

IV. Roma Social Safety Net Coverage in Serbia

55. The previous sections have presented the extent, dimensions and nature of poverty and social exclusion of Roma in Serbia and Montenegro. Both Republics have systems of social protection aimed at providing the poor with a minimum social safety net. How are these programs performing in alleviating Roma poverty? Do they play a role in reducing poverty among the Roma population or are Roma largely excluded from these programs? This section reviews the effectiveness of Serbia's social protection programs in dealing with Roma poverty.

1. SERBIA'S SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEM

56. **The overall coverage of Serbia's social protection system across the general population is high**, with around 64 percent of the population receiving at least one kind of benefit in 2003. Serbia's social protection system differentiates between social insurance (old-age, disability and survivor's pensions as well as unemployment insurance benefits) and social welfare and child protection (SWCP) programs (material support to families (MOP), child allowance, caregiver allowance, military veterans and disability benefits, one-time municipal social assistance, as well as various family and child care services). Wide coverage among the general population is primarily driven by social insurance programs, and in particular old-age pensions, as Table 4.1 indicates. Coverage of the social protection system was above 90 percent for Serbia's poor in 2003, again mainly driven by social insurance programs. However, they also cover a sizeable share of non-poor, as is expected and indeed intended for social insurance programs.

Table 4.1: Social insurance is the main social protection tool in Serbia, rather than social welfare or child protection, even for the poor. Coverage of Serbia's Social Protection Programs in 2003

in percent	Entire population	Non-poor	Poor	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
<i>Social Insurance</i>	51.3	39.7	83	88.9	62	47.8	36.3	21.7
Old age pension	33.2	24.6	56.6	61.2	41.7	29.5	21.9	11.6
Disability Pension	11.4	8.1	20.2	21.5	13.2	8.7	7	6.4
Family Pension	10.5	9.3	13.7	15.4	11	13.3	8.2	4.3
Foreign Pension	1	0.1	3.3	3.8	0.8	0	0.1	0.2
Unemployment Benefit	1.9	1.4	3.2	2.8	3.3	2	1.3	0.2
Severance Pay	2.1	1.3	4.3	5.3	2.1	1.3	1.9	0
<i>Social Welfare and Child Protection</i>	20.4	19.3	23.3	20.6	31.2	23.1	16.7	10.5
Caregiver's Allowance	2.8	1.5	6.3	6.9	2.3	2.7	1.4	0.5
Veterans and Disability Allowance	0.5	0.4	0.8	1	0.6	0.3	0	0.4
War Victims Allowance	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.4	0	0
MOP	1	0.5	2.6	3	1.1	0.9	0	0.2
Humanitarian Aid	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.6	3.2	1.3	1.2	0.1
One time Municipal Assistance	0.1	0.1	0.2	0	0.3	0.3	0	0
Child Allowance	14.3	14.3	14.2	10.8	23.9	16.8	11.1	8.6
New Birth Allowance	0.8	0.5	1.3	1	1.3	0.7	0.8	0
Mother's Monthly Allowance	0.7	0.8	0.4	0.3	1.4	0.3	1.2	0.2
Alimony	0.9	0.9	0.9	1	0.8	0.7	1.4	0.5
<i>Social Protection</i>	64.6	54.1	93.2	96	81.6	65.9	49.3	30.5

Source: Own calculations based on Serbia 2003 SLS. Poor/non-poor defined based on pre-transfer income, assuming a counterfactual consumption of 100 percent marginal propensity to consume out of transfer income (See Annex 1 for details).

57. **Serbia's social protection expenditure is high by regional standards, driven mainly by social insurance spending.** This is driven in particular by significant general revenue financing of pensions (covering the pension system's deficit of 5.5 percent of GDP in 2003) and expenditure on unemployment and severance benefits. Spending on social welfare and child protection, at around 1.7 percent of GDP in 2003 is in the mid-range in South-East European countries. Table 4.2 presents recent expenditure data on social welfare and child protection. Spending on social welfare and child protection programs has mildly grown in recent years as a share of GDP, with child protection mildly decreasing, but social welfare spending increasing. However, social welfare spending has been low in comparison to child protection spending, as evident in the direct comparison between the two most important public SWCP programs, child allowance and the material support for families (MOP).

Table 4.2: Social Welfare and Child Protection Spending in Serbia 2000-2003, as percentage of GDP

	2000	2001	2002	2003
Total social welfare and child protection	0.97	1.65	1.69	1.70
Child Protection	0.73	1.38	1.31	1.26
Wage compensation during maternity	0.20	0.23	0.33	0.37
Child allowance	0.37	0.89	0.70	0.51
Parental allowance	-	-	0.10	0.22
Educational program before first grade	0.09	0.09	0.07	0.00
Others	0.05	0.10	0.07	0.09
Social Welfare	0.23	0.27	0.38	0.44
MOP	0.02	0.09	0.09	0.10
Caregiver's allowance	0.03	0.03	0.04	0.05
Social Institutions	0.10	0.06	0.08	0.06
Others	0.09	0.09	0.16	0.16

Source: Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy, Republic of Serbia

2. COVERAGE OF THE ROMA

58. **Social protection coverage is high overall for Roma households residing in settlements, although a lower share of poor households is covered compared to the general population and a significant share of the poor remains without any benefit at all.** In 2003, only 11.7 percent of Roma households received social insurance benefits, and only 5.6 percent old age pension. This is not a surprising result: Labor Market analysis presented earlier shows that few Roma individuals are formally employed, which locks the majority out of formal employment-based social insurance benefits such as old-age and disability pension as well as unemployment benefit. Moreover, low old age pension coverage can also be explained by the comparative youth of the Roma population, with only 3.1 percent of Roma in Serbia being older than the age of 65. However, almost 74 percent of all individuals, and close to 80 percent of the poor, received social welfare and child protection in some form. Social welfare and child protection benefits, primarily aimed at poverty alleviation and means-tested appear to reach a sizable share of Serbia's poor Roma, but also a non-negligible share of non-poor Roma. However, while the poverty and social exclusion evidence presented in the preceding sections may have predicted significantly lower coverage rates for the Roma population, this analysis shows that almost 16 percent of poor Roma do not receive any benefit at all.

Table 4.3: Social welfare and child protection programs play a much greater role in social protection for Roma: coverage of Roma households of Serbia's social protection programs in 2003

in percent	Entire population	Non-poor	Poor	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
<i>Social Insurance</i>	11.7	5.2	14	13.8	15.6	12.1	12.4	4.7
Old age pension	5.6	2.9	6.6	4.9	8.3	4.5	7.3	3.3
Disability Pension	4.5	1.6	5.6	9.8	3.8	5.9	2.4	0.7
Family Pension	1.9	1.1	2.2	0.2	3.5	1.7	2.7	1.5
Unemployment Benefit	1.2	0	1.6	4.6	1.2	0	0	0
Severance Pay	0.7	0	1	3.7	0	0	0	0
<i>Social Welfare and Child Protection</i>	73.8	61.7	78.1	86.1	83.7	72.2	64.1	62.9
Caregiver's Allowance	2.8	1.5	3.2	1.9	0	9	2.3	0.7
Veterans and Disability Allowance	0.5	0.6	0.5	1.7	0	0	0	0.7
MOP	32.4	15.7	38.3	48.6	53.3	33.4	12.9	13.5
Humanitarian Aid	21.2	13.1	24.1	39.1	32.5	12	7.5	14.7
One time Municipal Assistance	1.7	0	2.3	5.5	0.5	1.9	0.6	0
Child Allowance	57.3	48.2	60.5	70.1	58.6	52.5	53.6	51.3
New Birth Allowance	1.8	1.1	2.1	0.7	4.4	0	2.6	1.5
Mother's Monthly Allowance	1.9	0	2.6	3.6	3.2	0	2.7	0
Alimony	0.6	1.5	0.2	0	0	0	2.8	0
<i>Social Protection</i>	79.2	63.6	84.7	93.7	88.3	76.2	72.6	64.8

Source: Own calculations, based on Serbia 2003 SLS. Poor/non-poor defined based on pre-transfer income, assuming a counterfactual consumption of 100 percent marginal propensity to consume out of transfer income.

59. **The most important social benefits covering the Roma population in 2003 were the child allowance, the material support for poor families (MOP) and humanitarian aid**, in this order (see Table 4.3). The *child allowance* program is financed and managed by the Serbian Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Policy (MLESP) and run by the municipalities. Recent reforms have introduced a new Law on Financial Support for Families adopted in 2002 with the aim to improve targeting of benefits. The right to child allowance is limited to the first four children, and the eligibility is controlled through means-testing including asset tests. The law also introduced a uniform eligibility threshold across the Republic. The *Family Material Support (Materijalno obezbeđenje porodice, MOP)* is the key social assistance benefit in Serbia. Financed and operated by MLESP through municipal Centers for Social Work (CSW), it is aimed at individuals and households with an income below the minimum social security threshold, filling the gap between the income and the threshold which is defined as a percentage of the average wage in the municipality, adjusted for household size. Recent reforms have introduced a unified Republican eligibility threshold for MOP also, and the eligibility is dependent on a means and asset test⁴⁰. *Humanitarian aid*, mainly provided to internally displaced persons and refugees, played an important role in sustaining the livelihood of poor households in 2003. Initially conceived by agencies such as the World Food Program (WFP) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) as a substitute for public social assistance during the crisis period of the late 1990s, in kind assistance such as food aid as well as one time cash assistance was provided based on similar targeting parameters as social assistance. While both agencies have phased out their food aid programs in 2004 in anticipation of a gradual take-up of their beneficiaries by the social welfare and child protection system, the transition from food aid to publicly financed cash benefits has not been smooth⁴¹.

⁴⁰ A unified Republican-wide eligibility threshold for MOP was introduced in amendments to the social welfare legislation in 2004. The analysis of the MOP benefit incidence in this report is based on 2003 data, i.e. without the unified threshold.

⁴¹ ICRC (2005) mentions the multiplicity of documentation required for MOP as a major barrier to access for IDPs and Roma.

60. **Child allowance is the SWCP benefit with the highest coverage both for settlement Roma and the general population, while MOP coverage is significantly more limited.** Child allowance reaches a sizeable share of poor Roma, but also a non-negligible share of the non-poor: As Table 4.3 shows, about 60 percent of poor Roma receive child allowance and almost 50 percent of non-poor. Moreover, 70 percent of Roma in the poorest quintile receive child allowance. High coverage rates for both poor and non-poor Roma are mainly driven by the significant budget allocation for child allowances. Child allowance coverage is also highly related with whether a household member resides in an urban center; coverage being significantly lower in rural areas. MOP coverage rates are lower than for child allowance consistently for poor and non-poor and all income quintiles. However, unlike for child allowance, coverage for the MOP is higher in rural than in urban areas.

61. **The data suggests that MOP has a significantly superior targeting performance among settlement Roma than child allowance.** Almost 90 percent of MOP recipients are poor, and equally almost 90 percent of MOP spending on Roma goes to the poor. This mirrors an equally superior targeting performance among the general population⁴². The data presented in Table 4.3 also show that, interestingly, more people in the second-poorest quintile receive MOP than in the poorest quintile – a likely phenomenon of access barriers which we attempt to explain below. With the introduction of means-testing of child allowance under the new Law on Financial Support for Families adopted in 2002, the targeting performance of child allowance has marginally improved⁴³.

Table 4.4: Comparative transfer incidence analysis reveals the superior targeting impact of the MOP

in percent	Non-poor	Poor	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
<i>Roma</i>							
MOP	12.5	87.5	39.1	30.0	15.8	8.8	6.3
Humanitarian Aid	14.0	86.0	48.3	19.8	13.5	8.2	10.2
Child Allowance	24.9	75.1	26.9	19.9	14.2	19.8	19.2
<i>General Population</i>							
MOP	33.6	66.4	53.6	23.1	16.9	0.0	6.4
Humanitarian Aid	57.4	42.6	29.3	41.5	16.8	11.2	1.3
Child Allowance	72.1	27.9	16.1	32.6	23.4	15.3	12.2

Source: Own calculation based on Serbia SLS 2003 and Roma booster.

Transfer incidence represents the percentage of total transfer amounts received by each subgroup

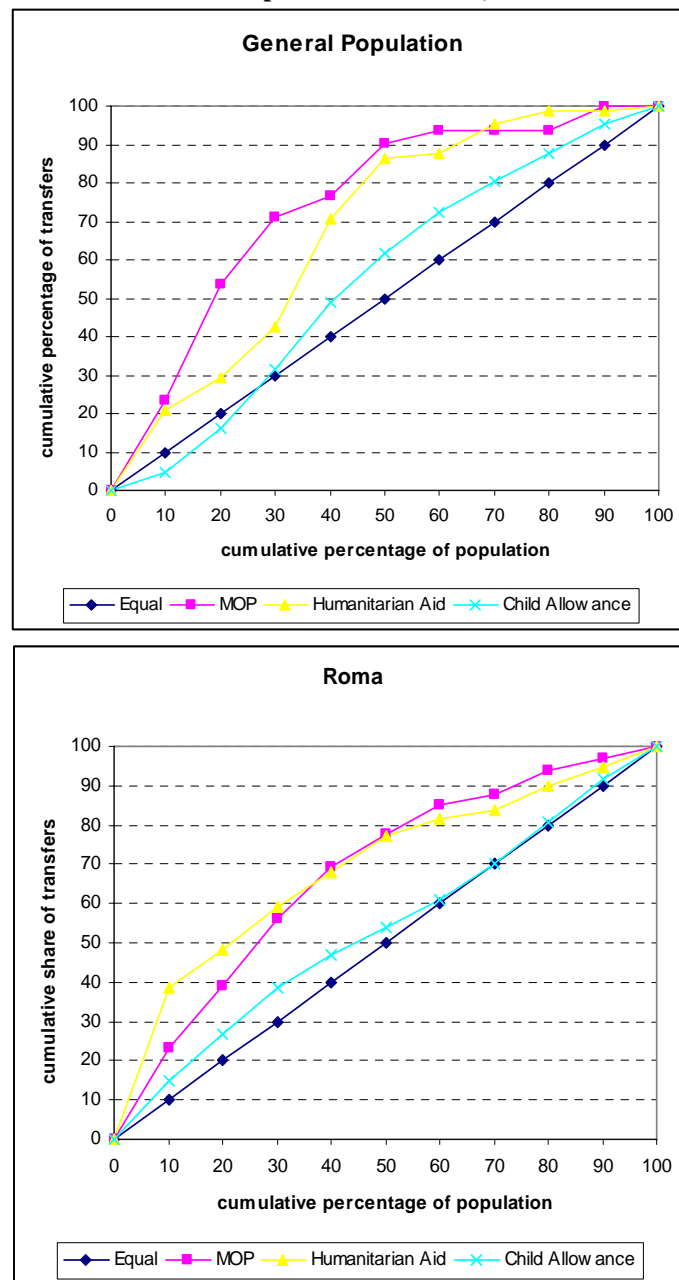
62. **The child allowance program's high coverage of the poor comes at the expense of high leakage to the non-poor.** Indeed, though they reach less poor households, the MOP and humanitarian aid have targeted poor Roma more effectively and show less leakage to non-poor Roma households, as the transfer incidence data presented in Table 4.4 shows. In 2003, a modest 26.9 percent of child allowance transfers went to the poorest quintile for Roma households. The MOP transferred 53.6 percent of its benefits to the poorest 20 percent of households in the general population and 39.1 percent to the poorest 20 percent of the Roma households. Humanitarian aid was better targeted on the poorest Roma households, with 48.3 percent going to the poorest 20 percent. The data confirm that child allowance in Serbia remains a benefit not effectively targeted to the poor. Almost three quarters of the child allowance resources went to the non-poor households in the general population in 2003. Given the greater poverty among the Roma, leakage of child allowance spending to the non-poor among the Roma households was lower than for the general population households, but its targeting cannot match that of the MOP:

⁴² The superior targeting performance may also be driven by limited available resources for MOP. Leakage may increase with increased spending on MOP.

⁴³ Tesliuc (2004)

While a quarter of the child allowance resources going to Roma households leaked to the non-poor, this was the case only for one eighth of the MOP resources. The concentration curves presented in Figure 4.1 indicate the superior targeting performance of the MOP and humanitarian aid. With the exception of child allowance for the general population, all transfers are progressive, i.e. the poor get a greater share of transfers than their share in total consumption. Child allowance, despite being means-tested, fares worse than the other two benefits, although it is also a (slightly) progressive transfer a result.

Figure 4.1: Concentration Curves for Selected Social Welfare and Child Protection Programs, General Population and Roma, Serbia



Source: World Bank estimates based on Serbia 2003 SLS and Roma Booster.

Note: Concentration curves are graphic devices which illustrate whether a transfer is progressive (the poor get a higher share of it) or regressive (the opposite is the case). If the concentration curve of a program lies above the equality line, the program is highly progressive: the poor recipients get more benefits than their share in total consumption.

63. **Consequently, the MOP is found to have a higher relevance in household income of the poorest Roma households than child allowance, while the phasing out of humanitarian aid risks leaving a vacuum in household income of the poorest.** While MOP represented a slightly lower share of household income than child allowance both for non-poor and poor Roma households overall, the reversal was true for the top two quintiles. For Roma households in the first quintile the MOP had a share of 12.9 percent of households' income compared to 12.2 percent of child allowance, and for the second quintile it represented 7.8 compared to 7.1, as Table 4.5 shows. Note also that for the poorest quintile more than 50 percent of household income is social protection, and that social welfare and child protection benefits represented a higher share in the Roma household income than social insurance consistently for all quintiles. While the relevance of humanitarian aid for the poor has been modest (2.5 percent), it took a share of 7 percent of household income for households in the poorest quintile in 2003. With humanitarian aid having been phased out, an income vacuum may emerge for the poorest households.

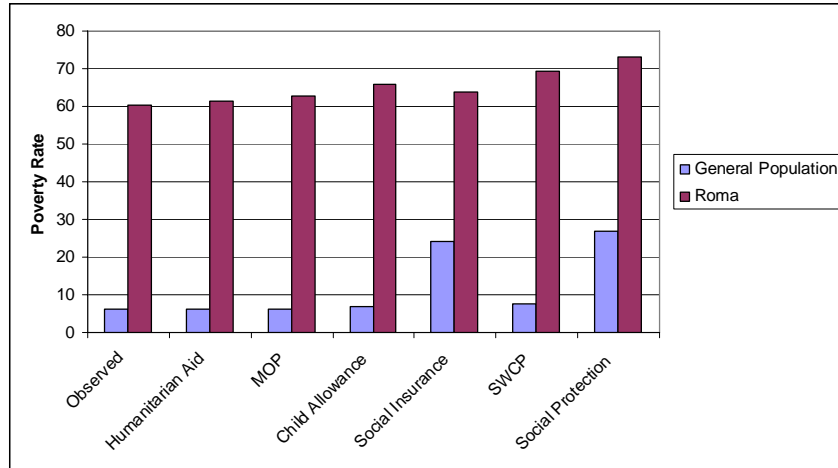
Table 4.5: Child Allowance and MOP were the most relevant transfers as a share of Roma household income in Serbia in 2003

In percent	Non-poor	Poor	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5
<i>Social Insurance</i>	1.2	5.6	12.1	4.7	3.9	2.9	0.9
Old age pension	0.9	3.0	5.8	3.0	2.1	1.7	0.7
Disability Pension	0.2	1.8	5.7	0.6	1.0	0.9	0.0
Family Pension	0.1	0.7	0.5	1.2	0.8	0.3	0.2
Foreign Pension	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Unemployment Benefit	0.0	0.3	1.3	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Severance Pay	0.0	1.3	6.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<i>Social Assistance</i>	4.5	16.7	35.5	19.6	9.4	7.4	3.8
Caregiver's Allowance	0.0	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.0
Veterans and Disability Allowance	0.0	0.1	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
War Victims Allowance	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
MOP	1.0	5.8	12.9	7.8	3.4	1.5	0.6
Humanitarian Aid	0.5	2.5	7.0	2.3	1.3	0.6	0.5
One time Municipal Assistance	0.0	0.3	0.9	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
Child Allowance	2.8	6.8	12.2	7.1	4.2	4.5	2.7
New Birth Allowance	0.0	0.3	0.1	0.8	0.0	0.1	0.0
Mother's Monthly Allowance	0.0	0.8	1.7	1.3	0.0	0.4	0.0
Alimony	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
<i>Social Protection</i>	5.7	23.9	55.3	24.6	13.3	10.3	4.7

Source: Own calculation based on Serbia SLS 2003 and Roma booster. Poor/non-poor defined based on pre-transfer income, assuming a counterfactual consumption of 100 percent marginal propensity to consume out of transfer income.

64. **There is significant overlap of MOP and child allowance coverage for both the general population and the Roma.** Among the general population in Serbia half of those families receiving MOP also received child allowance in 2003: While 1 percent and 14.3 percent of general population households received MOP and child allowance respectively, half of those receiving MOP also received child allowance. The overlap is even more pronounced for Roma households: While 32.4 percent of Roma households are estimated to have received MOP and 57.3 percent child allowance in 2003, 20 percent of the population received both benefits. In other words, 62.5 percent of those receiving MOP were also child allowance beneficiaries. The overlap of the two benefits is not surprising, given that child allowance and MOP are means-tested.

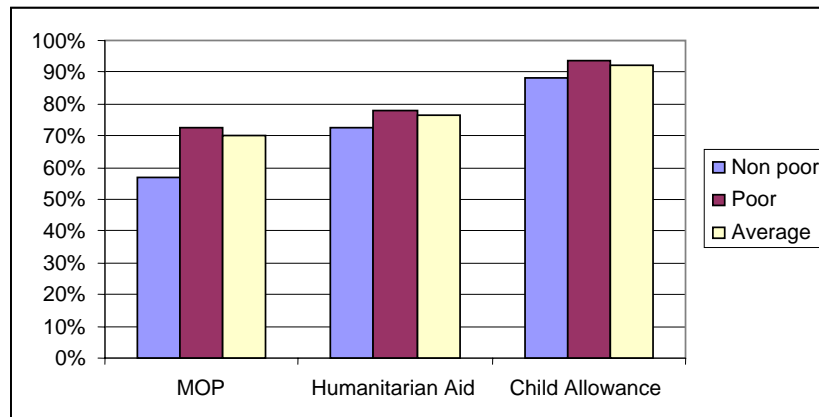
Figure 4.2: Roma poverty rates in Serbia would be significantly higher without social protection



Source: Own calculations based on Serbia 2003 SLS and Roma Booster. Observed poverty rates are defined as post-transfer, while poverty rates for benefits are defined based on pre-transfer income, assuming a counterfactual consumption of 100 percent marginal propensity to consume out of transfer income. “Roma” relates to Roma households residing in settlements

65. **Social protection prevents Roma poverty from rising even further:** In the absence of social protection the poverty rate for Roma would jump by 13 percentage points to above 73 percent. Driven by its high coverage rates, child allowance is the most relevant social protection instrument to mitigate Roma poverty, closely followed by MOP and humanitarian aid. Figure 4.2 presents the comparative poverty impact in the absence of select social protection interventions. It reveals that the mix of social welfare and child protection mechanisms is the most relevant tool mitigating Roma poverty, as in their absence, Roma poverty would jump from 60.5 percent to almost 70 percent. Note that social insurance policies such as old-age pensions are less important, as predicted by the low coverage rates of social insurance of Roma individuals. As for the most important SWCP interventions, the poverty rate for Roma would rise to 66 percent in the absence of child allowance, to 62.6 in the absence of MOP and to 61.4 if there was no humanitarian aid. The poverty mitigation relevance of the MOP is unsatisfactory, which is explained by its relatively low coverage due to its small budget allocation. The figure also presents the poverty mitigation relevance of the social protection policies for the general population. As predicted by its high coverage, social insurance policies turn out to be significantly more relevant than SWCP policies.

Figure 4.3: Percentage of Roma social assistance benefit applicants who received the benefit

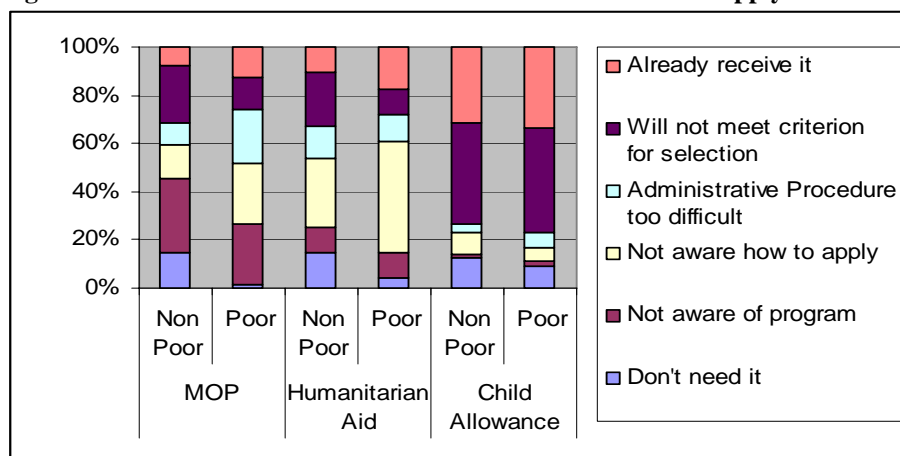


Source: Own calculation based on 2003 Serbia SLS and Roma Booster. Poor/non-poor defined based on pre-transfer income, assuming a counterfactual consumption of 100 percent marginal propensity to consume out of transfer income. "Roma" relates to Roma households residing in settlements

3. BARRIERS TO ROMA ACCESS TO THE SOCIAL PROTECTION SYSTEM

66. **Despite high coverage of poor Roma households, notable problems in terms of access for Roma to social protection programs remain, in particular for the MOP.** As Figure 4.3 demonstrates, despite its good targeting performance, only 73 percent of poor Roma households who had applied for the benefit actually received it (78 percent for humanitarian aid and 94 percent for child allowance). This discrepancy can largely be explained by various forms of access barriers evident in a perception of limited chance of actually being admitted to the benefit program. Figure 4.4 reveals the reasons which lead Roma household heads to not apply for social assistance benefits, both poor and non-poor. For MOP and humanitarian aid, survey respondents often stated that they were uncertain as to whether they met the eligibility criteria, were not aware of the programs or did not know how to apply for the benefit. In particular among the poor, a lack of knowledge on how to apply for humanitarian aid and MOP stands out. For child allowance, the main reason for not applying was a perception that the household would not meet the eligibility criteria, pointing to a better understanding and awareness about the benefit. These access barriers may be one key explanation why coverage of MOP is lower for Roma households in the poorest quintile compared to the second-poorest 20 percent of the population.

Figure 4.4: Reasons for Serbian Roma households heads to not apply for benefits



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

67. **Despite being targeted on the poor, child allowance fails to reach many poor Roma households with children.** According to child protection legislation, a household is eligible for monthly child allowance benefit for the first four children aged 0-19 (above the age of 7 if they are enrolled in school) and if the household's income is below a defined eligibility threshold. We therefore re-examine child allowance coverage data in the light of this eligibility criteria. The analysis of families with children who do not receive child allowance in either dataset reveals substantial discrepancies (see Table 4.6): While for the general population 12.9 percent of families who did not receive child allowance were poor, 87.1 percent of them were non-poor and, therefore, should not have been receiving it. However, the reverse is true for Roma households. Out of those Roma households who did not receive child allowance 68 percent were poor. This suggests that substantial access barriers for child allowance remains for Roma, even where households meet the eligibility criteria. The section on access barriers below analyses reason for

this. The data also confirms substantial leakage of child allowance to the non-poor, with 75 percent of non-poor general population households with children receiving the benefit.

Table 4.6: More Roma households in Serbia who do not receive child allowance are poor than among the general population

Percent of surveyed households	General Population			Roma		
	Non-Poor	Poor	Total	Non-Poor	Poor	Total
Do not receive child allowance (but have children)	87.1	12.9	100	32.0	68.0	100
Receive child allowance	75.1	24.9	100	22.7	77.3	100
Total	83.6	16.4	100	25.4	74.6	100

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

68. **Pervasive non-registration, in particular residential registration undermines access to social services and benefits.** As noted earlier in this report, many Roma households or individual members remain unregistered, in particular those residing in settlements. This non-registration can take the form of the lack of an address and therefore residential registration or individuals are simply without birth certificates, ID cards or passport. Moreover, displacement adds to the barriers to accessing social benefits: Almost 80 percent of Roma IDPs did not even apply for the MOP, as compared to 45 percent of non-IDP Roma. This underlines that Roma IDPs in Serbia, possibly for registration reasons, find it particularly difficult to access the social protection system. This is worrying especially in the light of humanitarian aid having been phased out in the meantime.

Box 5: Documentation needed to apply for MOP social assistance

According to the Serbian *Law on Social Care and Provision of Social Security of Citizens*, the right to MOP social assistance is based on a number of characteristics of the individual and family, such as income, family assets, the employment status and nature of the cause of unemployment of household members and others. The individual MOP benefit is determined as a monthly money amount equal to the difference between the minimum social security level, determined as a percentage of the Republican average wage and the amount of average monthly income of the individual or family, realized in the three months preceding the month in which the application was submitted. In order to determine eligibility, the Centers for Social Work have to conduct a comprehensive review of the multiple documentation allowing an assessment of the individual’s or family’s need. As noted, many Roma households, and IDPs in particular, do not hold even basic citizenship or residential registration documents, making it difficult for the CSW staff to assess their need based on formal documentation. Such documentation includes the following:

1. *ID card*
2. *IDP registration card* (if applicable)
3. *Witness’s declaration of shared household* – issued by the municipal administration in the temporary place of residence
4. *Proof of citizenship*
5. *Salary certificate* (*‘working booklet’*) - issued by dislocated employer company/ institution or *Unemployment certificate* – issued by the Bureau for Employment in temporary place of residence
6. *Pension certificate* or certificate confirming that the person does not receive pension - issued by dislocated Pension Insurance Office (dislocated PIO)
7. *Birth certificate* – issued by dislocated Registry Office
8. *Death certificate* – issued by dislocated Registry Office (if pensioner or other family member has died)
9. *Marriage certificate* – issued by dislocated Registry Office (if applicable)
10. *Divorce ruling* – issued by court where the procedure was initiated (if applicable).
11. Certificate issued by the *internal revenue service* (tax administration) in temporary place of residence.
12. Certificate issued by *land survey authority* (cadastre) in temporary place of residence
13. Certificate confirming *schooling* for children over 15
14. Certificate confirming a *person unfit for work* issued in temporary place of residence or by dislocated PIO (if applicable)
15. Court document certifying that the *applicant cannot rely on family support* (if applicable)
16. Document showing *inheritance* or lack of inheritance
17. *Bank account statements*

Source: *Law on Social Care and Provision of Social Security of Citizens and ICRC (2005b)*

69. **Policy Recommendations – Social Protection:**

- The municipal Centers for Social Work (CSW) in charge of social services and social welfare administration are the key primary interface and tool to identify and address poverty. Boosting coverage of the social welfare system as well as widening the recipients of social services requires a *new approach of scaled-up and sustained outreach by the CSWs to identify pockets of poverty* and improve information flow on how to access benefits and services among the poor communities. CSWs and municipal authorities as well as Roma associations can benefit from experience from MLESP's Social Innovation Fund (SIF) – a program aimed at promoting new ways of social service delivery and management and partnerships with NGOs which has supported Roma-centered projects already. The CSWs are also possibly a key tool in overcoming service access barriers resulting from lacking residential registration.
- As noted, multiple types of documentation are required in order to access the social welfare and child protection system. While these are necessary input to a CSW decision on eligibility for benefits and services, Roma households often lack the most basic form of documentation – residential and citizenship documents. Tackling the problem of lacking citizenship and residential registration is challenging given complex associated legal dimensions, and the elaboration of solutions lies beyond the scope of this report. However, it is obvious that the authorities in Serbia and Montenegro need to *intensify efforts in particular to ensure residential registration of Roma, including those residing in settlements and in particular Roma IDPs*, to ensure access to municipal services even without legalizing such settlements. While a new and comprehensive registration effort is required in the long term, allowing Roma households to access, in addition to residential and citizenship registration documents, such varied types of documents such as birth certificates and marriage licenses, temporary solutions may have to be found in the short term. This could involve applying temporary “proxy-residential registration” through the municipal centers for social work or allocating temporary numbers to households instead of addresses.
- Among the social welfare and child protection benefits the *MOP benefit* is best-targeted on the poorest but heavily under-resourced. Despite its good targeting performance, a significant share of the poor Roma population, therefore, remains uncovered – although also for reasons of access barriers affecting Roma in particular, such as lacking documentation and registration. If the MOP's impact on reducing poverty is to rise, more funding is required, in addition to a resolution of the registration challenge. In order to limit the budgetary impact of widening MOP coverage, CSW outreach activities could first be piloted regionally in areas of substantial Roma settlement, such as in and around Belgrade or in Vojvodina.
- *Humanitarian aid* in 2003 played an important role in poverty alleviation for the poorest Roma households, and its phase-out given receding donor-funded programs may have left a vacuum in the protection of the chronically poor, and Roma in particular. While informal coping strategies may well turn out to fill most of this remaining vacuum, this is a challenge for the formal public social safety net, and efforts have been made by humanitarian agencies to facilitate the transition from food aid to social welfare. Given its good and similar targeting performance, the MOP appears the benefit best placed to

replace phased-out humanitarian aid, however this requires increasing MOP financing and efforts to address Roma households' lack of registration documentation.