

III. Non-Income Dimensions of Roma Poverty and Social Exclusion

24. Having developed and presented the income poverty profiles for Roma in both Serbia and Montenegro based on household consumption data, the analysis in this section shifts the focus to an examination of non-income dimensions of poverty. Income and non-income dimensions of poverty often reinforce each other, and jointly fuel deprivation. In the European Union poverty has been defined as "...a dynamic process, best described as descending levels: some disadvantages lead to some exclusion, which in turn leads to more disadvantages and more social exclusion and ends up with persistent multiple (deprivation) disadvantages. Individuals, households and spatial units can be excluded from access to resources like employment, health, education, social or political life"²⁴. Multidimensional poverty definitions help to understand cases such as households that, while not income poor, may suffer from poverty in other dimensions or households suffering from multiple deprivations, such as many Roma households in Serbia and Montenegro. Non-income dimensions of poverty also help to identify aspects of social exclusion, i.e. through barriers to access to education, employment and others.

Box 3: Overview of Multidimensional Non-Income Poverty Indicators

- **Education poverty:** Individual is education poor if he or she is above 15 years old, is not in school and has only uncompleted primary education or no education at all
- **Housing and citizenship rights poverty:** Households with uncertain citizenship status and /or illegal and temporary occupants, households without documents confirming their ownership of housing
- **Health poverty:** Individuals of working age (aged 15-64) who in the month preceding SLS were suffering from a major physical ailments precluding their normal independent functioning
- **Housing conditions poverty:** Households not connected to tapped water and using latrines, households living in a building unsuitable as dwelling or living in partly destroyed home and living in overcrowded dwellings with more than 3 persons per room.
- **Employment poverty:** Lacking social inclusion, defined for working age individuals (aged 15-64) as being not employed continuously for over 2 years, but able and willing to work.

Source: World Bank (2003) Serbia and Montenegro Poverty Assessment

25. **Roma poverty in Serbia is multidimensional and evident in poor outcomes in education and employment, housing and health.** If viewing poverty as multi-dimensional and not merely related to household income or consumption, one needs to define how to measure these dimensions. Box 3 summarizes the definitions used for the 2003 Serbia and Montenegro Poverty Assessment, which we also use here. Compounding the evidence on income poverty, the data reveal significant multidimensional deprivation among the Roma in both Republics and how poverty spreads over all aspects of human capabilities. As Table 3.1 indicates, in Serbia close to 81 percent of the Roma population can be considered non-income poor in at least one dimension and 43.8 percent in two dimensions. Moreover, extreme non-income poverty²⁵ affects a significant 13.4 percent of Roma households, which confirms that extreme poverty is widespread among the Roma population in Serbia. Specifically, a staggering 61.3 percent of the Roma

²⁴ Eurostat Task Force (1998): *Recommendations on social exclusion and poverty statistics*, Document CPS 98/31/2, Eurostat, Luxembourg

²⁵ Extreme non-income poverty is defined as comprising three or more dimensions of non-income deprivation (see Table 3.2).

households residing in settlements in Serbia are considered education poor, suggesting significant deficiencies in terms of school enrollment and educational attainments among Roma. Moreover, the housing conditions for 64 percent of Roma households are below the housing poverty standard. The table also presents comparative rates for the general population households in Serbia which remain significantly below levels evident for Roma households, although also high with respect to education and housing poverty.

Table 3.1: In addition to income poverty, Roma residing in settlements in Serbia face high levels of non-income deprivation

in percent	Roma	General Population
Material poverty (consumption)		
Very poor	60.5	6.1
Extreme Poor	9.8	0.0
Non-income deprivation		
education poor	61.3	17.9
employment poor	13.6	3.9
Health poor	9.0	4.6
Housing condition poor	64.1	14.7
Housing and citizen right poor	22.3	5.9
<i>non-income deprivation (at least one)</i>	<i>80.8</i>	<i>34.0</i>
<i>non-income poor (at least 2)</i>	<i>43.8</i>	<i>7.3</i>
<i>non-income extreme poor (3 or more)</i>	<i>13.4</i>	<i>0.8</i>
Combination of non-income and income dimensions		
Material very poor or poor in at least one non-income dimension	88.0	36.1
Material very poor and at least one non-income dimension poor	53.3	3.9
<i>non income poor and income very poor</i>	<i>29.5</i>	<i>1.4</i>
<i>non-income extreme poor or income extreme poor</i>	<i>20.7</i>	<i>1.0</i>
<i>non-income extreme poor and income extreme poor</i>	<i>2.5</i>	<i>0.0</i>

Source: Staff estimates based on definitions reported in Table 3.1 and Serbia 2003 SLS and Roma booster; “Roma” relates to Roma households residing in settlements.

26. **While RAE income poverty in Montenegro does not stand out as much as in Serbia, non-income poverty indicators show evidence of pervasive social exclusion of the RAE population – in particular in education.** As Table 3.2 indicates, 77 percent of the RAE are education poor, compared to 11 percent among refugees. This result points to severe RAE-specific access barriers to the education system, for which this report provides further evidence below, and which point towards a major reform challenge and direction. Moreover, RAE households are significantly more likely to be housing poor than both refugee and IDP households, suggesting that displacement is less of a predictor for housing poverty than ethnicity. Differences in employment poverty rates are less pronounced, although still a sizeable 19 percent of Roma are employment poor. Health poverty rates are comparatively low for all groups, however these are based on reported rather than actual health status and may suffer from under-reporting.

Table 3.2: RAE non-income deprivation stands out from refugees and IDPs in Montenegro in 2003

in percent	RAE	Refugees	IDPs	General	Montenegro
Education poor	77.1	11.0	6.4	10.2	11.3
Health poor	12.9	3.9	2.7	4.2	4.3
Housing poor	87.6	58.2	52.1	9.8	14.1
Employment poor	19.0	12.3	14.0	5.6	6.2

Source: Own calculations based on Montenegro 2003 ISSP survey and definitions presented in Table 3.1, with the following exceptions: health poverty is defined as in Serbia, except time period for reporting any ailment is 1 year rather than 1 month; housing poverty is defined as in Serbia, except overcrowding is defined here as living space/person < 10 m² rather than 3 persons/room;

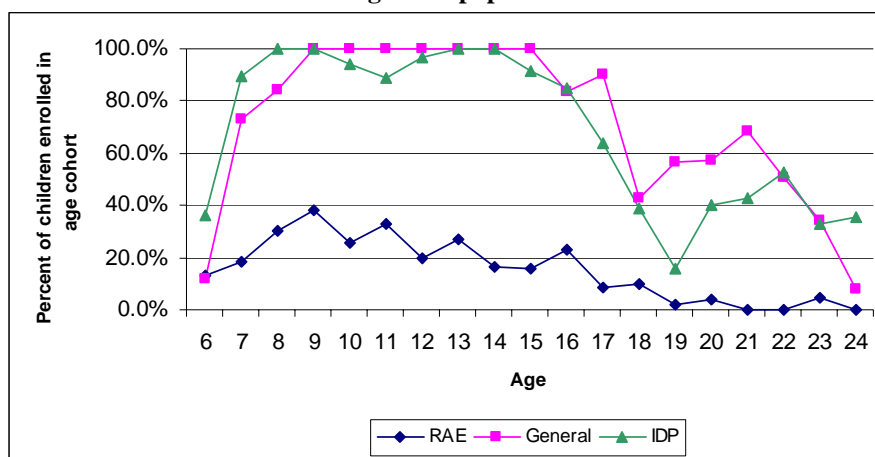
employment poverty is defined as in Serbia, except unemployed for more than 1 year are included as employment poor, rather than unemployed for over 2 years.

1. EDUCATION

27. The previous sections have documented the close correlation between educational outcomes, or the lack thereof, and poverty. At the same time, the relative youth of the Roma population compared to the general population is evident. This suggests that, like in other countries with significant Roma minorities, education is the key channel for Roma to break out of the poverty cycle. This section looks in more depth at education poverty, in particular at access to the education system and educational outcomes and attainments.

28. **There are serious constraints to access to education for Roma evident in low enrollment rates for Roma children:** Overall educational enrolment among Roma is low in both Republics, consistently from pre-school to higher education, while segregated schooling persists. Most alarmingly, many Roma children do not go to school: The Serbia SLS reveals that a staggering 35 percent of Roma children (ages 7-20) are not enrolled at all, compared to a rate of 2 percent for the general population. In 2003, the Roma net enrollment rate for primary schooling was 72.2 percent against 98.5 percent for the general population. Large differences prevail also for secondary education, with secondary school net enrollment rate for Roma being 16.7 percent, compared to 64.2 percent for non-Roma. Serbian administrative data from the Ministry of Education confirms high Roma student drop-out rates between first and eighth grade of elementary school²⁶. Substantial barriers to school access are also found in Montenegro, where school enrollment among Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians is significantly lower than for the general population, as indicated in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Significantly fewer RAE children are enrolled in school in Montenegro compared to IDPs and general population



Source: Montenegro Household Survey of Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons, 2003

29. **Poverty and low household income for Roma undermine access to education:** While schooling is free of charge in both Serbia and Montenegro, going to school is associated with not insignificant costs for school equipment such as textbooks and notebooks, but also clothes. It is also costly in terms of foregone revenue that children may generate through work, begging or other activities. Data from Serbia shows that pre-school institutions and primary schools are often

²⁶ Mihajlovic (2004), Needs Assessment Study for the Roma Education Fund, Serbia

not in the vicinity of Roma settlements, and families therefore incur significant transport costs for children going to school²⁷. Survey results from both Republics show that the main reason cited among Roma for not sending children to school is a lack of financial means. In Serbia, the average yearly expenditure for sending children to school is less than half that of the general population, suggesting that Roma children in school are less well equipped than their non-Rom peers. Children who do not go to school are usually engaged in some kind of economic activity. In Montenegro, survey results show that almost 43 percent of RAE children who do not go to school help elders, while 11.5 percent beg and 7.4 percent collect secondary material and trash. Only 38.3 percent are playing. Low access can also be explained by low expectation and apathy of Roma parents which are themselves characteristics of social exclusion: In Montenegro, 64.6 percent of RAE survey respondents stated that education of children is important, while an astonishing share of 35.4 percent believe it is not important and immaterial to changing their lives. Only 55.5 percent of household heads judged that children are interested in going to school. However, one has to interpret such statements with extreme caution, as the survey does not capture the motivation and context for individual's responses. Further qualitative work can uncover these.

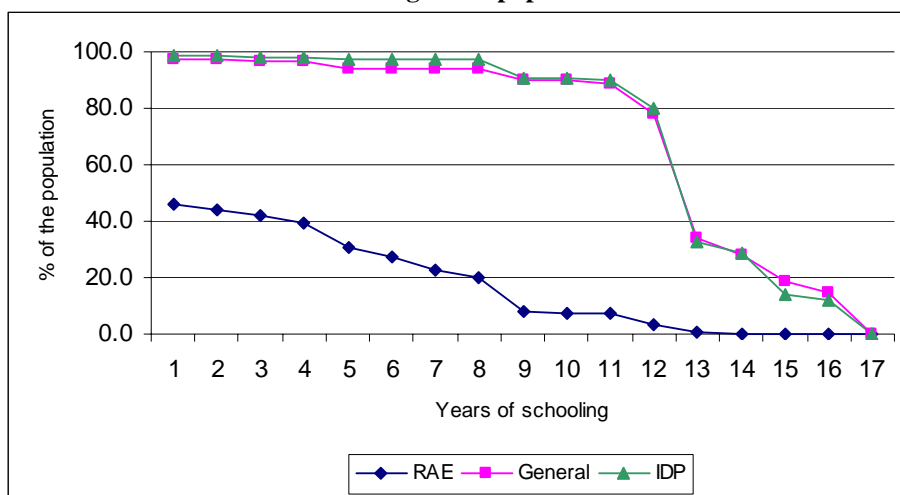
30. **Access barriers to education for Roma children begin with pre-schools, and low pre-school enrollment is likely to undermine subsequent primary education enrollment rates among Roma children:** In Serbia only 7 percent of Roma children residing in settlements attend pre-school (from age 3-7), comparing to almost 34 percent for the general population. This is unfortunate for a number of reasons: International evidence suggests that children who attended early childhood development (ECD) or pre-school programs on average tend to fare better in primary school than those who have not. In particular, pre-schooling can promote a child's learning ability and motivation especially when the environment at home does not allow so, for example because parents themselves are not educated. Pre-schooling has an impact on socializing children, which can be important especially for children from socially excluded groups. Apart from unspecified preferences to keep children at home and not to send to pre-school, Roma respondents stated most often that sending children to pre-school would be too expensive. While pre-school attendance has so far been fee-based²⁸, the level of attendance fee is dependent on household income, and social welfare beneficiaries have access to free pre-schooling. Possibly because they receive income support, only 41 percent of Roma survey respondents stated that they were paying for pre-schooling as opposed to 89 percent among the general population, while the mean expenses for pre-schooling among Roma was half that of the general population.

31. **Pervasive non-registration of Roma households works against school enrollment of Roma children.** While primary school attendance is compulsory from the age of 7, non-registration of many Roma households prevents enforcement for Roma children. Because many Roma families have no residence records and Roma children no birth certificates, municipal authorities often have no full knowledge of how many Roma children reside in the municipality, and where they reside, and lack means and motivation to enforce school attendance. Moreover, often because of the unregistered status of Roma settlements, many Roma children face adverse geographical boundaries in accessing pre-schools and primary schools – living further away from schools than they would if household residence was registered. Many Roma live in unregistered settlements outside towns or at the fringes of urban centers (see section on Roma and housing below).

²⁷ Jaksic and Basic (2002) *Roma Settlements, Living Conditions and Possibilities for Roma Integration in Serbia, Results of Social Research*, Centre for Research of Ethnicities, Belgrade

²⁸ Recent reforms of the education system in Serbia have introduced one year of free pre-schooling

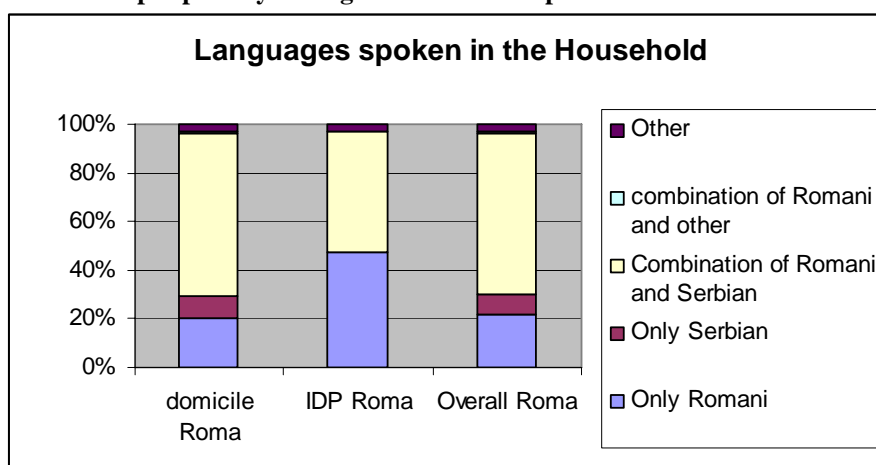
Figure 3.2 The RAE 18-45 year age cohort in Montenegro achieves substantially lower educational attainments than general population or IDPs



Source: Montenegro Household Survey of Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons, 2003

32. **Low enrollment in education is compounded by poor educational attainments and outcomes for Roma in both Serbia and Montenegro in comparison to both general population and non-Roma IDPs.** While there is no attainment data from the Serbia SLS and Roma booster, enrollment data suggests that most enrolled children are in primary education, with very few continuing on to vocational and/or secondary education. In Montenegro²⁹, as predicted by the low enrollment data, an alarming 63.1 percent of the RAE population have no education, 21.3 percent incomplete primary schooling, and 9.2 percent have completed primary schooling. Figure 3.2 shows the drastic differences in educational attainments between RAE and general population in Montenegro. This data suggests a high dropout of RAE children following initial entry into primary education.

Figure 3.3: Nearly half of Roma IDP households in Serbia speak only Romani – a likely key predictor of deeper poverty among Roma IDPs compared to non-Roma IDPs



Source: Own calculations based on Serbia 2003 SLS and Roma Booster: "Roma" relates to Roma households residing in settlements

²⁹ Data for Montenegro from Institute for Strategic Studies and Prognoses (2003), *Household Survey of Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians, Refugees and Internally Displaced People*

33. **Roma children fare worse in school performance compared to their non-Roma peers:** Data from the pilot stage of the national testing of school performance of 3rd grade pupils in Serbia in 2003/2004 show significant differences in student performance in Serbian language, mathematics as well as overall performance. This is driven by the fact that many Roma children are in special schools or that Roma children fail to receive the same quality of education in regular schools because of irregular attendance or insufficient support. Lower language performance may also be caused by less than full proficiency in the Serbian language and the fact that Serbian is not being spoken at home. Figure 3.3 indicates that in almost half of the surveyed Roma IDP households individuals did not speak any other language than Romani, while a staggering 20 percent of domicile Serbian Roma households do not master Serbian language. Inability to speak Serbian language severely limits labor market opportunities. Not surprisingly, the poverty analysis presented in the previous sections clearly indicates that those households, in which Romani is the only spoken language, are particularly poor. Moreover, language barriers are a likely key explanation for the substantially worse poverty incidence among Roma IDPs compared to non-Roma IDPs. Table 3.3 summarizes the national testing data.

Table 3.3: Data on school grades of Roma and non-Roma pupils in Serbian Language and Mathematics and data on overall performance at the end of 3rd grade of primary school, in percent

Grade	Serbian Language		Mathematics		Overall Performance	
	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma	Non-Roma	Roma
1	0.9	9.0	3.0	18.4	1.5	7.1
2	9.0	36.1	13.4	48.9	1.4	12.1
3	19.5	32.6	21.7	14.9	12.2	42.9
4	29.5	11.1	29.0	9.9	29.2	24.3
5	41.1	11.1	32.9	7.8	55.8	13.6
<i>Average grade</i>	4.01	2.79	3.75	2.40	4.36	3.25

Source: Mihajlovic (2004), Needs Assessment Study for the Roma Education Fund, Serbia. Note: Higher grade represents higher accomplishment.

34. **Special schooling remains a key feature of Roma education:** Roma children in both Serbia and Montenegro often go to special schools for children with special needs. These schools, aimed at children with special needs, follow simpler curricula than regular schools. The reasons for being assigned to special schools are rarely transparent and correct, while one key likely reason may be a less than proficient command of the Serbian language among some Roma children. In Montenegro, anecdotal evidence suggests that almost 80 percent of children enrolled in special schools are Roma children. According to anecdotal evidence in Serbia, Roma constitute between 50-80 percent of the total number of children in special schools or in special classes in regular schools, with Belgrade reaching 80-85 percent³⁰. While Roma children may feel safe given their majority status in many special schools, they become further stigmatized and fail to develop based on the exploitation of their full potential in such schools.

35. **While education appears to fail to break the poverty cycle for Roma today, access barriers and poor education outcomes threaten to lock Roma children into continued exclusion and poverty in the future.** The survey data reveals that Roma face a high likelihood of poverty even with education: In Serbia, while almost 68 percent of settlement Roma living in households with the household head having no education are very poor, 63 percent are poor even though the households head has elementary schooling. 47 percent of those households headed by a graduate of vocational education (1-2 years) and 37 percent of those with vocational schooling of 3-4 years or gymnasium are poor. In Montenegro, RAE households face an even higher poverty risk if the household head completed primary education (41.5 percent) than those where she/she has unfinished elementary education (30.8 percent). However, most importantly, evidence

³⁰ Mihajlovic (2004), Needs Assessment Study for the Roma Education Fund, Serbia

reveals the intergenerational dimension of Roma social exclusion: significant education access barriers and the resulting poor educational outcomes of Roma children today predict their continued social exclusion in the future.

36. **Policy Recommendations - Education:**

- The analysis shows that education poverty is a key predictor of income poverty and the main driver of an inter-generational poverty-trap. The staggeringly low enrollment rates among Roma children call for an ***all-out effort to improve access to schooling for the Roma population***, comprising measures both within and outside the education system. Only if Roma children go to school and raise overall attainment rates will the Roma population stand a chance of being lifted out of poverty over the next generation. Such an all-out effort is necessarily multi-sectoral and encompasses both financial and income measures as well as those aimed at overcoming multiple access barriers. They should be primarily directed at raising the number of children who complete regular elementary schooling, but need to be compounded by availability of vocational education.
- Within the education system, it appears that ***increasing access to pre-schooling*** for Roma children is a priority. Pre-schooling can help Roma children to catch up and make up for suboptimal learning conditions at home, so as to improve their chances once entering primary school. However, with even general population pre-school enrollment standing at only 34 percent, demonstrable change for both general population and Roma children will require a substantial Government effort. Expanding pre-schooling for Roma children can take the form of boosting Roma enrollment within existing public pre-school institution as well as arranging pre-schooling within Roma settlements, possibly run by Non-Governmental Organizations.
- Many Roma children who are going to school are enrolled in “special” schools for children with special needs who often do not allow Roma children to uncover and exploit their true potentials. Rather, the challenge is to ***achieve higher enrollment rates for Roma children in regular schools***. This requires specific school teacher training to deal with social exclusion manifested in the classroom as well as the provision of extra teachers to help bridge the knowledge gap between Roma and non-Roma children, in particular in the Serbian language.
- A precondition to measures to boost enrollment is a ***renewed attempt to register non-registered Roma*** and other households residing in settlements. Enforcement of compulsory primary schooling necessarily requires knowledge of the number, age and place of residence of Roma children.
- ***Teacher training*** to deal with social exclusion manifested in the classroom as well as the ***provision of extra teachers*** and/or ***Roma teaching assistants*** to help bridge the knowledge gap between Roma and non-Roma children, in particular in the Serbian language, can help reduce barriers and lift Roma children out of special schools.
- ***Availability of transport*** for Roma children in rural areas to help them commute to regular schools in neighboring villages. Likewise, ***free textbooks on loan from the schools*** will ensure that Roma children have access to study material (See Box 4).
- For adults, efforts aimed at raising ***adult literacy and vocational skills as well as teaching Serbian language skills***. This is essential to both boost adult’s employability, but also to enable parents to provide a more enabling learning environment for their children at home.

- **Increased availability of social protection benefits** for the Roma population can lower the necessity for children to earn income rather than going to school, and benefits such as the MOP or child allowance could be conditional upon child school attendance (see Section IV).

Box 4: Improving educational outcomes for RAE children in Montenegro – turning ideas into practice

The Government of the Republic of Montenegro has embarked upon a comprehensive reform of its school system. This reform started in 2004 in 25 schools and will be extended each year to cover more and more schools until all schools have been included. This reform program includes a revised curriculum for all grades, training for teachers on the new curriculum, new pedagogical approaches and the use of information technology, new textbooks and other learning materials, and renovation of school buildings. The World Bank is supporting this reform process through the Montenegro Education Reform Project.

Among the schools joining the reform program each year there will be at least two schools with significant minority populations, including Roma. This will ensure that these students have access to the revised curriculum and their teachers’ skills are upgraded as quickly as possible. It will also give policy makers information about how the reform process is implemented in different types of schools so that it can be adjusted to ensure real improvements happen in all schools.

In order to ensure that all students have access to the textbooks that they need, the Government will provide all students in the reform schools from disadvantaged backgrounds with free textbooks. This requires the Ministries of Education and Science and of Labor and Social Welfare to work closely together. Every parent whose child is attending or will attend a “reform” school is given a form to request free textbook provision. The Centers for Social Work (CSW) confirm which families are registered as socially deprived, by stamping the application form and returning it to the school. The school librarian then notifies the Ministry of Education and Science of the number of free books it needs. Parents sign a contract with the school to return the books at the end of the year in decent condition, so that the books can be re-used the following year by other children. This process is managed by the school librarian. Parents will be required to pay for books which are lost or returned in an unusable condition. The 2005-06 school year will be the first year of operation of this scheme, which will be carefully monitored to ensure it does actually reach the parents who need it.

2. EMPLOYMENT AND LABOR MARKET OUTCOMES

37. **Education status and outcomes are closely linked to employment and labor market outcomes.** Lower educational attainment is worsening an individual’s future chances in the labor market, while the need to contribute towards household income keeps many children out of school. Serbia’s and Montenegro’s delayed transition from the socialist system to a market economy has resulted in widespread unemployment. While chronic high unemployment in Serbia and Montenegro affects all sections of society, the labor market status for Roma is significantly worse than for the general population. In Serbia significantly more Roma are out of work than non-Roma, with particularly pronounced discrepancy for women. When Roma are employed, they often are in the informal sector, with negative welfare consequences and without social insurance coverage³¹. Table 3.4 summarizes labor market outcomes for Roma in working age (defined here as between 15 and 55 for women and 60 for men) in Serbia. While there appears to be little difference in labor force participation, Roma fare significantly worse in terms of employment and unemployment results.

Table 3.4: Serbian Roma face worse labor market outcomes than the general population

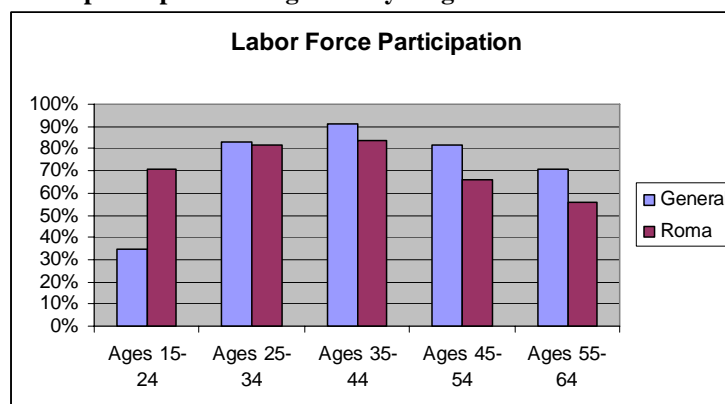
in percent	General Population	Roma
Labor Force Participation Rate	73.4	74.9
Employment Rate	62.2	51.0

³¹ This lower social insurance coverage is also evident from the social protection coverage analysis in Chapter IV.

Source: Own calculations based on Serbia 2003 SLS and Roma Booster; "Roma" relates to Roma households residing in settlements

38. **There are significant differences in labor force participation, employment and unemployment outcomes between settlement Roma and general population households in Serbia.** Although the labor force participation rates for general population and settlement Roma in Serbia appear similar, data presented in Table 3.5 and Figure 3.4 reveal that in fact there are significant differences, if viewed by age bracket. While significantly fewer Roma in older age cohorts participate in the labor market and are in employment, labor force participation and employment rates among young Roma aged 15-24 are higher than for the general population. This is driven by comparatively low school enrolment for Roma children and youth, who are often engaged in various income-generating activity rather than attending class (see section on education). The discrepancy in employment rates between Roma and general population is to some extent driven by differences in female employment rates: While the Roma male employment rate is only slightly below that of the general population (66.8 compared to 69.9 percent), the female Roma employment rate of 34.5 percent is significantly lower than that the rate of 54 percent for non-Roma.

Figure 3.4: Labor force participation is higher for young Roma in Serbia than for young non-Roma



Source: Own calculations based on Serbia 2003 SLS and Roma Booster; "Roma" relates to Roma households residing in settlements

39. **Despite this variation in participation and employment, Roma face consistently higher unemployment rates** across all age cohorts and all educational outcomes, although the discrepancy is lower for individuals with continuing education. As Table 3.5 shows, in particular Roma men who reach a Gymnasium-level of higher degree, fare significantly better than their less educated peers in comparison to non-Roma. However, discrepancies for women are significant and are not mitigated by education. Non-poor Roma face a higher unemployment rate than poor household heads in the general population (25.8 compared to 23.7 percent). Montenegro data confirms the unsatisfactory labor market and employment experience for Roma in Serbia: In Montenegro, only about 11 percent of Roma survey respondents indicated that they had been employed in the week preceding the survey.

Table 3.5: In Serbia in 2003 labor force participation and employment rates among young Roma aged 15-24 were higher than for the general population

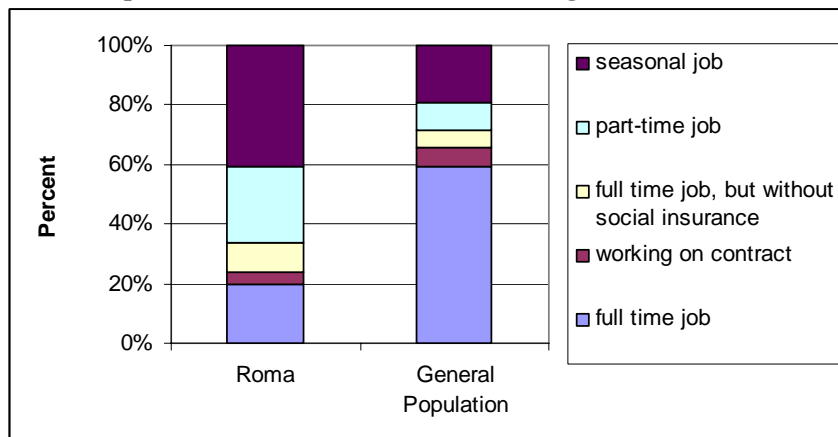
	Labor Force Participation		Employment		Unemployment	
	General	Roma	General	Roma	General	Roma
Ages 15-24	34.6	70.6	19.9	36.7	42.6	47.9
Ages 25-34	83.2	81.5	65.8	59.3	21.0	27.2
Ages 35-44	91.3	83.4	81.7	62.4	10.5	25.1

Ages 45-54	81.8	65.7	75.6	51.2	7.6	22.1
Ages 55-64	70.7	55.7	64.1	46.2	9.4	17.2

Source: Own calculations based on Serbia 2003 SLS and Roma Booster; “Roma” relates to Roma households residing in settlements

40. **Roma employment is mostly informal, part-time or short-term and low-skilled; and those who work, receive low salaries and often remain poor:** In fact, some of the types of employment the Roma are engaged in can be a source of vulnerability, for example through greater health risks. In Montenegro, more than 50 percent of survey respondents who worked stated they did physical work or were earning their income from collecting trash to sell it afterwards, while 18 percent are engaged in communal services, 5.4 percent in trade and repair, 3 percent in administration, 3 percent in production, 1.8 percent in agriculture and 1.8 percent in handicraft. Most survey respondents in Montenegro who reported to be employed are performing their job from time to time (47.3 percent), and 39.5 percent fulltime. Figure 3.5 presents comparative employment patterns for Roma and general population individuals in Serbia, and shows that, while 60 percent of general population household heads have a full-time job, this is true only for 20 percent of the Roma. At the same time, part-time and seasonal work is much more widespread among employed Roma than general population household heads. Not surprisingly, data from Serbia also indicates that many ‘employed’ are in fact working poor: Employment fails to fully protect from poverty, with 35 percent of Roma households with employed household head remaining in poverty. At the same time, Roma households can rely less on subsistence farming, an important informal safety net especially in the rural areas, than general population households: In Serbia only 2.5 percent of Roma households living in rural areas report holding land plots greater than 1,000 m², compared to 65.5 percent of general population households.

Figure 3.5: Roma employment is often seasonal or part-time rather than full-time with social insurance protection – evidence for Roma residing in settlements in Serbia



Source: Own calculation based on Serbia 2003 SLS and Roma booster; “Roma” relates to Roma households residing in settlements

41. **Educational attainment does not appear to have a major impact on improving the employment status of Roma in Serbia.** As Table 3.6 shows, Roma unemployment rates remain high across all levels of educational attainment such as primary, vocational and secondary education, and only a gymnasium degree or higher decreases the unemployment rate substantially. This suggests that Roma employment is affected by other aspects of social exclusion, preventing Roma from reaping the labor market benefits from education.

Table 3.6 Roma face inferior labor market outcomes in Serbia, regardless of educational attainments

Unemployment rates, in percent	General	Roma
No schooling/unfinished elementary	19.0	35.8
Elementary education	15.5	30.5
Vocational education	9.5	32.1
Secondary education	16.5	33.6
Gymnasium or higher	11.0	20.6

Source: Own calculations based on Serbia 2003 SLS and Roma Booster; “Roma” relates to Roma households residing in settlements

42. Policy Recommendations – Employment:

- **Primary efforts to raise the employability of the Roma builds on improving educational outcomes**, both through raising enrollment rates in regular elementary schooling and through increased availability of life-long learning and programs aimed at adults such as vocational education and training. In an environment where personal networks and adaptability are key determinants of finding employment, often informal, language skills are particularly important. The failure to speak Serbian language, affecting roughly 20 percent of Roma household heads and almost half of the Roma IDPs, is likely to act as an almost insurmountable barrier to employment – even informal.
- This effort also relies on **Roma multipliers** – boosting Roma employment in the education and health professions through targeted scholarship programs for example can help promote Roma inclusion and provide support in raising employability.
- **Employment generation and active labor market programs** operated through public and private employment services can conduct specific outreach to the Roma population and focus their attention on facilitating labor market entry and employment generation of socially excluded groups such as Roma. Apart from adequate funding of such efforts, this requires training of employment services staff to alert them to the specific needs and constraints faced by the Roma population. In addressing low employment of the Roma, it is essential to analyze currently used coping mechanisms and offer active labor programs based on these³².

3. HOUSING

43. **Poverty analysis presented above in this report has found that housing status for Roma is closely related with household welfare.** This section aims to develop the analysis of housing determinants of poverty further, by looking at individual housing characteristics for Roma and non-Roma households.

44. **While Roma settlements are dispersed across the country, Roma households in Serbia are predominantly found in Belgrade and other urban centers.** A recent survey of Roma settlements in Serbia³³ reveals that there are almost 600 Roma settlements with more than 15 families or 100 individuals. The density of the Roma settlements is highest in Belgrade, in Vojvodina and in districts of Central Serbia, while Southern Serbia has relatively few Roma

³² For example, in a recent survey of Roma settlements the majority of respondents stated that learning a handicraft would be a preferred way to earn more income (Oxfam and Argument (2001), “The Roma Livelihood in Belgrade Settlements”)

³³ Jaksic and Basic (2002) *Roma Settlements, Living Conditions and Possibilities for Roma Integration in Serbia, Results of Social Research*, Centre for Research of Ethnicities, Belgrade

settlements. Half of the Roma settlements are in urban areas, while the rest is in suburban or rural areas. The greatest single concentration of Roma settlements is in Belgrade itself, with about 100 large settlements.

45. **In Serbia, Roma households show significant discrepancies in housing indicators when compared to the general population**, with only 63 percent of the households having access to water supply compared to 92 percent for general population, and sewerage 33 vs. 63 percent (see Table 3.7). There are wide discrepancies in bathroom and toilet characteristics between Roma and non-Roma dwellings. Survey results also confirm that Roma housing is often sub-standard, leading respondents to complain about conditions: Almost 83 percent of Roma survey respondents had complaints about their accommodation, compared to 47 percent among non-Roma. The reasons for such complaints comprised lack of space, humidity, leaking roofs, rotten floor or walls and insufficiency of daylight.

Table 3.7: Roma living in settlements in Serbia face significantly worse housing characteristics than the general population

Percentage of households that have -	Roma	General Population
Separate kitchen	32.9	79.5
Bathroom (shower, tub) within dwelling	31.5	87.9
Toilet within the dwelling	29.8	82.0
Balcony or loggia	19.5	65.2
Garden plot used for agricultural purposes	10.3	38.4
Agricultural Plot of Land (greater than 10 acres)	1.7	36.6
Electricity	88.5	99.9
Water Supply	63.2	91.5
Sewerage	33.2	63.4
Gas	1.0	8.3
Central heating	0.3	21.8
Telephone	17.6	78.2
Cable or Satellite TV	1.9	23.4

Source: Own calculations, based on Serbia 2003 SLS and Roma Booster; "Roma" relates to Roma households residing in settlements

46. **In Montenegro, RAE households display similar poor characteristics.** Survey results show that 47.6 percent of RAE households live in barracks or non-solid housing, 30.5 percent in houses, while 7.8 percent reside in one-bedroom apartments. RAE households often live in cramped conditions: A staggering 61 percent of RAE households live in premises with less than 30 square meters, with the mean number of household members being 5.72 (as compared to 3.7 for general population households). More than 80.8 percent of RAE households live in accommodations that provide less than 10 square meters per individual, while this applies only to 8.2 percent for the general population.

47. **Roma settlements are found in urban, semi-urban and rural environments.** Analysis in Serbia reveals that 52.7 percent of Roma settlements are in cities, with 21.7 percent being quarters of cities and 31 percent suburban settlements³⁴. 44.8 percent of Roma settlements are in rural environments, while 21.7 percent are in villages and 23.1 percent as sections in villages with mixed ethnic composition. Most of these settlements are illegal or unplanned, are not registered in the local cadastre records and therefore do not have an address at which households can be registered. According to the analysis, 28 percent of Roma settlements in Serbia were built according to municipal plans, 34.6 percent were built illegally, and 35.4 percent spread illegally

³⁴ Jaksic and Basic (2002)

from an originally planned core settlement. Illegal housing often translates into slum-type settlements which as has been shown is highly correlated to poverty.

48. **Roma residing in rural areas tend to be poorer than in urban centers.** Despite the prevalence of slum-type settlements in urban centers, associated with a high risk of poverty, Roma poverty is significantly lower in Belgrade than in the other less urban areas, in particular in the northern Vojvodina region, as Table 3.8 reveals. Roma residents in Vojvodina are significantly more likely to be very poor than those in Belgrade, while the difference is even more prominent for the extremely poor.

Table 3.8: Roma poverty in Serbia varies substantially with region and settlement type

in percent	Very Poor	Extremely poor
Type of Settlement		
Slums	75.1	21.7
Settlements outside towns	52.1	8.1
Poor rural settlements	60.0	4.4
Suburban settlements	54.8	4.7
Area of Residence		
Urban	57.5	9.1
Other	65.2	11.0
Region		
Belgrade	51.1	5.1
Central Serbia	60.0	6.9
Vojvodina	67.7	18.9

Source: Own calculations based on Serbia 2003 SLS and Roma Booster; "Roma" relates to Roma households residing in settlements

49. **Policy Recommendations - Housing:**

- Housing status and the quality of dwelling are highly correlated with poverty, and many Roma live in precarious housing, often without residential registration. Tackling housing poverty means **registering the residential status of settlement Roma or identifying land for legal Roma settlements or allocating alternative accommodation** and is a precondition to reducing housing, as well as health, poverty. With many Roma settlements located on non-designated land and not registered in the cadastre records, there is no obvious and simple way to change the legal status of many unregistered Roma settlements, and the analysis of the registration and cadastre issue goes beyond the scope of this report. Ultimately, the only way out may be to transfer Roma households from precarious illegal settlements to designated alternative housing.
- Addressing the housing problem, such as through making available alternative accommodation and ensuring communal services and access to sewerage, water and electricity supplies, is predominantly a **responsibility of municipal authorities**. The central authorities in Serbia and Montenegro, therefore, need to involve the municipal authorities in their effort to operationalize and implement their Decade of Roma Inclusion Action Plans.
- Some Roma IDPs in Serbia and Montenegro have been residing in collective centers. With **IDP collective centers progressively being closed**, there is a risk that Roma IDPs end up in often more precarious settlements. In order to prevent this, the authorities would need to focus on ensuring that the availability of alternative housing is commensurate with collective center places being lost.

4. HEALTH

50. While there is a severe lack of adequate data and analysis on the health status of the Roma population in both Serbia and Montenegro, reports show that Roma hygiene and health standards are low in both Republics. Poor health status is mainly driven by precarious housing and living conditions, poor understanding of health and hygiene issues among Roma and multiple obstacles to access to the health care system. Qualitative and anecdotal evidence³⁵ suggests that Roma face a significantly larger risk of contagious diseases than the general population. Unofficial settlements both in urban centers and rural areas are usually not covered by communal services, resulting in severe health risks due to unsafe water supply, open sewage and improper waste disposal. Evidence shows that many Roma suffer from poverty-driven diseases such as malnutrition, lung and intestinal diseases, skeletal diseases and alcoholism. There has also been a reported rise in Roma children suffering from tuberculosis³⁶.

51. **Roma in working age show a significantly greater likelihood of chronic diseases which undermines their ability to generate income in the labor market.** The household survey data on health have to be treated with caution: The data reflect self-reported health status only, and should not be mistaken for actual health status. With only a minority of Roma visiting the doctor for regular medical check-ups, such self-reporting may underestimate the true incidence of health problems and, therefore, provides only an indicative picture. Table 3.9 summarizes age-specific rates of reported illnesses. In the Serbia household survey, 17.4 percent of Roma aged 25-44 reported chronic illnesses, compared to a mere 6.8 percent among the general population. More alarmingly, half of the Roma aged 40-55 report chronic illnesses (compared to 25.9 percent of the general population). The prevalence of chronic illnesses among the working age population is expected to have a significant impact on Roma household's poverty: Chronic illnesses hinder or prevent work ability and labor force participation and deprives Roma households of an important income-generating source. The higher average rate of reported chronic illnesses among the general population is driven by the older generation: Almost 20 percent of the general population is older than 65 years of age, compared to 3 percent of the Roma.

Table 3.9: Incidence of reported chronic illnesses is higher for Roma than the general population in Serbia, in percent

Age	General Population	Roma
0-25	3.0	5.9
25-40	6.8	17.4
40-55	25.9	47.6
55-70	53.9	61.8
70+	68.0	63.8
Average	27.2	19.9

Source: Own calculation based on Serbia 2003 SLS and Roma Booster; "Roma" relates to Roma households residing in settlements

52. **Health system utilization among Roma is low compared to the non-Roma population even for basic health needs.** While significantly more Roma report chronic illnesses, except for those above 70 years of age, significantly fewer of them receive health care, as Table 3.10 reveals. Moreover, while more Roma suffered from an acute illness than non-Roma survey respondents, fewer Roma utilized health services. Roma also spend only a third of what non-

³⁵ *Health Status, Health Needs and Utilisation of Health Services of Roma Population in 2001*, Report on the analysis for Roma children and adult population in Belgrade and Kragujevac, OXFAM GB, Office in Belgrade

³⁶ UN OCHA (2002) *Assessing the Needs of the Roma Community in FRY (ex. Kosovo)*

Roma spend on public medical services. This survey evidence is compounded by reports from human rights groups on cases where Roma have been denied access to health services. A survey of settlement Roma³⁷ shows that Roma children often fail to receive immunization: 9 percent of children in surveyed households were never vaccinated while the vaccination status was unknown for 27 percent, and only few children received comprehensive vaccination. Moreover, while 68 percent of Roma women visit a gynecologist for child birth, 80 percent do not go for regular check-ups. In the case of sickness or injury, Roma most often visit primary care physicians (62 percent), while 14 percent treat themselves, and in the majority of cases some serious health conditions were not treated when diagnosed. 80 percent of respondents stated they visit a dentist only for tooth extraction.

Table 3.10: Fewer Roma utilize health services than the general population in Serbia and pay lower amounts on out-of-pocket co-payments for health care

In percent	General Population	Roma
Report chronic illness and request regular therapy	78.6	52.3
0-25	79.3	45.9
25-40	60.9	39.2
40-55	74.0	53.2
55-70	80.7	67.3
70+	81.8	58.9
Suffered from acute illness/injury in previous month	16.5	20.5
Of which visited public health facility	22.1	17.0
Mean out of pocket expenditure at public health facility (in Dinars)	633	216

Source: Own calculations based on Serbia 2003 SLS and Roma Booster; "Roma" relates to Roma households residing in settlements

53. **The Roma population faces multiple barriers to access to health services, such as lack of information and knowledge, language barriers, financial barriers, unregistered residential status and discrimination.** Under-utilization of the health system is explicit in two forms, under-reporting of illnesses and failure to see a doctor or failure to receive health services when requested. Even where there is a significantly higher illness and disease incidence, individuals may fail to go and report it for reasons of exclusion and access barriers. The evidence on the dimensions of exclusion presented in this report suggest that many Roma are locked out of many forms of public services provided at the municipal level, and access to health services is constrained by the systemic barriers such as non-registration, lack of information or language skills. With respect to financial barriers, it is noteworthy that Roma make substantially lower out-of-pocket payments for health services on average than non-Roma, as evident from Table 3.10. This compounds the evidence on lower health service utilization – the poor face an even higher access barrier to health services in an environment of widespread out-of-pocket payments³⁸. However, there are reports from Serbia indicating access barriers in cases where individuals went to report illnesses and where health centers refused to treat them, and human rights organizations in Serbia and Montenegro have been reporting regular and multiple cases of discrimination³⁹.

54. **Policy Recommendations - Health:**

³⁷ Oxfam, ops. cit.

³⁸ There is evidence of substantial out-of-pocket payments for health care in Serbia. Overall health care expenditures are estimated at about 10 percent of GDP, of which 7 percent are public and 3 percent private (World Bank, *Serbia Public Expenditure Review*, forthcoming). Private expenditure comprises both formal co-payments and informal out-of-pocket payments. Household survey data suggests that patients pay substantially more out of pocket for accessing services than the small official co-payment, and those who are using private services are paying substantial amounts out of pocket (World Bank, 2003).

³⁹ Antic (2005), *Roma and Right to Health Care in Serbia*, Minority Rights Center, Belgrade

- Given the lack of suitable data on the health status of the Roma population, there is a ***need for more survey work and focused health assessments*** disaggregated by individual settlements to help the authorities in developing interventions, in particular at the municipal level.
- As noted the primary access barrier often is constituted by missing residential or citizenship registration of Roma as well as the fact that precarious Roma settlements are illegal and not recognized by municipalities. In the long-run there may be little alternative to ***transferring Roma households from illegal settlements to designated legal housing*** with improved sewerage and water supply systems to help mitigate health risks.
- Boosting a family medicine approach with primary health centers located close to and catering to Roma settlements can help tackle chronic health problems. This involves a ***preventive health care*** strategy of scaled-up immunization, preventive child health care and raising awareness among the Roma population most at risk. Overcoming access barriers relies crucially also on training staff in health care centers close to Roma settlements and on providing language and translation services, ideally through Roma staff.
- Serbians spend substantial resources on ***out-of-pocket payments for health care services***, whether they are insured or not. The widespread practice of out-of-pocket payments has a disproportionately negative effect on the very poor and is likely to prevent them from accessing health services in many instances. Attempts at tackling out-of-pocket payments and ensuring transparent and free of charge access for the uninsured poor and vulnerable groups contributes to promoting Roma access to health care.