kids would get a chance to get out of the ghetto, to socialize with Bulgarian children, and vice versa, and they all would realize that they do not differ so much from each other."

Roma from Vidin, Bulgaria.[186]

In Romania, segregated schools, defined as those where over half the pupils are Roma, cover around 12% of the Roma pupil population. Most of these schools are located in rural areas and are less than three kilometres from nearby schools of the same type, which are used predominantly by non-Roma children.[187] Segregated schools have more overcrowding and poorer facilities. They are less likely to have a library and there is also a clear correlation between schools with a Roma intake of over 50% and those employing unqualified teachers.[188] Pupil achievement is lower, with the ratio of pupils passing the national capacity examination 25% below the national average.[189] The repetition rate is almost three times higher in Roma schools and the participation of pupils in school competitions is almost six times lower than the national average of the education system.[190]

No research data was found on Roma segregation in schools in the countries included in this study. However, it is likely that schools located near settlements with a high Roma population have a high proportion of Roma pupils. Another form of segregated education is adult schools in Serbia. These are supposed to provide adults with basic skills, but in practice they are filled by school age Roma children. The quality of education in these schools is very low.[191]

Segregation and discrimination are becoming issues of concern and some governments are trying to address the problems in a commendable way. Romania has been pursuing an integration programme for a number of years and has set a target of 2008 for the elimination of all segregated schools and classes. In Bulgaria, ongoing desegregation initiatives include the

Segregated schools are poorly resourced with shortage of equipment and less skilled and motivated teachers. Insignificant number of students graduate for secondary school and illiteracy in the fourth grade is common.

requirement of local authorities to produce local desegregation plans, the provision of additional resources and support for schools receiving children from segregated schools (which will be closed), and the establishment of a National Information and Monitoring System to ensure future allocation practice does not produce new segregation. In Serbia, the quality of information and experience of de-segregation is less developed, but in the country's Common Action Plan for the Advancement of Roma Education, the government has undertaken to conduct the necessary research into the extent and causes of schooling segregation.

5.2.1.2 Special schools

Special form of segregation is the overrepresentation of Roma children in special needs schools. These schools provide low standard education based on modified curriculum and it is almost impossible for children from special schools to have any further education.

Roma children are also subject to a distinct form of discrimination and educational segregation in terms of their over-representation in special needs schools. Throughout the region, education systems provide separate schools for children assessed as having learning difficulties. These so-called "special" schools provide a low standard of education based on a modified curriculum. It is practically difficult for children from 'special' schools to have any further education.

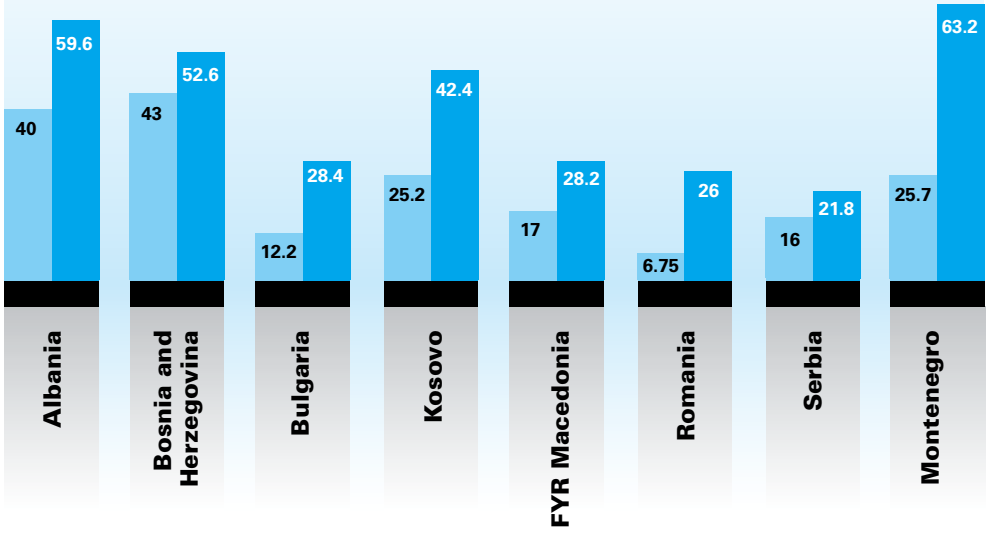
Several studies indicate that Roma children are grossly over-represented in special schools and that many are consigned to this form of education by prejudice and lack of preparation. This reflects the prevailing attitude of schools and teachers whereby children need to be prepared and to fit into school as it is, and not for school to adopt to the developmental and educational needs of children. Another reason for Roma children attending special schools is poverty. Children in these schools mostly receive some kind of subsidy, which is much needed for Roma children and makes it possible for them to attend. Research by the European Roma Rights Centre and the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee in 2004, covering 46 of the 138 special schools in Bulgaria, estimated that 80-90% of the pupils were Roma.[192] Most of the Roma pupils were channelled to the "special" school, not because of any diagnosed learning difficulty, but "if they are unprepared for primary school, if they are not proficient in the Bulgarian language, and/or if they did not attend preschool."[193] There are different estimates of the percentage of Roma enrolled in special schools in Serbia ranging from 50% to 80%.[194] In Montenegro, nearly 80% of the children that are enrolled in "special" schools are Roma, Ashkali or Egyptian children.[195]

The misdirection of Roma children into special needs classes expresses the lack of cultural sensitivity of education systems as a whole and, in particular, of educational professionals who assess the capability of children. More broadly, the educational dead-end to which the children are consigned, shows that local inspectorates have not considered the over-representation of Roma to be a problem, either for the children themselves or for society as whole. The Bulgarian government has now committed itself to ensuring that no child is wrongly assigned to special needs education and, in Serbia, the Ministry of Education will soon produce new regulations for allocating children to special schools and has undertaken to re-test and re-assign children who have been misdirected.

5.2.2 Dropping out of Primary Education

Household survey data shows that the system is not able to keep Roma children in school, and that they abandon education early. This is an expression of desire and disillusion, a failure of government and the school system to give the child the support required to prepare for school, to be successful and to be able to continue in school.

The gap between Roma and non-Roma is increasingly marked in the higher grades. The figures below give the enrolment gap in primary education. The data show that **the disproportion of Roma children at the start of their primary school education is magnified over its course, with the result that the chances of Roma going on to secondary and higher education are much reduced compared to that of their non-Roma contemporaries**. The states and entities have lost the opportunity to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and exclusion. **Most of these children will be unskilled labourers just as their parents, but in a time with ever greater demand on skills.**



Source: UNDP[196]

Enrollment gap on age groups

Roma enrollment gapfor age group from 7 to 10 (%)

Roma enrollment gap for age group from 11 to 15 (%)

This report's findings are backed up by other research:

- A study by the Research Institute for Quality of Life in Romania has shown that 36% of Roma pupils who dropped out of primary school after fourth grade and that one-third of those leaving in the sixth grade could not read or write properly.[197]
- In Albania, it is estimated that only 40% of Roma complete primary education, with most dropping out in third and fourth grades.[198]
- A needs assessment for the Roma Education Fund in 2004 quoted a drop-out rate for Roma children in FYR Macedonia of 48%.[199]

Cost is the main reason given by Roma for the termination of a child's education. At the same time, however, it is the duty of government to compensate parents for the education expenses that they cannot cover. It might also be a question of disappointment. Cost is relative and it depends on what you get for your money.

Research in Serbia has found a more diverse range of explanations for why Roma girls, in particular, leave school prematurely. Poverty and the costs associated with education were still very important, but so were issues relating to traditional female roles. In households where there are too few resources to cover the costs of schooling of all children, it is more likely that the girl will have her education curtailed since the education of girls has a lower priority. There is an even higher requirement of high quality education for girls to remain in school. It is also interesting to see in the study illustrated below that lack of

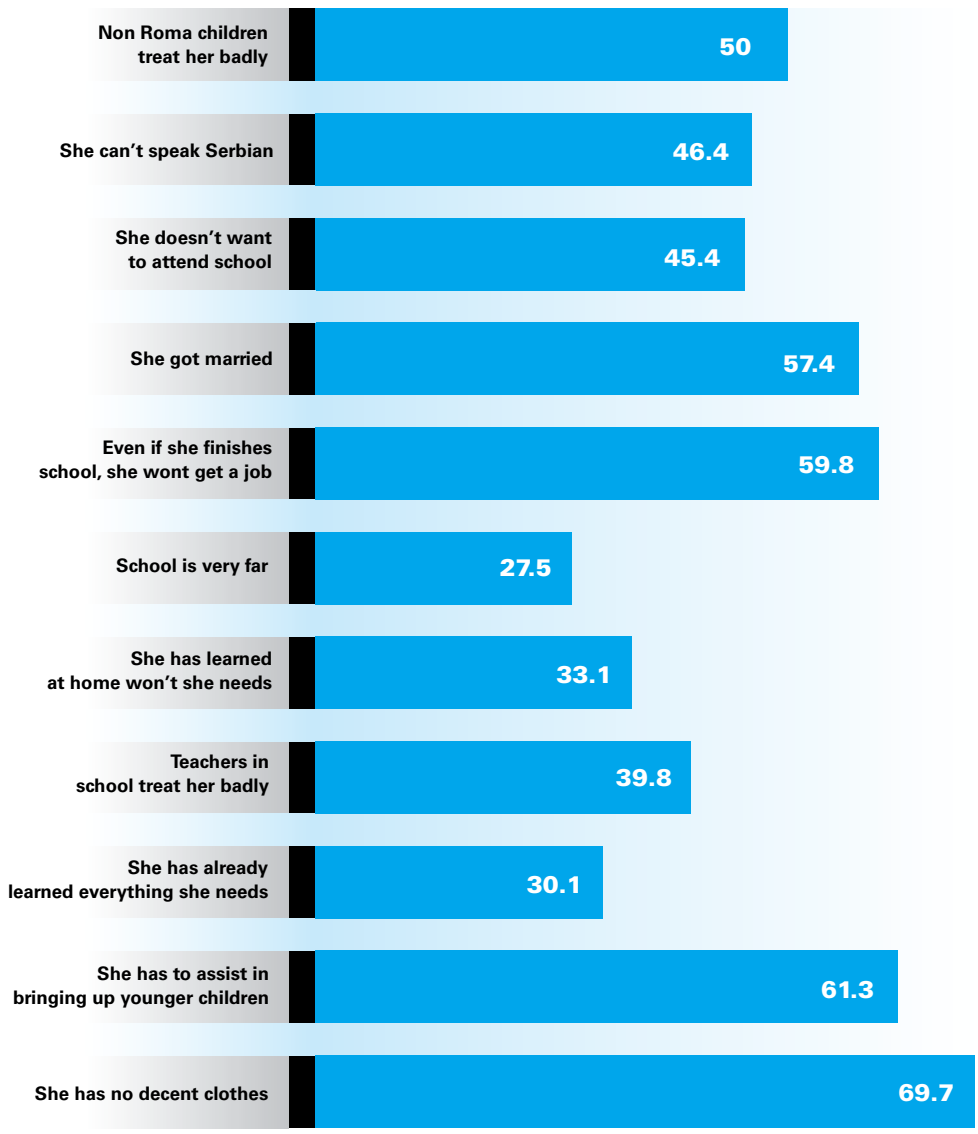
High costs of education and traditional female roles in patriarch al society gives lower priority to education of girls.

Reason	Roma	Non-Roma
Cost	51%	41%
Sufficiently Educated	14%	23%
Failed Exams	3%	10%
Marriage	7%	5%
Illness	3%	3%

Reasons given for Roma children dropping out of school

Source: UNDP [200]

Resons for not going to school



Source: Mitro *et al*[202]

"decent clothes" was the highest rated reason why girls do not attend school, which is indicative of a feeling among many Roma girls of low self esteem at school.

> **"I feel very bad because we have no money and I cannot buy nice clothes and shoes so i can look like my peers."**
>
> **Roma child from Serbia.**[201]

Focus groups run by the World Bank in 2005 in Montenegro also indicate that the education of some Roma children is curtailed by violence and lack of security at school. In the first chapter of this report, it was noted that due to their exclusion and not being provided the basic services, Roma communities maintain their own structures of security and safety. The protection they are not getting from their government, they are trying to compensate within their community. This directly affects children, especially girls, and determines age up to which her parents let her continue in school. Abuse of girls at school was one of the concerns raised in focus groups with Roma women.

When children are not coming to school it is the duty of the school to contact the family and help the child to come back. However, schools, like other services in the region, are institution rather than people centred. Most teachers and school staff do not consider it as their duty to ensure children come to school. They see their job as to educate them when they come to the school.

"Sometimes our children don't even want to go to school because of insults. My sister used to go to school, but she doesn't go there any more because she got beaten up."[203]

"Other children made fun of me and I was very unhappy. That's why I dropped out of school. Children also laughed at me when they saw my worn-out tennis shoes and they used to insult me by calling me a Gypsy."

Roma child, Serbia.[204]

Overall, there is little qualitative data about the experiences of Roma children in school. Children should be asked more often about their opinions and be consulted about decisions affecting their lives. The voices of Roma children need to be sought and listened to in the development of education initiatives at both local and national levels and the education systems have to be made inclusive, recognising the reality and conditions of all children.

5.3 Post-Primary Education

The exclusion of Roma children in primary education inevitably leads to exclusion in secondary and higher education. Data from household surveys shows that while participation in secondary education among non-Roma ranges between 68-83% in the state/entities covered in this report, this applies only to 12-20% of young Roma people. Only in Albania and FYR Macedonia do more than 1% of Roma make it into tertiary education.

As part of its national action plan, Bulgaria seeks to set up "second chance" programmes to enable those who did not complete primary school to take up vocational education. In Romania and Montenegro the state has endorsed adopting affirmative action measures such as quotas and grants to increase the number of Roma in secondary and higher education, and scholarships will be provided by the Macedonian government to support the further education of Roma, either in domestic institutions or abroad.

Economic and social changes require ever higher levels of knowledge and education. The table below shows from pre-school how poor and especially Roma

Only 12-20% of Roma participate in secondary education and less than 1% in tertiary education.

State/Entity	Roma (%)		Non Roma (%)
	Secondary Enrolment Ages 16-19	Tertiary Enrolment Age 20+	Secondary Enrolment Ages 16-19
Albania	12	2	78
Bosnia Herzegovina	20	1	76
Bulgaria	12	1	81
Kosovo	13	1	68
Macedonia	19	2	74
Montenegro	13	1	83
Romania	17	1	69
Serbia	19	1	71

Source: UNDP[205]

National average / 20% poorest / Roma in Roma settlements (in percentages)

	National average		20% poorest	Roma in Roma settlements	
	Serbia	FRYMacedonia	Serbia	Serbia	FRYMacedonia
Pre-school attendance	34	11	6	4	4
Entering primary school	98	95	92	76	63
Primary completion rate	95	83	80	13	45
Net secondary school attendance	85	63	67	10	17

MICS 2005, unpublished data

children, as they gradually grow older, fall deeper and deeper into the same trap of exclusion and poverty as their parents.[206]

We can see that the 20% poorest children are in disadvantage in relation to the national average. In Serbia only 80% of those who enter school complete primary education. A relatively high percentage 76% of Roma children, enter primary school, although **87% of those who enter are not able to complete**. In Macedonia less Roma children enter primary school but a higher percentage of them complete. While participation in secondary education among non-Roma ranges from 63 to 85% in the states/entities covered in this report, this applies only to 10-20% of Roma children. Only in Albania and FYR Macedonia do more than 1% of Roma make it into tertiary education.

Despite all their disadvantages, Roma children manage to start primary school but are unable to complete even that level. This failure is a tremendous disappointment for these children and a loss of opportunity for the country. The low percentage of Roma children in post-primary education preserves the deep social division along ethnic lines in a region where Roma minorities represent a growing section of national populations.

5.4 Child labour

A consequence for children of not having access and not being welcome to a school where they can learn and progress is greater pressure for them to work or beg to complement the family income.

"And how will I work? I get no pension, I receive no social welfare benefit. It means I have to employ my child."

Roma from Serbia.[207]

Across the region, estimates of the number of children involved in some kind of work vary greatly between countries, from 23% in Albania to 1% in Romania.[208] Research in Kosovo by UNICEF in 2004 found that the overwhelming majority of the working children interviewed (99%) reported that they have some type of family support and none lived on the streets. When asked why they work, more than 80% of the children stated that it was to support their immediate family or family members, while only approximately 5% noted personal interests (i.e. pocket money) as a motivation.[209]

"The hardest thing for me is to see the way my parents toil every day to earn money to buy us food. I have to help my father who doesn't have a job and goes to the rubbish dump to collect scrap iron."

Roma child, Serbia.[210]

In Albania, it is estimated that there are currently about 800 children living/

working on the streets of the main cities, many of whom are Roma and who 'represent the most vulnerable group in danger of maltreatment, insecurity, illiteracy and malnutrition'.[211] There is a perception that the majority of street children and working children are Roma, however, that is not necessarily the case. In Bosnia Herzegovina, police and NGO estimates put the number of street children at around 1,000. The majority (55%) being non-Roma.[212] Child labour in Serbia is 10% of children from the 20% poorest non-Roma population and 7% of Roma children from Roma settlements (MICS). In Romania the number of street children has fallen sharply in recent years due to government intervention. It is thought that there are around from three to four hundred street children (mainly in Bucharest), most of whom either live on the street, some with their family.

Child labour is, to a large extent, a consequence of lack of real access to good education. If it had existed many of the working children would not have started work. In addition to reducing their chances of studying, the work truncates their childhood and places considerable physical and emotional burdens upon them.

5.5 Conclusion

"If the children are left without education, the situation will not improve."

Roma from FYR Macedonia.[213]

For generations, education systems in South East Europe have failed Roma minorities, resulting in the widespread poverty and exclusion experienced by most Roma today. Rather than creating opportunities, public services and education have played a major role in excluding these children and in perpetuating inequality and discrimination. Roma children start their educational careers with already significant disadvantages which increase as they get older, resulting in the enormous differences that exist between Roma and non-Roma in educational achievement throughout the region. Education systems fail to acknowledge the values and culture of Roma and to educate children in intercultural understanding and respect. Instead, Roma children face prejudice and discrimination when they enter school and many Roma children are forced to learn in segregated environments that provide low quality education. As a result, the participation of Roma in post-primary education is extremely low and few are able to acquire the skills and qualifications necessary to participate effectively in society and in the labour market.

When children reach school age they face a disjunction: they might go into permanent poverty and probably exclusion, or with the right support they could break through the barriers of exclusion. If excluded children get a chance to get prepared for school in a good quality pre-school and are guaranteed good quality primary education, they could overcome their disadvantages. Inclusion of children in education as early as possible is proven to be an effective way to support their development and to give them a significant chance of escaping from the vicious circle of poverty.

6. Breaking the Cycle of Intergenerational Exclusion

Recommendations *

People are excluded when structures, laws, policies and programmes fail to consider the rights of all people, when resources and capacities are not made available and when social norms and people's behaviour are not based on the respect of differences among people, their culture and reality. These failures have to be identified and addressed. There are various underlying causes of exclusion, such as economic, social, geographic and cultural/ethnic. Confronting social exclusion does not mean setting up special parallel systems to address the problems of those who are 'socially excluded'. It is policies, norms and behaviour that have to change, to become rights based and inclusive. To break the intergenerational cycle of poverty and exclusion the highest priority must be given to children.

* This is seen as a working document to be discussed and complemented in sub-regional workshops, while exchanging experiences and lessons learned.

The Environment

The excluded population groups are victims of multiple deprivations, whereby disadvantage in one area such as housing, can reinforce disadvantage in another, such as employment or health. Poverty, exclusion and discrimination of the parents and the community affect the life chances and development of children.

The transition and reform process pays little attention to children. Since **governments** are weak and are not giving the required support, many poor especially Roma children are not getting access to health and education. Governments should get the necessary support for system strengthening and policy development but they should also be held accountable for ensuring inclusion of children of all population groups. The EU, WB and the UN should together with governments set the inclusion of Roma and especially Roma children as a high priority to be urgently addressed.

There is a serious lack of capacity amongst authorities, public services, and individuals to respect the Roma people and their rights.

Discrimination

The **historic societal discrimination** including stereotyping and prejudice of Roma is deep rooted and will take a long time to overcome. Well educated Roma people should be invited to participate in public life, on radio and television, so that people get to see Roma in roles, other than the classical roles. Roma, especially Roma women and children should be aware of their rights and become more publicly active in a movement demanding their rights.

Institutional discrimination

Many Roma children are **overlooked by public authorities** and are not provided with the services and support to which they are entitled. The coverage of health and education services is very low for Roma children and many are not even registered. When accessing services they are often discriminated against. Administrative procedures and requirements are too complicated and rigid and not culturally sensitive.
There is a lack of confidence in **law enforcement and protection bodies** which are at times seen as a threat rather than a source of protection.

Direct discrimination

Segregated living and the conditions of poverty create distance, prejudice and tension that can even lead to violence and abuse. Roma culture is seen as negative, of less value. Roma children are often exposed to mobbing, which is one of the factors for their high drop-out rate. The life of women and girls can also be conditioned by disrespect and risk of abuse. Roma people and children are often treated in a negative way in public institutions.

Based on dialogue between service providers and clients, more inclusive structures, policies and service delivery should be designed. Capacities in the institutions and individuals to apply culturally sensitive child rights-based practices should be developed. The Child Ombudsman system in the country should have a section or person supporting and promoting the rights of excluded children with special attention to Roma children. In addition, anti-discriminatory legislation and a monitoring system to ensure its application should be introduced and discrimination should not be tolerated.

Poor living conditions and segregation reduce opportunities for Roma people to access good quality services, are harmful to health and distance them from the mainstream population. Residents of slums suffer legal insecurity and often lack property rights and cannot **register** their home at a permanent address. Many children are not called to school when they reach school age and are not registered with a doctor and those living in slum settlements are not always included in statistics, programmes and studies. To combat exclusion it is a requirement that all citizens are registered and get an address. This must become a priority and solutions must be found.

For **temporary settlements,** at least temporary basic services must be provided in the short term, to avoid health risks caused by inadequate infrastructure and environmental pollution. Permanent solutions should also be identified and developed in a participatory way with the population.

Welfare assistance and transfer systems are important mechanisms of inclusion for poor and excluded people. However, they are inefficient, insufficient and not well targeted, so those most at need are often excluded from these benefits and services. In the absence of government support children have to take on the responsibilities of an adult, when their parents fall ill. Most social security spending in the region is on pensions, not on children and child welfare. Lack of information, complicated application procedures, unreliability of welfare payments, restrictive eligibility criteria, lack of registration and unemployment result in Roma, irrespective of their poverty and higher number of children, being to a large extent excluded from access to social welfare schemes.

The welfare system should, **in coordination with the other social sectors**, play an important role in ensuring children and their parents are not excluded from the basic services. Well targeted child-centred, cash transfer schemes and other social assistance should be channelled preferably to the mother to facilitate the smooth access of basic services. The effect of the transfers should be monitored on a regular basis. To ensure efficiency and good targeting, such schemes should be designed and developed through dialogue between service providers, authorities and the targeted population.

The Child

Support to pregnant women and to parents to ensure health and nutrition of the woman and nutrition and stimulation of their small children, should become top priorities in combating poverty and exclusion. Short, medium and long term targets should be set for ensuring excluded children get the best possible start in life, seeking immediate results.

Registration of children is of particular concern as the lack of an official identity can hinder them from receiving their other rights to care and support from public authorities and services. It is governments' responsibility to ensure that all children are registered. This should not depend on the parents and their abilities and capacities. Policies should be designed in a way that ensures the inclusion of all children. Automatic registration of children at birth in the hospital would solve most of the problem. This together with good outreach antenatal and health care should cover all children. Once children are registered, all their basic services should be monitored and guaranteed, including full coverage of vaccination and registration in a pre-school.

Access to health care for Roma children is obstructed by costs, lack of registration and discrimination. All children should be registered from birth. No costs should be charged or poor children should be covered by insurance and guaranteed good quality service. Health centres should be well aware of all children in their district or area of responsibility and in effective outreach service should be provided when required. Preventive health care including training of parents should be provided. Services should be held responsible for the health of children and to ensure all children are reached. Improving the health of poor and Roma children has to be addressed comprehensively at both national and local levels, in an integrated way, with good control and a sufficient budget. With the help of dialogue between service providers and the clients and services, policies and structures should be made more inclusive to all people. Capacities for intercultural understanding and service delivery should be a requirement for all health workers.

Most **Roma women** have low, if any, education and little bargaining power in the family. They often marry early and have more children than they would wish to have. Focus groups held with Roma women indicate that high fertility results from various forms of exclusion, including **limited access for many Roma women to health care and family planning**. Several pregnancies and low nutritional status among poor pregnant women present a higher risk for woman and children, and this makes it particularly important for health authorities to ensure that Roma women receive **adequate culturally-sensitive antenatal and prenatal care**. Women who prefer home births should be identified and feel confident to consent to the same care. Good quality antenatal and prenatal care should involve both the husband or partner and the woman. Care and nutritional support to the pregnant woman should be provided when required as well as orientation in family planning and parenting skills, with regard to health, hygiene, nutrition, care and stimulation of the child. During the first years, the basis is laid for good learning and preparation of pre-school and further education. The progress of poor and excluded children should be closely monitored and supported until completion of secondary education. Health, education and social welfare services should coordinate, and barriers that prohibit full access to services removed.

The **empowerment of women and women's groups** is an urgent need. Roma women and men should learn about the rights of women and children. Family planning, maternity and parenting skills should be offered to Roma women's groups, and boys and men should be invited. There are successful experiences in the region to learn from. The services must adjust to the needs and circumstances of the women and the family. The service providers would need training to acquire capacities and resources to deliver culturally sensitive outreach services defined together with the Roma people.

Research on parenting practices confirmed that Roma women had been victims of **domestic violence**, in most cases with their children as either witnesses or victims. Public authorities, teachers, health workers and social services providers have the responsibility of identifying cases that require attention and ensuring they are acted on or referred to the relevant institutions. To protect children and women from violence is a big task that is just starting. It will require awareness and institution building, including well functioning referral systems, policy development and changes in social norms and behaviour. Women's groups and networks linked to the referral system should be developed or strengthened and peer support among women promoted so they can support each other in case of abuse and violence.

Education

For generations, education systems in South East Europe have failed Roma minorities, resulting in the widespread poverty and exclusion experienced by most Roma today. Rather than creating opportunities, public services and education have played a major role in excluding these children and in perpetuating inequality and discrimination.

Public spending on education has fallen and the costs of education have been increasingly passed on to individuals. This has a negative effect on children from the poorest families.

Pre-school education is important for preparing children for school. It is especially important for children from families and communities that have traditionally been excluded from education and for those who only speak a minority language. Pre-school can also be an excellent opportunity to orient both children and parents and lay the ground for an inclusive inter-cultural school environment, to enable children and parents, both Roma and non Roma, to become acquainted with, and learn to understand and appreciate different cultures. **Inter-cultural learning and understanding** require a revision of policies and the development of institutional as well as individual capacities. In some of the states/entities included in this study, good initiatives are being defined but progress is still slow.

An ambitious target, such as ensuring that 80% of Roma and the poorest children attend good quality, culturally sensitive pre-schools 3 to 5 years from now, is not impossible and would have a dramatic effect on inclusion in the educational system. It could be the key element in an emergency short term strategy for inclusion. The return of such an investment could be extraordinary.

There is little concern about the increasing disparities in South East Europe and too little attention is given to **primary education**. As with pre-school, it is children from the poorest and the most socially excluded families and communities who are least likely to enrol in primary school. Not having the capacity to cover all **costs**, inadequate preparation, discrimination and low quality education are the main causes of exclusion from school. Even though primary education is formally free of charge, schooling entails costs which can be prohibitive for poor families, particularly those with more than one child of school age. Costs can include clothing, books, equipment and travel, and informal payments to teachers are not uncommon in the region. Over one-third of Roma families in the focus groups could not afford books and school materials.

Governments have the ultimate responsibility to ensure children attend school during the years for which it is compulsory. Parents should not be expected to cover education costs that they cannot bear. Government must ensure that these children get the subsidies and the support they require to have a chance to succeed.

A **malnourished child** is more exposed to infections and disease, has difficulties concentrating and following classes in school and feels humiliated. Pre-schools and **schools** should include provision of nutritious meals. Good coordination between the school/teachers, health and the social welfare system should be established at local level and the situation of excluded children closely monitored. Cash transfers to parents should be combined with free of charge school supply and tutoring classes when required.

In general, education systems are not based on inter-cultural understanding, and do not respect the rights of children to their mother tongue and to their culture. Roma children are often offered segregated or special schools of inferior quality. Low quality, poor learning, costs and discrimination, both within the school and in wider society are the main reasons why Roma children abandon school early. Good quality, culturally sensitive education where children are successful is the best incentive for children to go to school and not drop out. This is especially important for girls, since their work is needed at home. Abuse or risk of abuse of girls at school is another reason to drop out.

Schools, like other services in the region, are institution rather than people-centred. Most teachers and school staff do not consider it their duty to ensure children come to school. They see their job as to educate them when they come to school. Capacities should be developed in the school system and among teachers for intercultural understanding and inclusive and gender sensitive teaching. Teachers should be held accountable for the education of all children in their district or geographical area of responsibility and parents should be visited when required. Schools should maintain constantly updated information systems, with accurate identification and monitoring of all children in their area of responsibility, especially following those who are at greater risk. There should also be a quality control system, through which the students and parents can give their views on the services obtained and the teachers recognised in accordance with the results of children. Children should be asked for their opinions more often. The voices of Roma children should be sought and listened to in the development of education initiatives at both local and national levels, and the education systems have to be made inclusive, recognising the reality and conditions of all children.

Affirmative measures should be developed to increase secondary education of Roma girls by providing targeted assistance, as well as to young girls who dropped out due to early marriages, and pregnancy, and literacy classes for women should be initiated.

Examples of Key Issues Short / Medium / Long Term Action

Considering the urgency there is for preventing new generations of children being excluded for life, an example is given how most critical issues can be addressed in the short term, while more substantial changes are made as medium and long term measures. These later measures are important but not critical for preventing exclusion right now. It is suggested that work groups are created at central and local level with all partners involved, including Roma representatives (preferably female leaders) and children. They should define gaps, obstacles and mechanisms of exclusion and barriers and how they can be overcome in the short (ST), medium (MT) and long term (LT); which policies and structures are required, and capacities for the development of a service for awareness-building among policy and decision makers and society, for building trust among Roma families and communities. Plans, budgets and monitoring mechanisms should be defined.

1) Pre-school

Target: Min 80% attendance of Roma children in 2012.

2) Registration (short, medium and long term)

ST. Target: 1) All newborn Roma and other excluded children registered, as well as those below 8 years of age by 2012.

MT. Target: 2) All Roma and other excluded women below 40 are registered and have all documents required by 2014

LT. Target: 3) All Roma are registered and have all documents required by 2020

3) Child Allowance / Free Services / Subsidized Attendance

Required for 1, 4, 5, 6, 7. See respective year

4) Primary Education / Start Secondary

ST. Target: 1) All Roma children start primary school at right age in 2012.

MT. Target: 2) Retention of Roma children and learning levels doubled by 2014.

LT. Target: 3) Enrolment and retention of Roma and other excluded children in secondary education doubled by 2020

5) Pre / Post Natal Controls, Nutrition of Pregnant Women, Parenting Skills,

ST. Target: All pregnant Roma women have min. 2 pre and 2 post natal controls and receive parenting, family planning and nutrition orientation, and support when required, by 2012.

6) Outreach Services, Health Care, Living Conditions, Pollution, Sanitation

ST. Target: All children/ women get health services required by 2012.

LT. Target: Basic standards of hygiene and living conditions are met in the environment where Roma children grow up by 2020.

7) Women's Empowerment, Family Planning, Early Marriage

MT. Target: Roma women's network developed with members in most Roma communities by 2014.

8) Protection and Monitoring of Rights, Ombudsman for Children, Section on Inclusion/ Intercultural Relations/ Roma Children

MT. Target: Monitoring of fulfilment of rights at central and local levels by 2014. Local committees consisting of all partners involved should monitor progress in accordance with jointly developed plans. Discrimination in institutions by service providers and individuals or groups in society is also monitored.

Index of footnotes

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