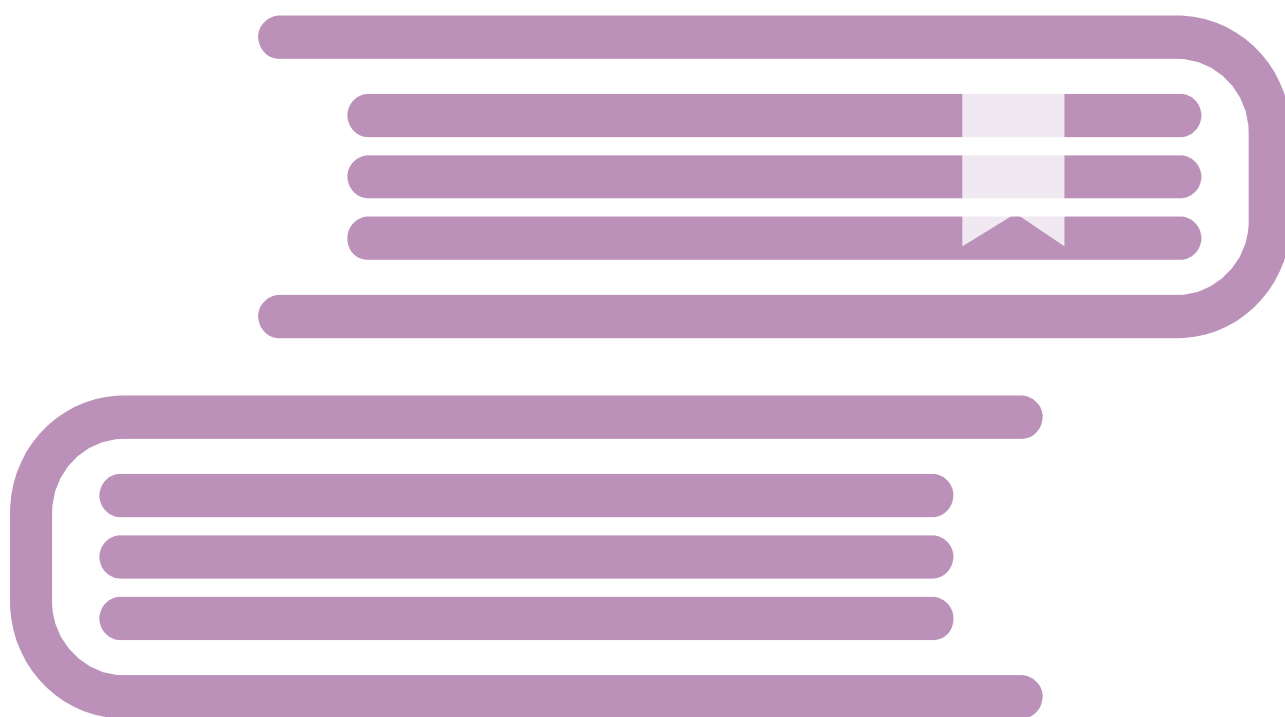


National Survey on Roma Educational Attainment and Employment

*Key Findings from a nationally
representative study of
the Roma community in Bulgaria*

January 2020



NATIONAL SURVEY ON ROMA EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

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More than 100 interviewers and mediators throughout the country were involved in conducting the survey. Without their precision and attention to detail, this survey would not have been a success.

CONTENTS

1	Introduction.....	9
2	Survey Methodology.....	11
3	Changes in the socio-demographic structure and attitudes of the Roma population from 2011–2019.....	16
4	Socio-demographic status of the Roma population as of 2019.....	20
4.1	Education.....	20
4.1.1	Nursery and kindergarten attendance.....	20
4.1.2	Literacy rates.....	21
4.1.3	School attendance.....	23
4.1.4	Highest level of education attained.....	24
4.1.5	Share of Roma participating in different educational levels without obtaining a diploma.....	29
4.1.6	Profile of those who have completed secondary education.....	30
4.1.7	Profile of those who have completed higher education.....	32
4.1.8	Participation in training courses or internships for adults.....	33
4.1.9	Factors that exert influence on the educational attainment of Roma.....	38
4.2	Attitudes towards education.....	48
4.3	Employment.....	50
4.4	Attitudes towards independent economic activity.....	55
4.5	Characteristics of households.....	55
4.5.1	Average number of household members.....	55
4.5.2	Average number of children.....	57
4.5.3	Average age.....	58
4.5.4	Marital status.....	60
4.5.5	Average age at time of marriage.....	62
4.5.6	Self-identification by ethnic belonging.....	63
4.5.7	Languages spoken in the household.....	63
4.5.8	Religious affiliation.....	65
4.5.9	Household structure (generations and types of members).....	66
4.5.10	Share of adults who have lived and worked abroad.....	67
4.5.11	Share of children who have lived abroad.....	68
4.5.12	Place of residence.....	69
4.5.13	Financial status of households.....	70
5	Summary.....	76
	ANNEXES.....	77

Abbreviations

EU	European Union
MLSP	Ministry of Labor and Social Policy
NSI	National Statistical Institute
NCCEII	National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
pps	percentage point
CEICSEM	Centre for Educational Integration of Children and Students from Ethnic Minorities
TSA	Trust for Social Achievement
FRA	Fundamental Rights Agency

List of Tables

TABLE 1. Correlation between number of years in nursery/kindergarten and subsequent graduation rates.....	21
TABLE 2. School attendance by age cohort	23
TABLE 3. Educational status by age cohort.....	25
TABLE 4. Type of secondary education completed by age cohort.....	26
TABLE 5. Educational attainment of surveyed Roma in 2019 and 2011 compared to a country-level survey in 2018 and the 2011 census.....	27
TABLE 6. Persons who have studied and completed higher education by gender.....	29
TABLE 7. Share of the Roma participating in different educational levels without obtaining a diploma	29
TABLE 8. Correlation between occupation and educational attainment.....	31
TABLE 9. Share of respondents in training courses by highest level of education achieved	34
TABLE 10. Attendance in different types of training courses by highest level of education achieved	35
TABLE 11. Share of unemployed and long-term unemployed adults participating in training courses	35
TABLE 12. Share of respondents in training courses by occupation.....	36
TABLE 13. Correlation between age of first marriage and the highest level of education attained	40
TABLE 14. Correlation between educational attainment of different generations in the same household.....	45

TABLE 15. Educational attainment by type of locality	46
TABLE 16. Correlation between income and educational attainment for respondents aged 18-35.....	47
TABLE 17. Attitudes concerning what level of education is sufficient for girls and boys	48
TABLE 18. Attitudes concerning what level of education should be completed	49
TABLE 19. Share of long-term unemployed men and women by educational attainment as a percentage of all respondents	54
TABLE 20. Comparative data on the number of members in a household in 2019 and 2011..	56
TABLE 21. Number of children per household.....	57
TABLE 22. Number of children per household 2019 and 2011.....	58
TABLE 23. Share of respondents per age cohort in 2019 and 2011.....	58
TABLE 24. Marital status in 2019 and 2011	60
TABLE 25. Marital status of each age cohort	61
TABLE 26. Age at first marriage for each age cohort	62
TABLE 27. Average age at first marriage for all respondents in 2019 and 2011.....	62
TABLE 28. Ethnic self-identification of respondents in 2019 and 2011	63
TABLE 29. Languages spoken most often in the family in 2019 and 2011.....	64
TABLE 30. Other language/ languages spoken in the family in 2019 and 2011.....	64
TABLE 31. Religious affiliation of respondents in 2019 and 2011.....	65
TABLE 32. Share of households with extended families in 2019 and 2011.....	66
TABLE 33. Breakdown of household members in extended families in 2019 and 2011	66
TABLE 34. Share of all respondents who have lived abroad.....	67
TABLE 35. Share of all adults who have worked abroad.....	68
TABLE 36. Share of children who have lived abroad.....	68
TABLE 37. Total time at current residence.....	69
TABLE 38. Number of years at current residence	69
TABLE 39. Sources of household income	71
TABLE 40. Income structure of households	72
TABLE 41. Household expenditures in 2019 and 2011	74
TABLE 42. Highest level of education attained for all respondents in 2019 and 2011	77

TABLE 43. Highest level of education attained by age cohort and gender.....	78
TABLE 44. Educational profile of the population in different age groups	79
TABLE 45. Share of respondents enrolled and graduating from higher education by gender .	80
TABLE 46. Last completed grade in school by age cohort and gender	81
TABLE 47. Correlation between educational attainment and employment opportunities.....	82

List of Figures

FIGURE 1. Literacy levels among different age cohorts by gender.....	22
FIGURE 2. Ethnic composition of schools attended by respondents' children in 2019 and 2011	24
FIGURE 3. Educational attainment of adults aged 18+ by gender.....	28
FIGURE 4. Share of different age cohorts graduating from higher education by type of locality	32
FIGURE 5. Participation in training courses among the four surveyed groups.....	33
FIGURE 6. Share participating in training courses by level of educational achievement	33
FIGURE 7. Participants vs. non-participants in professional and training courses by type and level of education.....	37
FIGURE 8. Participants vs. non-participants in vocational training courses by occupation.....	37
FIGURE 9. Income of participants vs. non-participants in training courses.....	38
FIGURE 10. Average age of first marriage by level of educational attainment	39
FIGURE 11. Average number of years attending nursery/kindergarten by level of educational attainment.....	41
FIGURE 12. Share of respondents who attended vs. did not attend kindergarten by level of educational attainment.....	42
FIGURE 13. Level of educational achievement of 18-25 year olds by number of household members	43
FIGURE 14. Level of educational achievement of 23-27 year olds by number of household members	43
FIGURE 15. Level of education of 30-40 year olds by number of household members	44
FIGURE 16. Correlation between monthly household expenditures and highest level of educational attainment for 18-27 year olds	47
FIGURE 17. Share of employed respondents by age cohort.....	50

FIGURE 18. Share of employed respondents by age cohort and gender.....	51
FIGURE 19. Share of employed respondents by level of educational attainment and gender	51
FIGURE 20. Women with the status „housewives” and women on maternity leave by age cohort.....	52
FIGURE 21. Share of respondents aged 18+ who have worked abroad	53
FIGURE 22. Share of respondents who have lived abroad by educational attainment and gender	53
FIGURE 23. Respondents currently (December 2019) working abroad by educational attainment and gender	54
FIGURE 24. Share of respondents by number of household members in 2019 and 2011	56
FIGURE 25. Age structure of the Roma population in 2019 and 2011	59
FIGURE 26. Age structure of the Roma population by 10-year increments in 2019 and 2011	59
FIGURE 27. Share of all marriages described as “official” for each age cohort.....	61
FIGURE 28. Statistical distribution of household income levels across respondents in 2019 and 2011.....	72
FIGURE 29. Share of household members earning different levels of income.....	73
FIGURE 30. Statistical distribution of income per household member by level of educational attainment.....	73

1 Introduction

With an estimated population of 6 million in Europe, the Roma comprise the largest ethnic minority in the EU¹. Social exclusion, lack of equal access to education, employment and healthcare are among the main challenges that have made many Roma communities vulnerable and socially isolated, not only in Bulgaria, but in Europe as a whole. In order to overcome the social and spatial isolation of these groups, various measures have been implemented, with an aim to increase the employment rate and income of the Roma population, as well as to ensure access to education. Much of the research conducted to date has focused on a specific research question or field. Even when such research partially addressed the educational status of the Roma in Bulgaria, in most cases there were discrepancies between the methodology and tools, which prevented a reliable comparison of data and trend-tracking. In 2008, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights launched a randomized survey of Roma communities in seven EU Member States, in the context of a previous survey on minorities and discrimination in the European Union (EU-MIDIS I)². In 2011, two parallel surveys were conducted to map the situation of the Roma in the EU. The first survey focused on social and economic development and was conducted by the UNDP and the World Bank. The second study was conducted by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights and focused on fundamental rights and their observance. In 2016, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) conducted a survey of Roma communities for a third time within EU-MIDIS II³ to assess progress over time, reflecting the impact of implemented legislative changes and policies.

To overcome the lack of up-to-date data, the Trust for Social Achievement (TSA) commissioned the sociological agency Global Metrics to conduct a nationally representative survey of Roma communities⁴ living in Bulgaria. The study aims to determine the current level of educational attainment among the Roma population by comparing current data with data obtained from the survey conducted in 2011 by the UNDP. The methodological approaches of the two studies are identical and allow for full comparability of results and tracking of differences in a comparative perspective.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination/roma-and-eu/roma-integration-eu_en

² <https://fra.europa.eu/en/project/2011/european-union-minorities-and-discrimination-survey>

³ https://ec.europa.eu/knowledge4policy/dataset/ds00141_en

⁴ In the current report and in the framework of the survey the term “Roma communities” is used, although these communities do not form a homogenous group. In this way the authors of the research use one concept to refer to the different ethnic and cultural groups on the territory of Bulgaria who self-identify as Roma.

For the purposes of the English translation of this report, the following terminology will be used to refer to different levels of educational attainment:

Children aged 0–6	Nursery and kindergarten
Grades 1 st – 4th	Primary school
Grades 5 th – 8th	Basic (junior secondary) school
Grades 9 th – 10th	Stage one: secondary school
Grades 10th – 12th	Stage two: secondary school
Grades 9th – 12th	Secondary school
Post-secondary (tertiary):	Higher education
Tertiary of 2–3 years	Associate's (professional) degree
Tertiary of 4 or more years	Bachelor's degree and higher (Master's)

For the purposes of the survey, the following levels have been studied in detail in full comparability with the data from 2011: basic education (through 7th grade), secondary education (10th or 12th grade, depending on the type of school) and higher education. The survey aims to inform TSA and its partners on the educational status of the Roma and policies connected to it. ●

2 Survey Methodology

The main parameters of this nationally representative survey conducted among the Roma population are as follows:

Territory	Throughout the territory of the whole country in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian population; – Neighborhoods with a compact Roma population of at least 20 households; – Neighborhoods with a mixed population (Roma and Bulgarian, Roma and Turkish, other population or representatives of each of these groups).
Target group to be interviewed	Adult representatives of Roma households
Target group for which information has been collected:	All members of the households included in the sample
Sample unit	Household
Data collection method	Direct interview in respondents' homes
Main sample size	900 Roma households from neighborhoods/ settlements with a compact/ predominantly Roma population
Booster sample size	150 Roma households from neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population
Sample type	Nationally representative sample of households
Survey scope	Nationally representative survey among the Roma population
Method for selecting the respondents from the main sample	Two-stage cluster sampling with a starting address
Method for selecting the respondents from the booster sample	Criterion sampling by the Adaptive cluster sampling method
Total number of clusters	Main sample 129 clusters Booster sample 21 clusters

Number of persons included in the sample	3655 persons who live in Roma settlements/ neighborhoods or areas with compact a Roma population and who self-identify as Roma, or have been identified as Roma by the head of their household, and 509 persons who live in neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian population or in mixed population neighborhoods and self-identify as Roma or have been identified as Roma by the head of their household, for a total number of 4164 persons
Maximum statistical error	+/-1.63% with a 95% confidence interval for the main sample +/- 4.31% with a 95% confidence interval for the booster sample of persons who live in neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian population or in neighborhoods with a mixed population

The total number of persons involved in the survey is 4164, of which 3655 live in Roma settlements /neighborhoods or areas with a compact Roma population and self-identify as Roma, and 509 live in neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian population or in mixed-population neighborhoods. The 2011 UNDP survey, which was used as a basis for comparison to this current survey, covered 3058 Roma and 938 non-Roma⁵ living in close proximity to Roma neighborhoods.

Definition of scope: the scope of the main sample includes all households that are part of Roma neighborhoods or neighborhoods with a compact Roma population. "Roma neighborhoods or neighborhoods with a compact Roma population" are residential areas in which the share of the Roma population is higher than the national average, according to the 2011 census data and subsequent field data collected under surveys with the participation of at least 20 Roma households⁶. In order to achieve greater precision in the selection of Roma households, as well as to compensate for both the differences generated by the distance of time from the census as well as other factors, data from other surveys⁷ have been used as well. To complement the existing information, assistance was sought from representatives of non-governmental organizations working with Roma communities to collect up-to-date and accurate information on the geographical location of areas with a compact Roma population, while at the same time

⁵ This is the definition used by the authors of the survey that was conducted in 2011. For the purposes of this survey, "non-Roma" includes all other ethnic groups (Bulgarians, Turks, etc.) who live close to Roma neighborhoods and who do not self-identify as Roma.

⁶ The requirement of 20 households was introduced due to theoretical reasons—arriving at a community consisting of approximately 100 people (with an expected average number of 5 people per household). This was done in view of the expectation of intensive migration and close neighboring of expanded and composite family households in order to avoid the risk of having an overlap between subjects, or running out of relevant subjects as a result of refusal to take part in the survey.

⁷ 2010 Prevention of forced marriages. (Ref No JLS/2008/DAP3/AG/1298-30-CE-03124780080) Consortium Amalipe (Bulgaria- Liga pro Europa (Romania) -Arsis (Greece).; 2011 Transfer and exchange of data and exchange of good practices with respect to the inclusion of the Roma population in Romania, Bulgaria, Italy and Spain (Ref.No POSDRU/98/6.4/S/63841).; 2014 „Data collection for the TSA Bulgaria kindergarten randomized control trial“ (World bank, contract 7170562); 2018 Community monitoring of the health services on the territory of Stara Zagora Region (Public Health Program/Open Society Foundations). World without borders.; 2019 The Roma Early Childhood Inclusion+ (RECI+). Open Society Foundation London, UNICEF & Roma Education Fund.

taking into account the MLSP and NCCEII data on identified neighborhoods with a compact Roma population.

In order to overcome the risk of "over-representation" of households that are part of compact Roma communities in the survey, an additional sample (booster) of 150 Roma households who live in areas with a mixed or predominantly Bulgarian population was selected. Such a sample allows for an analysis of the similarities and differences in the educational and socio-economic profile of Roma who live in areas with a mixed or predominantly Bulgarian population and Roma who live in areas with a concentrated Roma population. The advantage of this approach is that it allows the survey to claim maximum coverage of different types of Roma communities in the country.

Selection of respondents: three main stages were used to identify persons of Roma origin. For the main sample, in the first stage, a systematic random sampling was used to identify the location of a household situated in a Roma neighborhood or a neighborhood with a predominantly Roma population. In the second stage, the interviewer assessed whether the potential respondent was of Roma origin⁸. In the third stage, the principle of self-identification was used. The last is the main criterion by which the representatives of the target group were selected to take part in the survey. Some of the persons who met the first two selection criteria, when asked about their origin, self-identified as Turks without denying their Roma origin. Part of the Roma who stated that they practice Islam (or the "Muslim religion"), also did not deny their Roma origin and were included in the survey.

In identifying household members, the definition of "household" is defined as two or more persons who live together in one dwelling or a part of a dwelling and have a common budget and common meals regardless of the fact that some of them may not be related by family ties or married to each other. A household can include several families or it can be represented by a single person who lives in a separate dwelling, in a room or part of a dwelling, and has a separate budget in terms of food expenses and other needs. A household member is a person who lives in the same dwelling for at least 3 months per year and shares his/ her income with the other members and has a meal with them at least once a day. Exceptions for a shorter period of cohabitation are possible for newborns, young couples, people in military service, etc. In conducting the survey, special questions were used to find information about the number and kinship ties within each of the surveyed households.

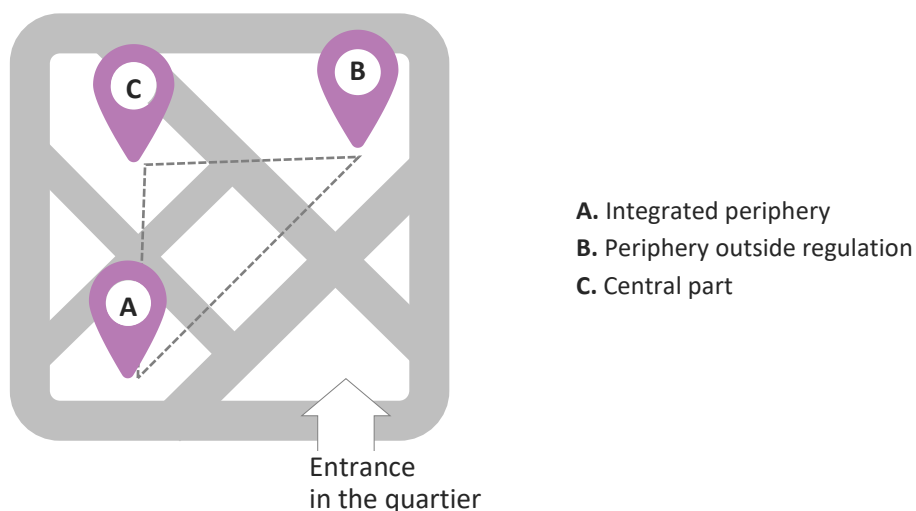
During the survey, information was collected from one person within each household who the other household members referred to as "the head of the household". In cases where the head of the household was absent, either his/ her spouse or another adult member of the household who was in a position to provide comprehensive answers to the questions was interviewed. The interviewed member of the household that was included in the survey then provided information about all remaining household members.

⁸ In accordance with the legal framework of the European Union and the European Commission, the present document makes use of the term "Roma" as a summary term to refer to the Bulgarian citizens in vulnerable social and economic position who self-identify as Roma, and to the citizens in a similar situation who have been identified by the surrounding population as Roma, regardless of their self-identification.

In order to overcome some of the shortcomings of self-identification with an ethnic group, the survey used an indirect question to find out about respondents' ethnic origin: ***“We are conducting a survey among the Roma population. Do you mind being interviewed?”*** The approach of using external identification (by the interviewer) to assess the ethnicity of the respondent combined with self-identification (by the respondent) minimized the risk of potential representatives of the target group dropping out of the survey, while at the same time giving them the opportunity to either openly state their ethnic origin in the questionnaire, or to refuse to recognize their membership within the Roma community by refusing to participate.

METHODOLOGY FOR SELECTING THE MAIN SAMPLE:

- The general population consists of all households in a Roma neighborhood or in a neighborhood with a predominantly Roma population with at least 20 Roma households according to 2011 census data and other existing expert databases.
- In the first stage, the cluster samples were randomly selected. The selection of clusters and their number in a given residential area was stratified and reproduced the weight stemming from the size of the Roma population in different regions /districts, thus ensuring maximum accuracy of the sample and the subsequent data by ensuring the proportional presence of the smallest neighborhoods, without underestimating the size of the large neighborhoods.
- In the second stage, the households within the territory of the survey rounds were randomly selected (by starting address). For the purpose of achieving higher sample efficiency and avoiding the selection of households only in a separate small part of the neighborhood (in the case of larger neighborhoods), starting addresses were determined at three different points with a view to reflect the internal sub-stratification of the detached residential areas in accordance with the theoretical scheme below.



The entry points presented in this scheme are as follows: A. Integrated periphery, B. Periphery outside regulation, C. Central part. The principle of conducting the rounds for each of the points is as follows: A: stopping at every 3rd door after entering the neighborhood (moving clockwise, conditionally at 7 o'clock), then stopping at every 5th door; B: stopping at every 3rd door after reaching the end point (conditionally at 2 o'clock), then stopping at every 5th door moving clockwise, i.e. back to the "entrance"; C: stopping at every 3rd door forward and to the left after reaching the conditional center of the neighborhood (conditionally at 10 o'clock), then stopping at every 5th door moving clockwise.

METHODOLOGY FOR SELECTING THE BOOSTER SAMPLE:

A typological (criterion) selection was used in the booster sample for selecting persons to be interviewed from Roma households in neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian population or in neighborhoods with a mixed population. They were recruited by the following methods: 1) through the snowball method on the basis of information from persons from the main sample, 2) through a tour in areas with a mixed population, 3) through a tour or a targeted visit to neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian population. ●

3 Changes in the socio-demographic structure and attitudes of the Roma population from 2011–2019

A comparison of results from the surveys conducted in 2011 and 2019 shows a change in the profile of the Roma population in several areas:

- An improved educational background of the Roma population in three areas – the share of people who have never attended school or who have not yet completed **primary education** has decreased almost three times (from 15.3% in 2011 to 5.6% in 2019). This trend can be explained by generational change and an influx of cohorts⁹ that have completed higher levels of education. These developments have led to a decrease in the share of people with primary education (from 31% to 13.8%) and an increase in the share of people with **basic education** (from 31% to 39.7%) The share of people with basic education has increased considerably among the older generation of Roma (aged 56+). At the same time, a trend of an increase in the share of Roma who have completed **secondary education** (from 22.8% to 34.5%) can be observed. The younger generations (19-35) have contributed to this trend the most, with a considerable increase of persons who have completed secondary education (from 19% to 35% in the age group 19–25 and from 11% to 24% in the age group 26–35). There is also an increase (six times) in the share of persons who have completed higher education (from 0.2% in 2011 to 1.2% in 2019). This jump is due to the indicator’s low starting point in 2011. The largest increase in the number of people who have completed higher education is among the younger generations, with the number of women being greater than the number of men. If the number of those who have completed a 2-year associate’s or professional degree¹⁰ is added to the number of higher education graduates, the overall increase as a nominal value, albeit small, shows a clear trend, and due to the low 2011 baseline, the current growth is quite large. The share of higher education graduates is twice as high among those who have attended nursery and/or kindergarten, and there is a clear trend according to which the greater the number of years in nursery and kindergarten, the better the likelihood of completing higher education (TABLE 1).
- **The share of people in school has increased.** A comparison of results from the two surveys shows that in the age group 7–15, the share of Roma enrolled in school in 2019 was 92.8%, while in 2011 it was 82.2%. There is an increase of 16 percentage points in the age group 16-19 (from 32.7% in 2011 to 49% in 2019). A similar trend in the age

⁹ New age groups have been added to the surveyed age groups that stay in education longer and complete higher levels of education.

¹⁰ Since 2007 the educational level “semi-higher education” has been replaced by the educational level “professional bachelors”.

group 7–18 shows an increase of 12 percentage points (from 72% in 2011 to 84% in 2019).

- An illustration of this increased educational activity can be found when looking at the share of students (pupils and students) in the age group 15+ (the number of students in this age group grew from 4.2% in 2011 to 6.3% in 2019).
- The share of school-aged students who do not regularly attend school¹¹ has remained unchanged (TABLE 2 **Error! Reference source not found.**). Students in the age group 7–18 who are frequently absent from school comprise about 8% in both of the two survey periods.
- **A trend can be observed of a stronger concentration of Roma students in schools with a predominantly Roma student body.** The share of students attending such schools has increased from 31% to 47%.
- **An increase in the employment rate (2.4 times):** In 2019 the share of employed Roma was two times higher than in 2011. The percentage of employed Roma in the age group 15+ grew from 19% in 2011 to 45% in 2019. Respectively, the share of unemployed Roma dropped from 39% in 2011 to 20% in 2019. A similar trend can be observed in the age group 18+ where the number of employed Roma grew from 20% in 2011 to 49% in 2019. While in 2011 the ratio between Roma employed in private companies and those employed in state or municipal companies was 72%:28% (three to one), in 2019 the ratio was 81%:19% (four to one). This change is likely the result of a number of policies that led to a better integration of vulnerable groups in the labor market and can also be associated with shortages that have characterized the labor market in recent years. Another positive change in the period 2011-2019 has to do with an increase in the share of Roma who have permanent employment¹² (this share increased almost two times, from 11% to 21%) and a decrease in the share of Roma who have temporary employment in the age group 15+ (from 10.8% in 2011 to 4.3% in 2019), with an even greater difference in the age group 18+ (from 11.4% in 2011 to 4.3% in 2019). The fact that the share of employed persons (even on a temporary basis) has increased is also a part of a general trend toward increased employment rates.
- **There is an increase in the share of self-employed persons** (their share has increased 1.5 times). The share of self-employed persons in the age group 18+ has increased from 2.5% in 2011 to 3.7% in 2019. Among the active population (people who are not unemployed), the share of self-employed Roma has increased almost three times (from 2.6% to 8.3%).
- **The share of skilled workers and low-skilled workers has increased, contributing toward a lower share of unskilled workers.** In the surveyed period, the share of unskilled workers in the age group 18+ has decreased by one third from 43.7% in 2011 to 28.1% in 2019.
- The share of Roma who aspire to develop independent economic activities has decreased. This trend can be explained, on the one hand, by an increase in the share of

¹¹ Every day.

¹² The term “permanent employment” in this report refers to employment related to a longer, or rather indefinite, period of time. Seasonal or temporary employment, on the other hand, is employment associated with a short period of time and is related to certain activities which are not perennial or might have a brigade-like character.

self-employed Roma (i.e. the persons who have fulfilled their ambition), and on the other hand, by the availability of permanent employment, which is associated with clearer employment prospects and good income. This reduces the interest in starting own enterprises, which is associated with more risks, greater insecurity, and increased workload.

- **The income of Roma households has increased.** Compared to 2011, the share of households with a monthly income greater than BGN 900 has quadrupled (from 10% in 2011 to 40% in 2019)¹³.
- **The share of households receiving income from a salary has increased.** This trend is related to the higher employment rate and the increase in the share of persons with permanent employment (from 53% in 2011 to 64% in 2019). At the same time, the share of households receiving pension income has decreased significantly (from 41% to 26%). On the one hand, this trend reflects the growing number of households where only one or two generations live together, which results in a decreased share of households with pensioners¹⁴. On the other hand, the retirement age is increasing, which also contributes to a decreased share in this type of household income. An additional factor is that the Roma generations that were hardest hit by the transition were unemployed for extended periods between 1990 to 2009 and have not worked a sufficient number of years to retire, and therefore keep postponing their retirement until they become eligible to receive a social pension. The share of households that receive cash transfers from friends and relatives abroad has also increased. This trend is related to the increased number of representatives of the Roma ethnic group who work abroad.
- The share of households that receive child allowances (48–49%), unemployment benefits (7–8%) and other social assistance (18%) has remained unchanged. This trend shows that in the period between the two surveys a relatively similar share of people received social assistance. The results show that despite the changed economic situation and increased employment opportunities, as well as despite the change in the structure of households, certain groups are still left without opportunities for other income apart from social assistance.
- **An increase in expenditures can be observed.** On the one hand, this change has to do with the increased share of employed people in Roma communities around the country and the subsequent increase in income and consumption. On the other hand, it comes as a result of the cumulative effect of inflation over the 9-year period between the two surveys, which has affected the prices of consumer goods and services (TABLE 41).
- **A more prevalent attitude that young boys and girls should complete higher educational levels:** An increasing share of Roma believe that it is good for Roma youth to stay as long as possible in education, with most respondents stating that completion of secondary school is important, followed by higher education. This corresponds with a decrease of 13 percentage points in the share of those who believe that completing basic education is sufficient for both Roma boys and girls. An increase of 11% for girls

¹³ Another factor which has to some extent contributed to this increase is the overall development of the economy in the country. According to NSI data, the average gross salary in Bulgaria increased from 727 BGN in the last quarter of 2011 to 1313 in the last quarter of 2019.

¹⁴ Proof of this is the decrease in the average number of household members in 2019 compared to 2011. At the same time, there is a tendency for more young Roma families to become independent households and not to share one household with older generations.

and 10% for boys is observed in the share of those who support the completion of higher education. Despite these positive attitudes toward higher education, there is a slight increase in the number of people who consider it normal that girls should achieve lower educational attainment than boys. Such attitudes were reported by a larger number of those interviewed in 2019 compared to those interviewed in 2011 (11% of those interviewed in 2019 and 9% of those interviewed in 2011). This position is more often shared by young members of Roma communities, people who have gotten married early (before the age of 18), or Roma with low educational status (including those who cannot read). There is a slight difference in the opinion of men and women on this issue, with a slightly higher proportion of women reporting that they feel girls should complete a lower level of education compared to boys. At the same time, despite the deepening of this conservative trend, there is still a positive change in attitudes. With the introduction of two stages of secondary education (stage one through 10th grade and stage two through 12th grade)¹⁵, a slight increase can be observed in the share of those who believe that it is required (sufficient) for young people to complete one of these two stages of secondary education, with a decreased share believing that completing basic education is sufficient (a decrease of 13 percentage points). Along with these attitudes, there is an increase in the share of people who believe that young Roma should complete a higher education (an increase of 10 percentage points for boys and 11 percentage points for girls - TABLE 17). In addition to the attitudes of relatives and the family, there are many other factors that influence the decisions and actions of young people, including the educational environment itself, their interest in and motivation to obtain an education, the chances for professional fulfillment, young people's perception of self, and other factors that determine their development, etc. Therefore, most likely, the intentions of young people with respect to completing the highest educational level will be different from the measured attitudes of their loved ones.

- **The attitude that young boys and girls within Roma communities should continue their education for longer is becoming more prevalent.** Again, the most common answer is that young people should stay in education until they turn 18 for both genders, but it is clear that the distribution in 2019 covers older ages for both boys and girls. That said, the difference between the two sexes is slightly in favor of boys. Still, the difference between generations shows that the younger generations are staying in the educational system longer than their parents and grandparents (**Error! Reference source not found.**). ●

¹⁵ According to Article 73, para 3 of the Law on preschool and school education, the instruction for the attainment of a secondary education degree shall be provided from grade VIII to grade XII inclusive in the following two stages: 1. lower gymnasium – grades VIII to X inclusive; and 2. high gymnasium – grades XI to XII inclusive.

4 Socio-demographic status of the Roma population as of 2019

4.1 Education

4.1.1 Nursery and kindergarten attendance

The share of children aged 4–6 who do not attend kindergarten is high (between 25% and 45% in different cohorts). A different survey conducted by Global Metrics in 2019, which focused¹⁶ on kindergarten attendance, showed that the reasons for low attendance, in addition to financial difficulties, are connected with a variety of factors, including: there may be family members available to care for the child, sometimes there is no one is able or available to take the child to the kindergarten, and sometimes the children and parents of Roma origin are not well-treated by the kindergarten staff. The share of adult participants in the survey who attended kindergarten varied in the individual cohorts, and it can be concluded that the highest kindergarten attendance rate for Roma children was in the period 2005–2017.

Kindergarten attendance increases the chances of completing higher education by about 35% (measured by the highest level of completed education by adult Roma). The share of secondary school graduates among those who attended kindergarten increased two to three times compared to those who did not attend kindergarten, and each year of education in a nursery or kindergarten leads to an increase of between 5% and 30% of secondary education graduates. After the third year in a kindergarten, the chance of completing secondary education increases by 25% to 30%.

The impact of kindergarten attendance on completion of primary and basic education is not significant (within 4-6 percentage points).

The share of people who live in mixed population areas and have attended kindergarten is higher by 5 percentage points, and they have also attended kindergarten for a longer period of time.

¹⁶ “Studying and mapping the environment in which the interaction kindergarten-family takes place”, January 2020, Commissioned by CEICSEM

TABLE 1.

Correlation between number of years in nursery/kindergarten and subsequent graduation rates

— **How many years has he/ she attended a nursery and/or a kindergarten group?**
(Among persons aged 23 and above)

	MAIN SAMPLE 2019		BOOSTER 2019
	Persons who have completed secondary education	Persons who have completed higher education	Persons who have completed higher education
Has not attended	13.2%	0.5%	1.0%
One year	30.2%	0.9%	3.8%
Two years	31.8%	2.2%	7.1%
Three years	37.9%	3.4%	17.3%
Four years	39.6%	4.9%	-
Five years	34.1%	6.4%	19.4%
Persons who have completed higher/ secondary education, average for the population	25.2%	2.0%	7.0%
Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.000

The correlation between years of attending nursery/ kindergarten is statistically significant at $P < 0.05$

There is also a positive association between kindergarten attendance and household income and employment. The employment rate among people who have attended kindergarten is 40% higher, and their income is 30% higher, compared to the employment rate and income among those who have not. This trend has been influenced by an indirect factor, i.e. the higher education level completed by those who have attended kindergarten (FIGURE 11).

4.1.2 Literacy rates ¹⁷

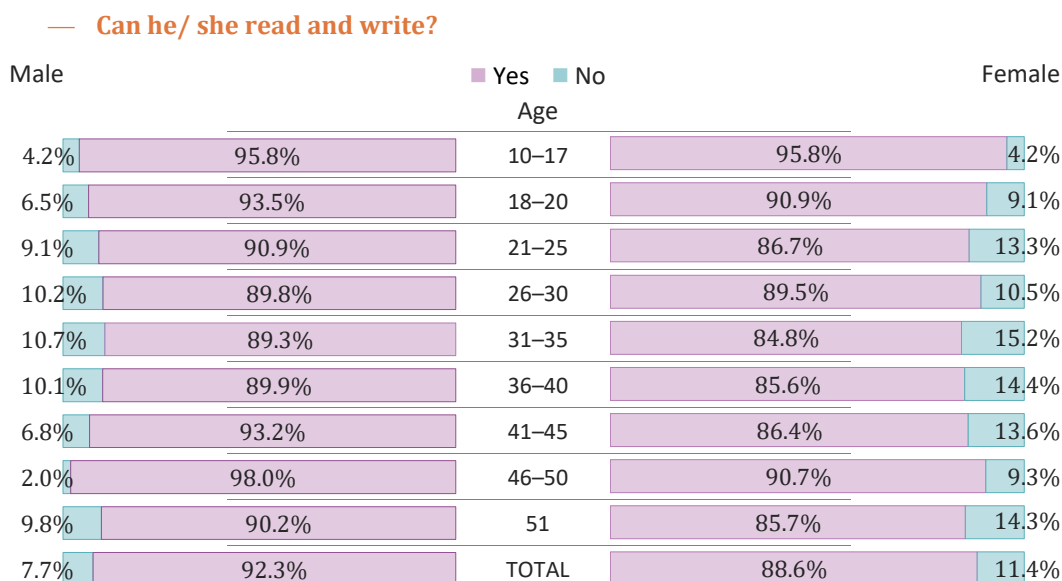
Interviewed household heads living in Roma neighborhoods stated that 88.4% of their household members over age 7 can read and write. Among Roma who live in neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population, the share of persons over age 7 who have been reported to be able to read and write is slightly higher – 92.2%.

When it comes to persons over 16 years of age, 88.1% of Roma who live in separate neighborhoods have stated that they can read and write, while the share among the Roma who live in neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population is 93.4%. In comparison, the share of Roma over age 16 who claimed that they could read and write in 2011 was 87.4%. The results point toward a declining trend of illiteracy among Roma, with the age group 8-18 characterized by higher literacy compared to cohorts aged 19-45. The highest illiteracy rate could be observed among those who married early and those who have never

¹⁷ Measured by self-reporting the ability to read and write.

attended school (over 85% illiteracy rate). Still, the total share of people who have been reported as unable to read and write is only 7.7% for men and 11.4% for women, respectively.

FIGURE 1.
Literacy levels among different age cohorts by gender



The correlation is statistically significant if $P < 0.05$

The survey shows a very strong correlation between an individual's literacy level and their likelihood to find employment in the labor market. The risk of unemployment among the illiterate is 30% higher compared to other groups, while their income is considerably lower compared to the income of other Roma. Illiterate Roma are more often employed on a temporary or seasonal basis and are also more often hired sporadically. The share of the long-term unemployed among illiterate Roma is twice as high as among other Roma. Added to this, their participation in additional training and qualification courses is extremely low. Less than 1-2% of illiterate Roma have enrolled in various courses. The number of illiterate women is higher than the number of illiterate men (the gender ratio is 60%:40% in favor of women), which helps to explain the high proportion of illiterate people with the status of "housewife". The largest share of illiterate Roma is concentrated in the age group 26-45, most likely because this is the generation that was particularly hard-hit by the transition and the ongoing economic and social reforms in the country, and therefore was left with the fewest opportunities to attain an education. Another trend can be observed among older Roma generations – the illiteracy rate among women is higher than the illiteracy rate among men. This trend can be observed in all age groups, except for those under 18, and is most pronounced among Roma over 30. In the children's age groups (10–17 years) no difference has been observed between boys and girls with respect to their reading and writing skills (based on their self-assessment). The results show that the educational system, as well as other modernization processes taking place in Roma communities, have managed to create relatively equal literacy opportunities for both boys and girls, but there is still significant inequality in terms of formal education. The current situation shows that the educational background (educational attainment) of Roma girls and boys continues to differ – with Roma girls completing lower levels of education than Roma boys. The

two groups are equal in terms of the highest possible level of education completed (higher education), but in terms of the share of secondary school graduates, Roma girls still lag behind Roma boys.

4.1.3 School attendance

The 2019 survey shows that the share of students attending school has increased in all age groups. There is an unchanged trend of a higher share of Roma children in lower school cohorts, and a higher share of dropouts as their age increases. The school enrollment rate among Roma who live in mixed-population neighborhoods, especially in the older age groups, is higher (TABLE 2). In both surveys (2011 and 2019) a relatively equal share of students in different age groups who were frequently absent (at least one day a week or more often) can be observed. The exception is with the group of the youngest students, where the share of absent students in 2019 is lower.

TABLE 2.
School attendance by age cohort

MAIN SAMPLE 2019	— Does he/ she currently go to school?		— How often does he/ she go to school?		
	Yes	No	Every day	He/she is absent one day per week	He/she is absent more than 4 days per month
7–10 years	95.30%	4.70%	93.00%	4.30%	2.70%
11–14 years	91.60%	8.40%	90.80%	6.50%	2.70%
15–18 years	63.00%	37.10%	90.20%	6.90%	2.90%
Total, Col %	84.10%	15.90%	91.50%	5.70%	2.70%
BOOSTER 2019					
7–10 years	90.90%	9.10%	97.50%	-	2.50%
11–14 years	93.50%	6.50%	96.30%	-	3.70%
15–18 years	73.50%	26.50%	96.00%	4.00%	-
Total, Col %	86.20%	13.80%	96.70%	1.10%	2.20%
UNDP 2011					
7–10 years	78.60%	21.40%	89.40%	7.80%	2.80%
11–14 years	90.30%	9.70%	92.00%	4.00%	4.00%
15–18 years	43.90%	56.10%	91.60%	4.80%	3.60%
Total, Col %	71.60%	28.40%	90.80%	5.70%	3.40%

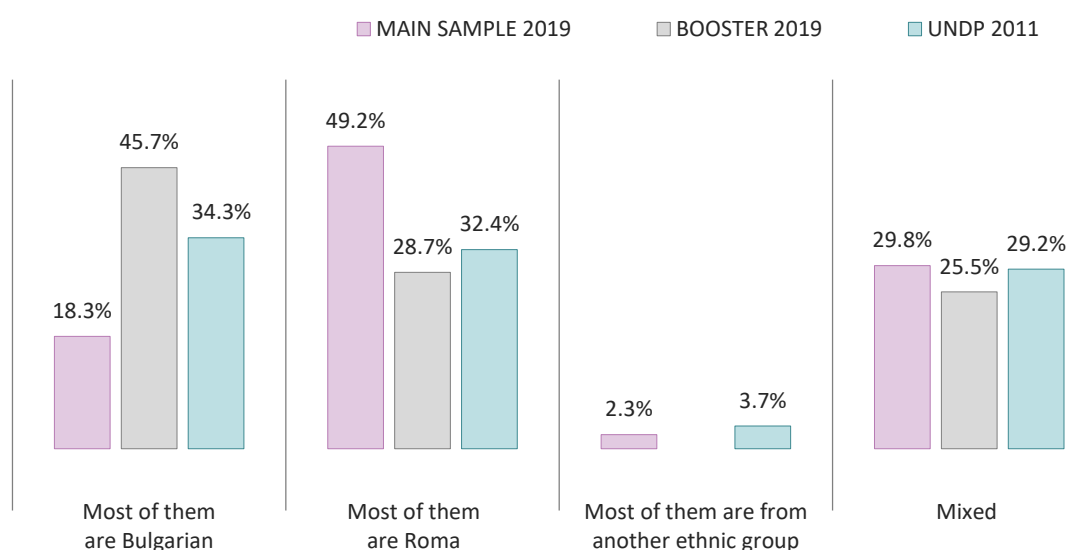
The correlation is statistically significant at $P < 0.05$

The share of students attending mixed schools remains approximately the same in the years of the two surveys. At the same time, the share of Roma students who attend schools where the majority of the students are of Bulgarian ethnic origin has decreased two times. The share of students in schools where there is a concentration of Roma students has increased – almost every second child of Roma ethnic origin is enrolled in a school where the student body is predominantly Roma.

FIGURE 2.
Ethnic composition of schools attended by respondents' children in 2019 and 2011

— **What is the ethnic belonging of most of his/her classmates?**

(Among the students who go to school)



The correlation is statistically significant if $P < 0.05$

4.1.4 Highest level of education attained

To demonstrate trends in terms of the highest education completed, we will look at the different age groups, which will allow us to illustrate how over time, albeit slowly, the educational status of Roma has improved. The data clearly show that the largest share of the Roma population aged 41+ have completed basic education (between 45–49% for the different age cohorts). Gradually over the years, the share of Roma who have completed secondary education has increased (from 17% in the cohorts over age 50 to 35% in the cohort of age 21–25). The share of people completing college and higher education has grown as well.

The group of respondents aged 21–30 shows the highest educational attainment. The share of people with primary or lower education is gradually decreasing. At the same time, however, a concerning trend can be observed – the generation that is now aged 31–40 is characterized by a higher share of people with primary and lower education compared to the other age cohorts. This is the generation that was most affected by educational reforms and negative trends in the

labor market, which had a negative influence on their motivation, their educational status, and their employment status, (see chapter 3 ‘Employment’). To a large extent, the educational profile of this group has had an influence on the attitudes and the educational opportunities of their children. As TABLE 3 shows, the share of young people with primary and basic education in the age group 18–20 has increased compared to previous cohorts, which means that despite the overall increase in the level of education, there is still a significant share of early school dropouts.

TABLE 3.
Educational status by age cohort

— **What is his/her highest attained education level?**

	Age								Total
	18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	50 +	
Never attended school or other training	0.6%	3.1%	5.3%	7.3%	3.2%	3.5%	1.9%	5.3%	4.3%
No formal education. Incomplete lower basic	4.8%	5.4%	7.5%	7.3%	8.5%	6.2%	6.3%	6.4%	6.6%
Primary education (1-4 grade)	17.3%	13.4%	16.8%	20.8%	24.1%	21.2%	20.2%	21.3%	19.9%
Basic (5-8 grade) or junior secondary (5-7 grade)	45.8%	37.9%	38.9%	41.2%	40.1%	48.2%	44.7%	48.4%	43.7%
Secondary education (stage one and stage two)	31.5%	34.8%	26.8%	20.4%	23.4%	17.7%	25.0%	16.6%	22.9%
Higher education (associate’s or professional degree)		1.8%	1.2%	0.7%	0.4%	0.9%		1.3%	0.9%
Higher education (bachelor’s degree)		3.6%	3.4%	2.4%	.4%	2.2%	1.9%	0.8%	1.7%

The correlation is statistically significant if $P < 0.05$

In the groups aged 18 and above, the share of people who have completed only primary education is about 20%, 44% have attained basic education and roughly 23% have completed secondary education. The share that have graduated from higher education in this age group is about 1.7%. The respondents in the youngest cohort (aged 21–25) who in practice might have graduated from college or a university at the time the survey was conducted, demonstrated even higher educational results (5.4% graduated from higher education with either a two or four-year degree and 35% completed secondary education). Despite these results, the share of people with basic education in this group remains high (38%), and although there is a decrease in the number of people who have only completed primary education or less in this group, their share is still significant (a total of 22%).

TABLE 4.
Type of secondary education completed by age cohort

	Age									
	1-17	18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51+	Total
United schools (1-10 grade)	4.4%	7.6%	7.0%	3.7%	4.1%	2.8%	5.2%	1.9%	3.3%	4.1%
Vocational secondary school	5.0%	24.0%	21.0%	17.7%	13.7%	14.0%	8.2%	14.2%	11.6%	11.3%
Secondary school (8-12 grade)	2.1%	9.9%	5.7%	3.4%	2.4%	4.2%	2.2%	5.2%	2.7%	3.3%
General secondary school (1-12 grade)	9.7%	14.6%	17.9%	14.0%	14.0%	10.1%	12.6%	15.1%	6.5%	11.0%

The correlation is statistically significant at $P < 0.05$

The difference to 100% is at the expense of the other educational levels..

In recent years an increase has been observed in the number of young Roma who have completed secondary vocational education (VET). A similar phenomenon was observed in the period before 1989, but after that, with the restructuring of the economy and the closure of many industries, the number of VET graduates in the early 90's decreased and only in recent years has their share started to increase again. This trend has been accompanied by an increase in the share of young people who have completed secondary education, as a result of which the share of VET graduates in the age group 18–25 is higher than the share of VET graduates in the age groups over 46. Still, within the group of secondary education graduates, the share of secondary vocational education has not reached its pre-1989 levels.

In each of the surveyed age groups, the share of Roma who have completed secondary and higher education is higher among those living in areas with a mixed population or with a predominantly Bulgarian population. This trend clearly shows that the educational status, lifestyle, and other social and demographic characteristics of Roma who live with other communities, more closely approximate the characteristics of the majority group, although the share that have only completed basic education (up to the 8th grade) still remains relatively high. Despite positive trends toward higher educational attainment, about 7% of Roma in this group have no education, 13% have only completed primary education, and 38% have only completed basic or junior secondary education. The share of persons who have completed secondary education among Roma living in territories with a mixed or predominantly Bulgarian population is about 35%, which is 12 percentage points higher than the share of secondary education graduates among Roma aged 18 or above living in areas with a predominantly Roma population.

TABLE 5.

Educational attainment of surveyed Roma in 2019 and 2011 compared to a country-level survey in 2018 and the 2011 census

— **What is his/ her highest level of education completed?**

(Analyzed population of persons aged 18+)

	MAIN SAMPLE 2019	BOOSTER 2019	UNDP 2011	Eurostat 2018 data Bulgaria	NSI 2011 Census	
				Country population aged 18-74	Country population 18+	Identified themselves as Roma 20+
Never attended school or other training	4.2%	3.0%		NA	1.1%	11.1%
No formal education. Incomplete lower basic	6.6%	4.4%	17.8%	NA	1.1%	10.7%
Primary education (1-4 grade)	19.7%	12.7%	32.0%	NA	5.3%	27.9%
Basic (5-8 grade) or junior secondary (5-7 grade)	43.2%	37.7%	36.2%	20.1%*	22.4%	40.8%
Secondary education (stage one and stage two)	22.7%	34.9%	13.5%	55.2%	48.3%	9.0%
Higher education (associate's or professional degree)	0.9%	0.3%	0.1%			
Higher education (bachelor's degree)	1.7%	6.6%	0.3%	24.7%	21.8%	0.5%
Doesn't know	1.0%	0.3%				

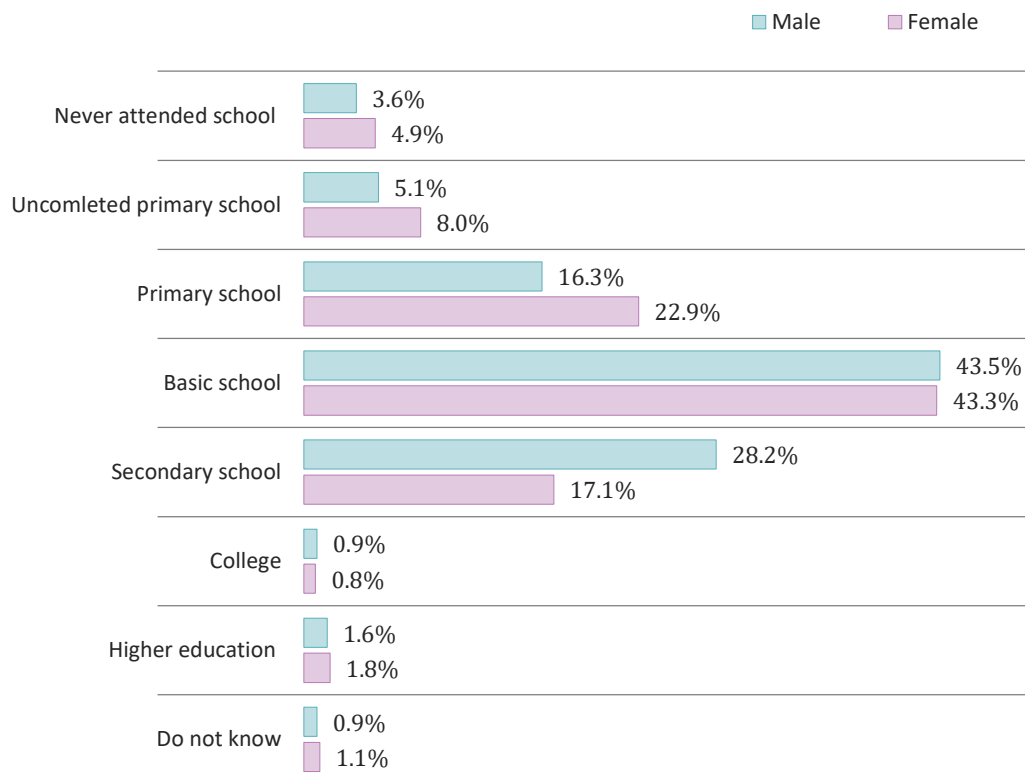
* Basic or lower

The correlation is statistically significant at $P < 0.05$

The differences in the results by gender are of interest and statistically significant. In the youngest cohorts, the share of boys who have completed secondary education is roughly 17 percentage points higher than the share of girls (in the age group 19–25, 43% of boys have completed secondary education compared to 26% of girls) (TABLE 44). Despite the existing stereotypes and socio-cultural expectations, girls have managed to catch up with boys with respect to completing higher education (this conclusion is valid only for the level of higher education, as far as the other educational levels are concerned, the girls are still lagging behind

Error! Reference source not found.), which indicates an increased interest in higher education among girls. The share of graduates among the youngest generations can be most accurately analyzed in the age group 26–30, when efforts to complete higher education are most visible. Some of the highest shares of university graduates among Roma have been observed in this group, which is indicative of the trend in recent years of an increased share of Roma who enroll in and complete higher education.

FIGURE 3.
Educational attainment of adults aged 18+ by gender



Although there is no statistically significant difference, data shows that Roma girls in the youngest age groups are more likely to enroll in and complete higher education than Roma boys. Time will tell whether, and to what extent, this gender difference will become statistically significant. As of 2019, data clearly show that in the age group 21-30 the share of girls with higher education is higher than the share of boys with higher education. In the subsequent age cohorts, this difference decreases and the ratio is then reversed. This shows that at present the share of girls who enroll and complete higher education is higher than the share of boys. What is more, compared to Roma boys, Roma girls who have enrolled at higher education institutions are more likely to complete their studies on time and less likely to delay their graduation.

The higher activity among girls in terms of higher education enrollment and completion is also evident from the following question: Has he/ she ever been in higher education and has he/ she completed higher education? (TABLE 6).

TABLE 6.

Persons who have studied and completed higher education by gender

	Men	Women
Have you ever been in higher education	1.8%	2.1%
In higher education right now	0.6%	0.8%
Have you ever completed higher education	1.3%	1.5%

This trend has been observed in all cohorts, but is most pronounced in the younger age groups (19–24 years and 25–30 years) (TABLE 43).

72% of all those who enroll, at all age levels and all genders successfully graduate from higher education. This coefficient varies in different age cohorts as the process is dynamic. It can be assumed that boys are at a greater risk of not completing higher education. The analysis of age data in recent years shows an increase in the share of Roma girls completing higher education.

4.1.5 Share of Roma participating in different educational levels without obtaining a diploma

The share of Roma who were trained at different educational levels without obtaining a diploma is as follows:

TABLE 7.

Share of the Roma participating in different educational levels without obtaining a diploma

	Boys	Girls
Primary	2.1%	3.0%
Basic or Junior Secondary	6.7%	8.8%
Secondary	3.5%	3.5%

A total of 12.3% of the boys took 1–2 additional years of study without obtaining a diploma, compared to 15.3% of girls.

The persons in the age groups 36–45 and 46–55 turned out to be the most vulnerable and most frequently had to interrupt their studies after completing 1–2 years of the respective educational level. It is clear that early marriages are strongly correlated with the number of years spent in education without obtaining a degree.

4.1.6 Profile of those who have completed secondary education

The following trend has been clearly observed with respect to the completion of secondary education among Roma – namely, younger cohorts complete secondary education more often than older ones. At the same time, however, the share of girls completing secondary education is still lower than the share of boys, even among younger people. The correlation between the completion of secondary education and kindergarten attendance can easily be traced, and it is equally valid for both sexes. Both boys and girls have a better chance of completing secondary education if they have been educated in mixed schools, together with representatives of other ethnic groups, or in schools where the majority of students are ethnic Bulgarians.

The chance of completing secondary education for people who have married early is two times lower (the share of people who have completed secondary education among those who married at a later stage is about 32%, while for those who married early the chance of completing secondary education is 15% for boys and 10% for girls).

More persons have completed secondary vocational education (56%) than graduates of other types of secondary education, with an increase in their share compared to previous periods (TABLE 4). The type of secondary education completed does not affect the chances of completing higher education. In all three types of secondary education, approximately the same share of Roma continue to study higher education.

Persons who have completed secondary vocational education are more often employed as skilled (49%) or, in some cases, as low-skilled workers (20%). Due to a lack of professional qualification, the persons who have completed general secondary education are more often employed as unskilled or low-skilled workers.

TABLE 8.
Correlation between occupation and educational attainment

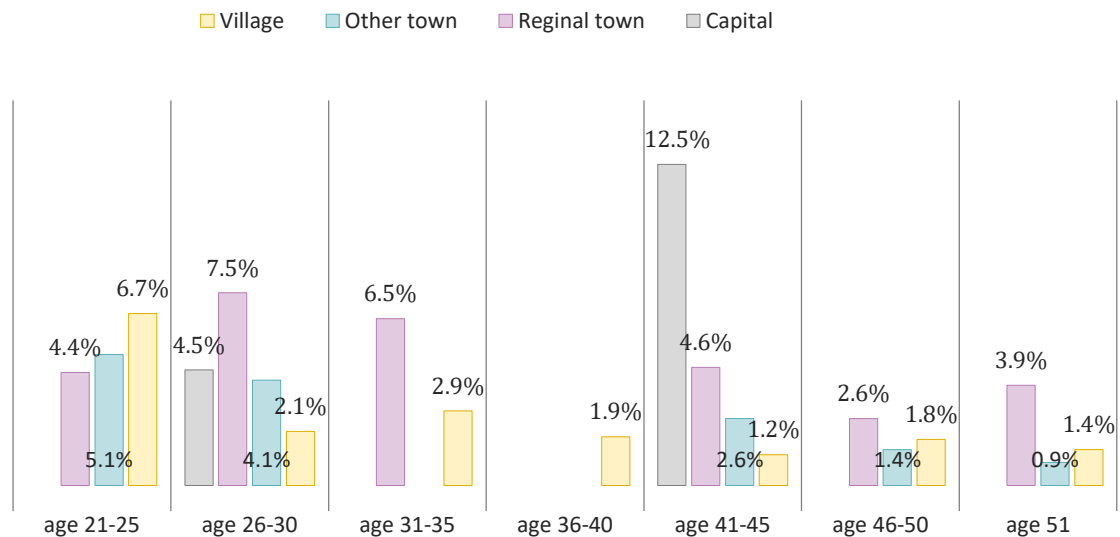
— What is/was the position that the person has/had at his/her current or previous job?	— What is the type of school that the person attended last?						Average
	Primary school	Basic or junior secondary school	United school (1-10 grade)	Vocational secondary school	Secondary school (8-12 grade)	General secondary school (1-12 grade)	
Own business	0.8%	3.6%	2.8%	7.7%	7.4%	12.2%	5.0%
Manager of the enterprise/ department		0.1%			2.9%	0.9%	0.3%
Specialist		0.1%		3.3%	2.9%	1.8%	1.3%
Employee with management functions		0.1%		1.8%	1.5%	1.8%	0.9%
Employee in an office		0.1%		1.8%	2.9%	0.9%	0.7%
Team/ brigade leader/ technician				1.5%	1.5%	0.5%	0.6%
Skilled worker	8.4%	13.5%	11.3%	48.9%	26.5%	32.4%	20.8%
Low-skilled worker	21.0%	39.3%	28.2%	19.9%	22.1%	28.4%	32.3%
Unskilled worker	69.7%	43.2%	57.7%	15.1%	32.4%	21.2%	38.1%

The correlation is statistically significant at $P < 0.05$

4.1.7 Profile of those who have completed higher education

An increase has been observed in the share of college and university graduates among young Roma, with a larger number of girls than number of boys. It should be noted that the share of people in young age groups (21–25 years of age) who have completed college and higher education is slightly higher in small towns and villages than in regional capital cities.

FIGURE 4.
Share of different age cohorts graduating from higher education by type of locality



The reason behind this trend most likely has to do with the fact that integration policies are not as efficient in the regional capital cities, and access to quality education in mixed schools is more difficult due to the specificities of urbanized territories, the population density in Roma neighborhoods, and other factors. In this sense, the effectiveness of the policies in small settlements has paid off, leading to a higher share of Roma with higher education among the youngest groups – a trend that is not typical for other ethnic groups. Given this trend, it may be assumed that Roma who complete higher education return to their native places and seek employment close to their extended family, unlike graduates from other ethnic groups who go to large economic centers around Bulgaria and abroad. Another assumption might be that after completing higher education, Roma leave their neighborhoods and no longer self-identify as Roma¹⁸.

There is also a trend in recent years with regards to a decrease in the share of young Roma who graduate from college, due to the restructuring of the education system which closed colleges and introduced the associate’s degree. As of now, both of the two types of degrees in higher education enjoy a similar interest on the part of boys and girls. There is no data to demonstrate that either boys or girls are more active in completing a master’s degree.

¹⁸ There is no instrument in the frame of this survey which could be used for measuring such a hypothesis, but it can be tested in future surveys.

4.1.8 Participation in training courses or internships for adults

The share of Roma aged 14+ who have participated in training courses is low (8.3%) but has increased by 3.2 percentage points since 2011 (in 2011 the share of Roma who had participated in training courses was 5.1%).

FIGURE 5.
Participation in training courses among the four surveyed groups

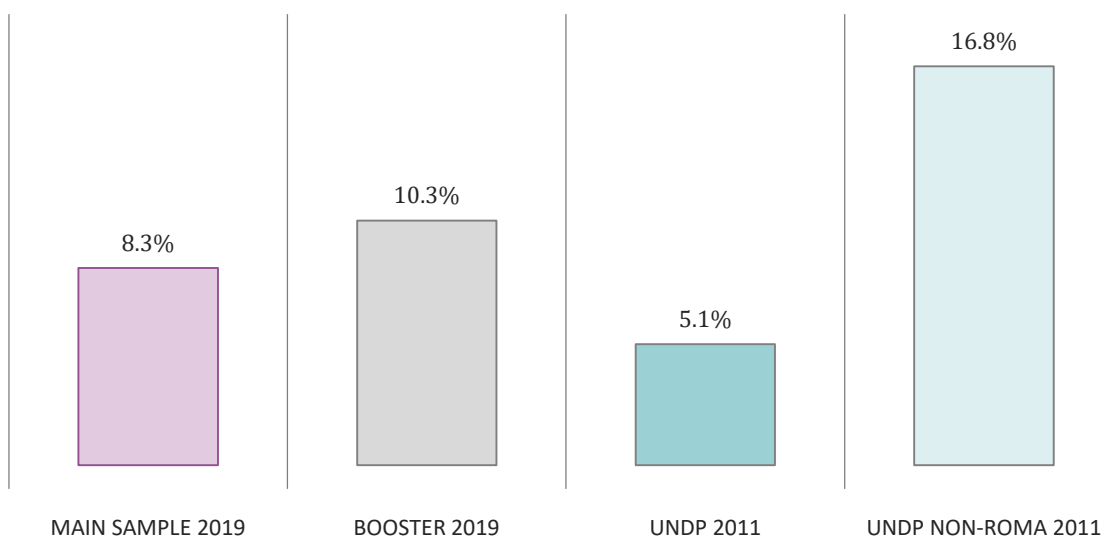
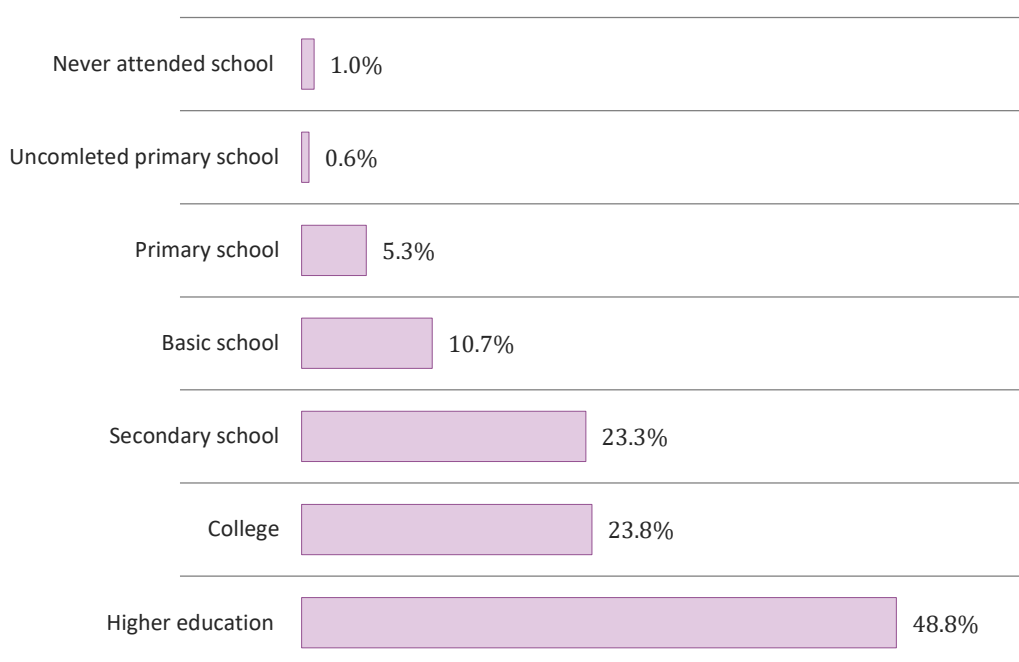


FIGURE 6.
Share participating in training courses by level of educational achievement



In most cases, training courses are attended by people who have completed secondary or higher education. The largest share of these persons attended vocational training courses (5.3%). These courses attract the interest mainly of Roma who have completed secondary education (15%), as they are associated with training for the acquisition of qualification in a profession. The share of people with basic education who have attended professional qualification courses is only 6.7%. This demonstrates a lower interest in this group to acquire a profession through additional qualification courses. The age group 46-55 has taken the most active part in vocational training courses, with its members most widely covered by additional qualification activities. Roma who have completed higher education or are currently students are more interested in foreign language or computer literacy courses. In most cases, the participants in these courses have permanent employment, while those who have not taken part in them are mainly employed on a temporary, seasonal or sporadic basis.

TABLE 9.

Share of respondents in training courses by highest level of education achieved

— Have you participated in training courses?

Primary school	1.9%
Basic school	8.7%
United school (1-10 grade)	6.3%
Vocational secondary school	28.6%
Secondary school (8-12 grade)	16.9%
General secondary school (1-12 grade)	21.1%
Sports school	16.7%

The correlation is statistically significant at $P < 0.05$

Graduates of vocational secondary schools are more interested in vocational training courses. On the one hand, these courses provide them with an opportunity to upgrade their education by means of additional training, and on the other hand, they can use them as a tool for requalification and adaptation to the requirements of the labor market, given that in VET the discrepancy between the curriculum content and the labor market requirements is most sharply felt.

TABLE 10.

Attendance in different types of training courses by highest level of education achieved

— What is hers/his the level of highest completed education?	— What kind of course she/he has attended or attends now?			
	Language course	Computer literacy	Professional qualification courses	Other
Never attended school	-	-	0.4%	-
Uncompleted primary school	0.3%	0.8%	0.3%	-
Primary school	0.3%	0.7%	2.8%	1.0%
Basic school	0.4%	1.5%	6.7%	1.3%
Secondary school	2.7%	4.1%	15.0%	1.2%
College	3.8%	-	7.7%	-
Higher education	23.3%	9.3%	4.7%	12.0%
Total	1.1%	1.7%	5.3%	0.5%

Participation in vocational courses reduces by half the risk of unemployment, while at the same time reducing the risk of long-term unemployment.

TABLE 11.

Share of unemployed and long-term unemployed adults participating in training courses

	Those who have taken part in training courses	Those who haven't taken part in training courses
Unemployed	9%	22%
Long-term unemployed	6%	11%

Participation in vocational courses has a positive effect on the perceived readiness to start an independent entrepreneurial activity, as well as on actual self-employment (there is a higher share of self-employment among the persons who have completed vocational training courses). Those who have completed vocational training courses are also more likely to occupy management positions in the field in which they work.

TABLE 12.
Share of respondents in training courses by occupation

— **What is the person doing at the moment?**

	Attended training courses
Full-time employment	20.0%
Part-time employment	11.6%
Self-employed	27.9%
Employed in the family business/ farm	24.1%
Housewife (takes care of the house/ children/ relatives)	5.2%
Maternity leave	5.6%
Does not have a job/ unemployed	5.5%
Student	20.0%

The correlation is statistically significant at $P < 0.05$

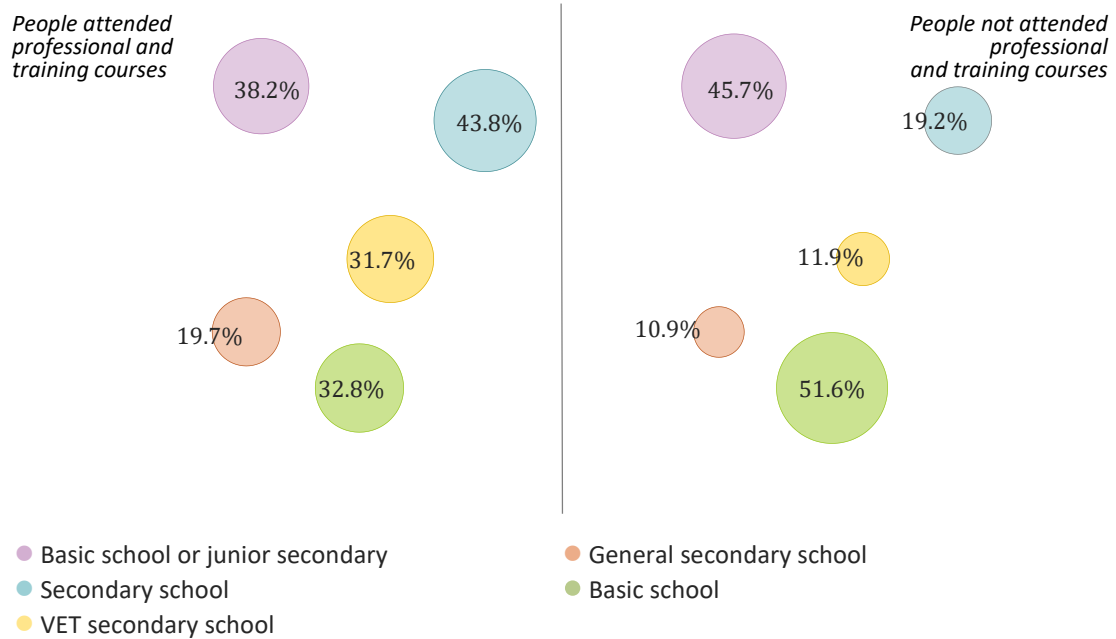
A comparison between the profiles of those who enrolled in training courses and those who did not shows that those who completed such courses have better employment opportunities. They are more often employed in positions that require higher or secondary education qualifications, and more often occupy managerial positions, which affects their income. The profiles of the two groups have been compared in the following two graphs. The blue spheres on the left present the characteristics of those who took part in training courses, and the brown spheres on the right present the characteristics of the persons who have not taken part in training courses. The size of the spheres reflects the size of the subgroup within the two subsets – those who participated in training courses and those who did not. The difference in the internal structure of the two groups is clearly visible. One of the specifics is that persons who have completed secondary education (vocational or general) are more open to training and more often enroll in such courses.

Persons who have participated in other training courses (foreign language, computer skills, etc.) are more often engaged in office activities, expert work or management activities.

In addition to being characterized by a higher employment rate, those who have participated in additional qualification courses are more likely to be employed in the state administration.

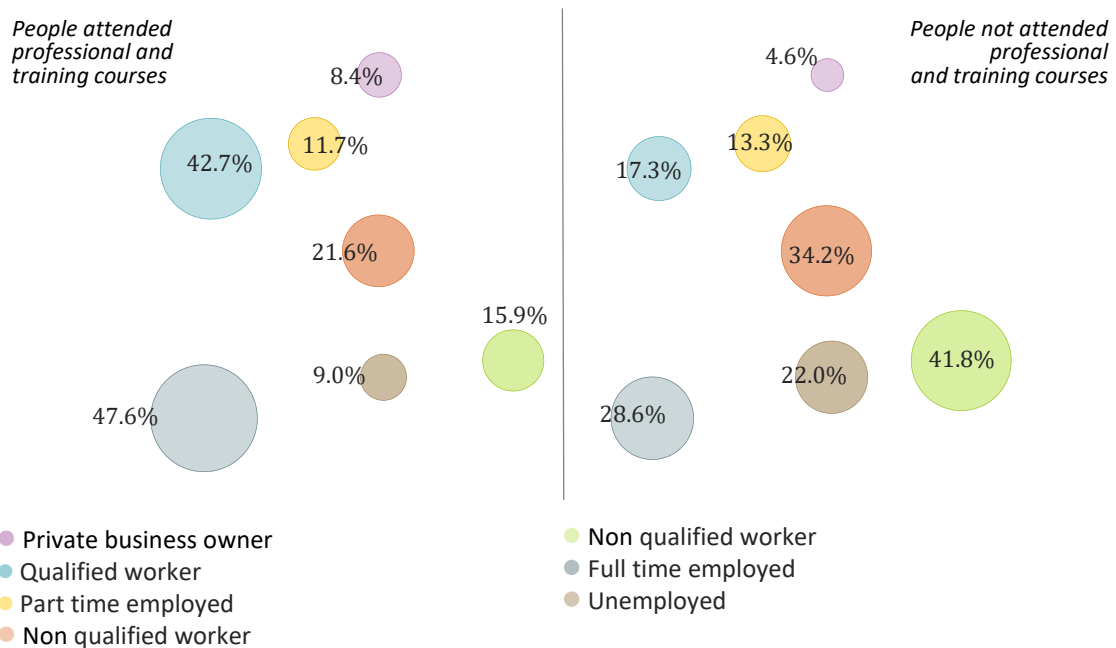
The income structure of the two groups also differs significantly. The following graph (FIGURE 9) shows that the persons who have participated, or are currently participating, in training courses have higher income compared to persons who have not.

FIGURE 7.
Participants vs. non-participants in professional and training courses by type and level of education



The correlation is statistically significant at $P < 0.05$

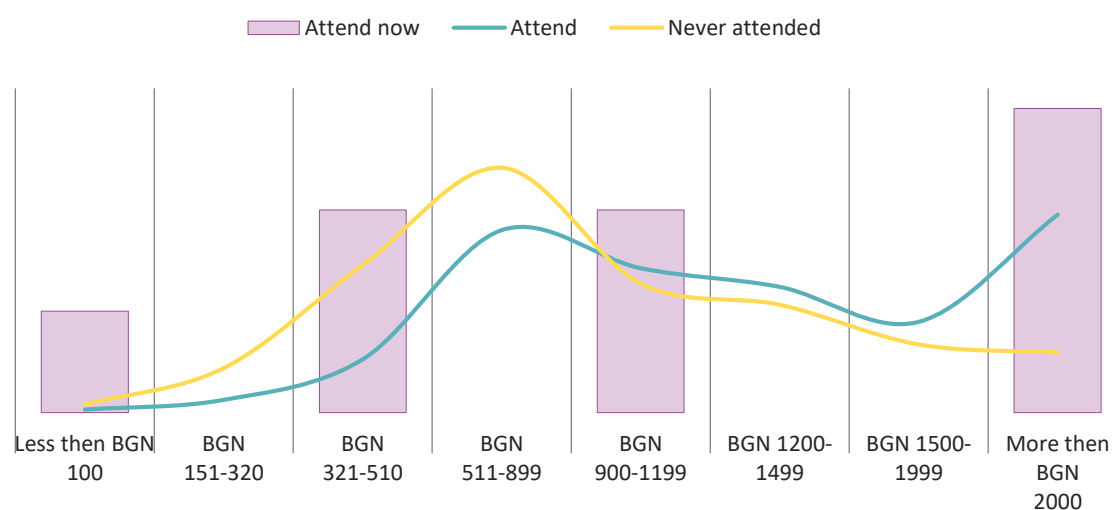
FIGURE 8.
Participants vs. non-participants in vocational training courses by occupation



The correlation is statistically significant at $P < 0.05$

Note: The size of the spheres corresponds to the share of the respective group among those who have attended and those who haven't attended training courses

FIGURE 9.
Income of participants vs. non-participants in training courses



The correlation is statistically significant at $P < 0.05$

4.1.9 Factors that exert influence on the educational attainment of Roma

The present survey cannot examine in depth all factors that influence the educational attainment of Roma, as most contributing factors require retrospective information on the status of individuals and their households during the period of their childhood and adolescence. On the basis of the data available in the present survey, there are clear indications that the following factors are statistically significant for the educational attainment of Roma: the age of the first marriage, the number of years one attended nursery/kindergarten, the number of household members, the educational attainment of the other adult household members, per capita household expenditure and the type of settlement in which the person lives. These variables certainly do not exhaust all the factors that influence the educational attainment of Roma but are rather those that can be identified in the present study, given its specificity and tools.

As the above variables can be interpreted both as factors that affect educational attainment and as outcomes of the educational and economic status of the adult, the analysis has made use of different age cohorts. The age groups 18–25 and 23–27 were used in analyzing the variables as factors that influence educational attainment (the first group was used to track the educational attainment for all levels up to secondary education, and the second group was used to track graduates of higher education). These age groups have been selected because they are the first cohorts to have the practical opportunity to acquire all the analyzed levels of education¹⁹, and these variables can still be isolated as a factor for the educational status and not as a result of

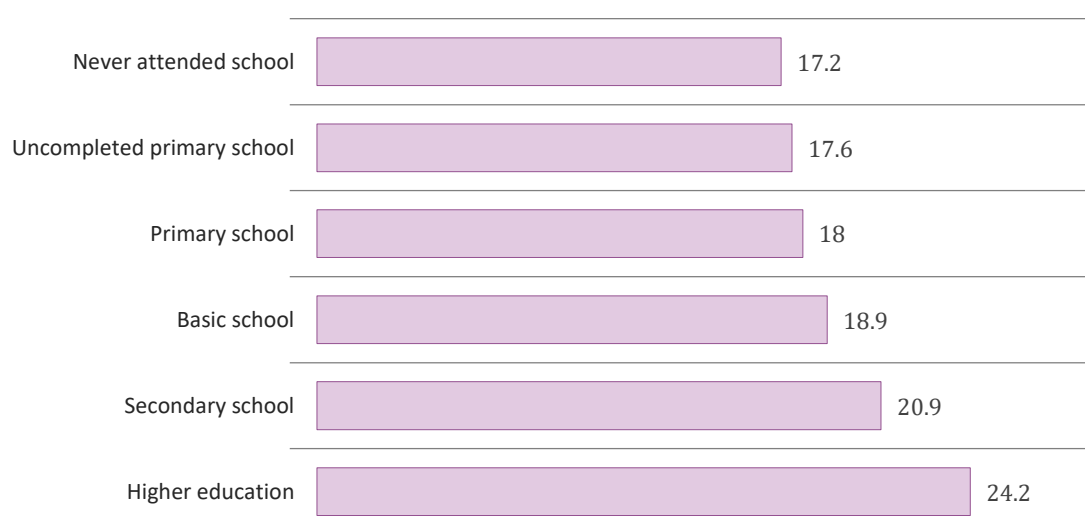
¹⁹ The first group provides an opportunity for analyzing the results for all levels up to secondary education, and the second group provides an opportunity for analyzing the factors for completing higher education

the educational status. In the analysis of these variables all persons over the age of 35 have been used as a result.

– Early marriages

One of the factors that has a statistically significant correlation with the highest level of education completed is early marriage. Marriage before the age of 18 reduces the chances of completing secondary education to only 12% for girls and to 18% for boys (TABLE 13). Early marriages primarily affect the chances of completing secondary education. With regards to the remaining educational levels, about one third of men and two-fifths of women complete only basic education (5th-7th grade). The average age of first marriage in the different educational groups increases with an increase in educational attainment²⁰. The change in the average age of marriage is relatively small (the difference between the different age subgroups of Roma is less than one year with a trend of a slight increase in the age of first marriage).

FIGURE 10.
Average age of first marriage by level of educational attainment



The correlation is statistically significant at $P < 0.05$

²⁰ The present survey shows that the average age of first marriage in Roma communities is 20.27 years for men and 17.86 years for women. For the sake of comparison, in 2018 the average age of first marriage in Bulgaria was 31.7 and 28.7 for men and women, respectively. In other words, the difference between Roma communities and the overall population of the country amounts to 11 years.

TABLE 13.

Correlation between age of first marriage and the highest level of education attained

(Among persons aged 24+)

— How old did he get married?		— What is the highest attained education level?							
		Has never attended school or other type of training	No formal education/incomplete primary education	Primary (1-4 grade)	Basic (5-8 grade) or junior secondary (5-7 grade)	Secondary education (stage one and stage two)	Higher education (associate's or professional degree)	Higher education (bachelor's degree)	Doesn't know
MALE	Up to age 18	4.7%	7.5%	20.6%	48.9%	15.3%	1.4%	0.3%	1.4%
	Age 19-25	1.2%	4.4%	15.6%	43.6%	32.5%	.5%	1.9%	.2%
	Age 26-35	1.2%	3.7%	6.1%	35.4%	42.7%	1.2%	8.5%	1.2%
	Over 35				37.5%	50.0%		12.5%	
	Total	2.5%	5.4%	16.5%	44.7%	27.4%	0.9%	2.0%	0.7%
FEMALE	Up to age 18	6.1%	9.6%	26.5%	46.0%	10.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.6%
	Age 19-25	1.5%	3.9%	17.0%	41.4%	31.0%	1.5%	3.9%	
	Age 26-35	2.6%	5.3%	15.8%	39.5%	28.9%		5.3%	2.6%
	Over 35		50.0%	50.0%					
	Total	4.5%	7.8%	23.2%	44.2%	17.4%	0.7%	1.7%	0.5%

– Kindergarten attendance

The other statistically significant factor that influences the highest attained educational level is the amount of time spent in nursery/kindergarten. The chances of completing a higher level of education (with respect to all educational levels after primary education) are greater for people who have attended a nursery or kindergarten for a longer period of time. Completion of primary education is highly achievable without attending a nursery or kindergarten, but for each subsequent educational level the time spent in a nursery/kindergarten has a significant impact. Two years of attendance increases the chances of completing each subsequent level of education after primary education (grades 1–4).

The probability of completing secondary education for people who have not attended kindergarten is only 15%. For those attending a nursery/kindergarten, the chance of completing secondary education varies between 29% for those attending for one year and 39% for those attending for 4 years.

FIGURE 11.
Average number of years attending nursery/kindergarten by level of educational attainment

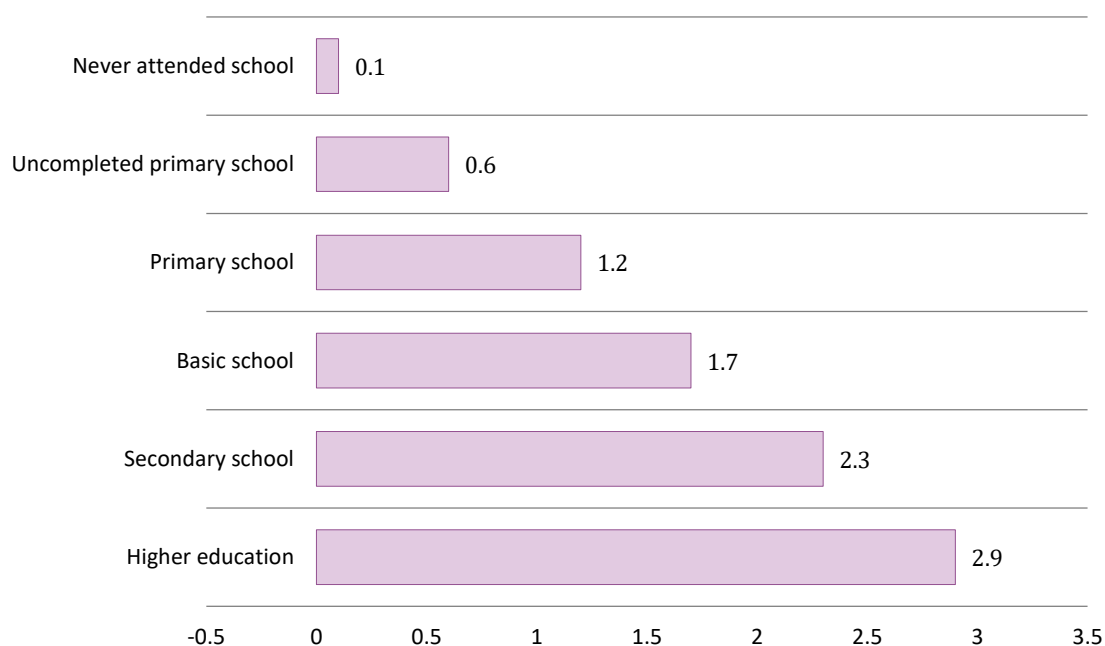
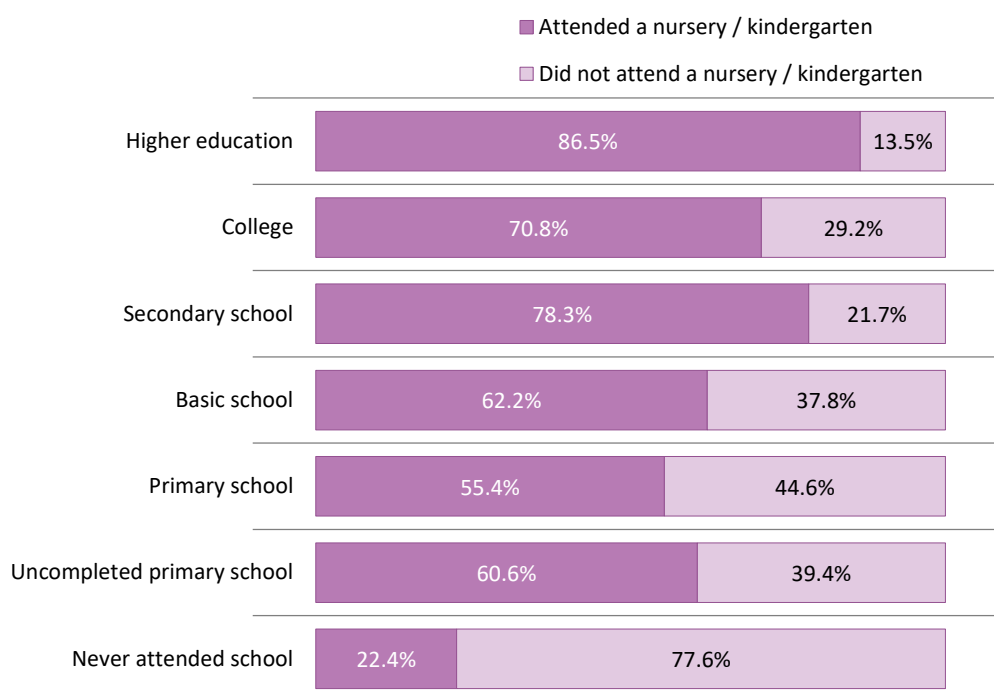


FIGURE 12.

Share of respondents who attended vs. did not attend kindergarten by level of educational attainment



The correlation is statistically significant at $P < 0.05$

– Number of household members

The other factor that has a statistically significant correlation with educational attainment within Roma communities, measured by the level of higher education completed, is the number of household members. In order to establish this connection, persons aged 18–25 and 23–27 were analyzed in order to track young people who have graduated in recent years. Most of the people in this age group still live with their parents and not in independent households²¹. In view of all the conditionalities of this method, one conclusion could be that the chance of completing secondary education for young people from households consisting of 5 or more members is three times lower. At the same time, in the age group 23–27, the chance of completing higher education for young people from households with 5 or more members is almost ten times lower.

²¹ With the aim of enhancing the precision of the present analysis, only respondents who are not household heads of an independent household or are not in the role of a husband/ wife of the household head have been selected.

FIGURE 13.
Level of educational achievement of 18-25 year olds by number of household members

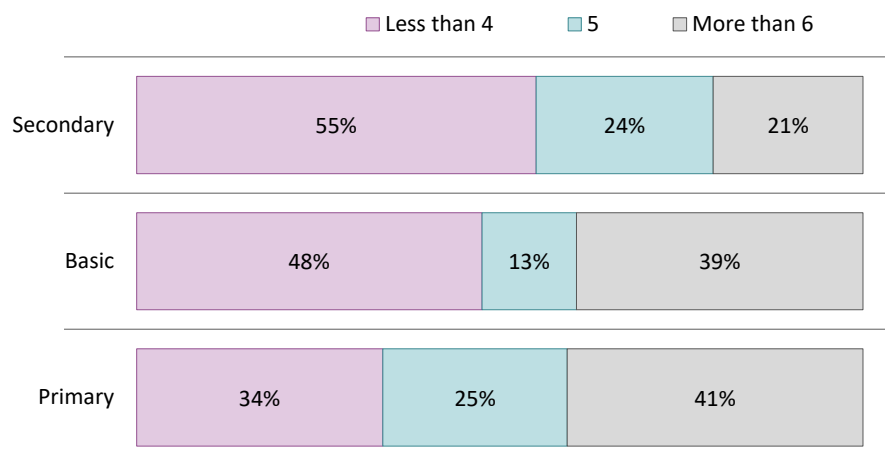
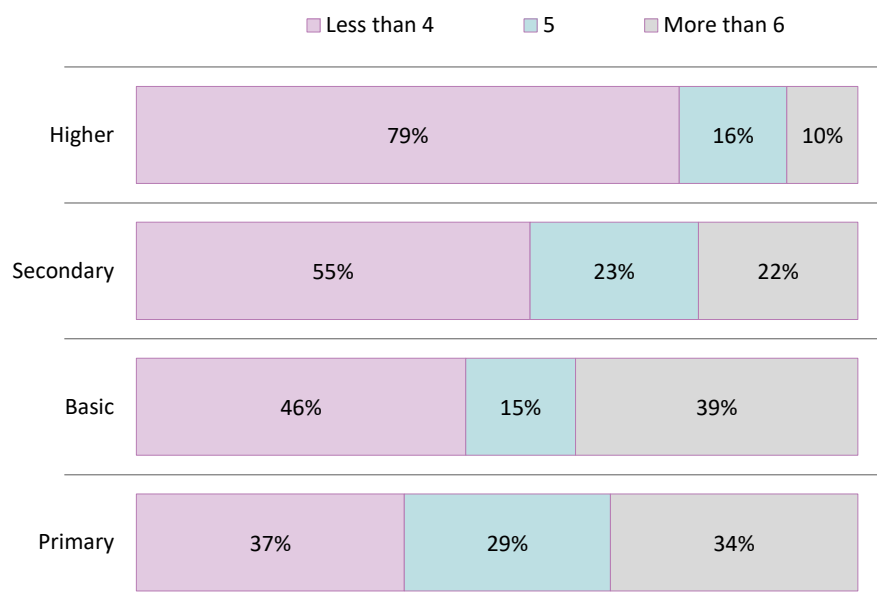


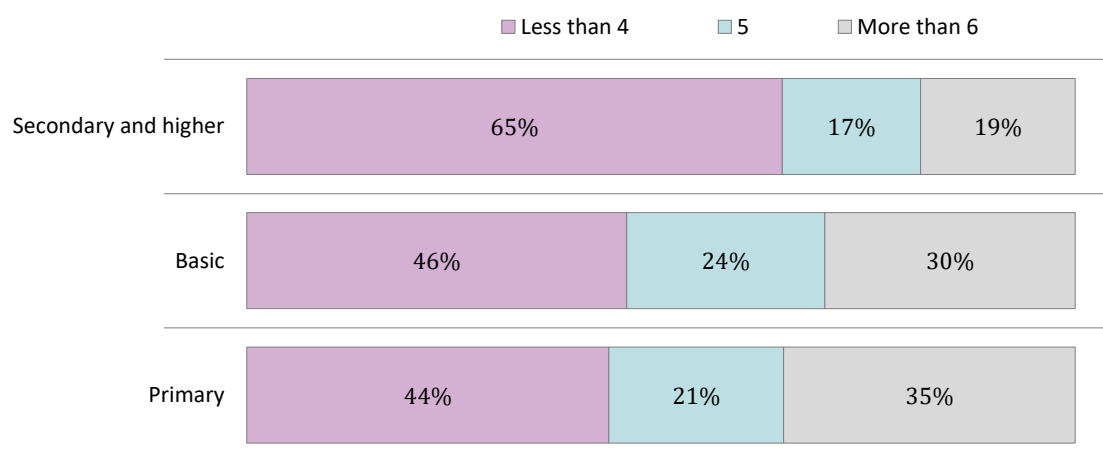
FIGURE 14.
Level of educational achievement of 23-27 year olds by number of household members



In addition to the influence of the number of household members on the level of educational attainment, yet another correlation can be observed – the influence of education on the number of household members. This correlation has been observed with persons aged 30–40. The higher the educational attainment of persons in the age group 30–40 years, the lower the number of household members. In other words, the more educated the household members are, the greater are the chances of the nuclear family living in an independent household and the number of children decrease.

FIGURE 15.

Level of education of 30-40 year olds by number of household members



– Educational attainment of the other adult household members

In order to explore the impact of the educational attainment of adult household members on the educational achievements of younger household members, persons in the age group 23-35 have been studied, for whom the most complete picture of educational outcomes is available that does not reflect generational specificities²². This group has been compared with the available information about themselves and their households. This analysis, however, has its limitations, given that there are many other childhood factors commonly described in the literature that may influence educational attainment and for which there is no available information (e.g. household income in childhood and adolescence; the educational status of parents rather than of all adults in the household; the availability of books in the dwelling; employment of parents, etc.) Despite this, the available data still allow for an evidence-based conclusion about the impact of the educational status of other adult household members on the educational attainment of young people.

The probability of a person aged 18–35 to complete secondary or higher education if his/her parents or other adult household members are without education is below 20%. With an increase of the educational level of the adult household members, the chance of younger members completing secondary education grows (TABLE 14). If the adult household members have completed secondary education, the probability of a young person completing secondary education is 75%, and the probability of studying at university – 16%. If there are adults in the household who have completed higher education, the chance for young people to complete at least secondary education is 94%, and the chance to continue with their studies at the university level is 17%. Due to the low percentage of higher education graduates in the Roma communities, the profile and replication of this educational status have not been clearly defined. While there

²² This group could have completed all educational levels without concerns for age limitations with respect to taking part in the instruction process. The only exception is higher education as it could start at any age after 18, but an upper age limit has been set in order to obtain more complete information about the other surveyed indicators and their impact on educational achievements.

are clear replication models with respect to the other educational levels – the higher the educational attainment of the adult household members, the greater the chance of replicating or upgrading the educational status. In the case of higher education, the level of replication is lower. For example, in the case of adult household members with low levels of education (primary or no education) between 24% and 29% of the young members replicate this status, while the rest complete one to three higher levels. In the case of adult household members with primary education, in 42% of the cases their status is replicated by the next generations, in 44% it is upgraded to secondary education (39%), and to higher education (4%). In the case of parents with secondary education, the percentage of the replication of the educational status by the next generation is even higher (59%), but the potential for the next generation to upgrade to higher education is still relatively low²³. In the case of adult household members with higher education, the replication rate is the lowest, which is indicative of the instability of the choice of this educational trajectory. What is more, the decision of young Roma to pursue higher education is often influenced by external and situational factors (the influence of a particular person or situation).

TABLE 14.
Correlation between educational attainment of different generations in the same household

Educational attainment of all other household members over 35 years of age	Educational attainment of household members aged 18-35				
	Without education	Primary education (1-4 grade)	Basic (5-8 grade) or junior secondary (5-7 grade)	Secondary education	Higher education
No education	23.9%	21.6%	37.5%	13.6%	3.4%
Primary education (1-4 grade)	5.7%	29.3%	35.6%	26.4%	2.9%
Basic education (5-8 grade) or junior secondary education (5-7 grade)	4.7%	10.0%	41.8%	39.2%	4.2%
Secondary education (stage one and stage two)	1.1%	4.3%	20.1%	58.7%	15.8%
Higher education			5.6%	77.8%	16.7%
Doesn't know	25.0%	8.3%	16.7%	50.0%	
Total (educational profile of the age group 18-35)	6.3%	13.7%	34.3%	39.1%	6.5%

The correlation is statistically significant if $P < 0.055$

²³ It has been assumed that the degree of upgrading to a higher educational level is lower for the Roma with secondary and higher education than for the representatives of the other ethnic groups. In other words, convergence as far as this indicator is concerned between the representatives of Roma and other ethnic groups could serve as a measurement of the progress with respect to educational achievements and convergence with respect to the status.

With about 25% of adults with secondary education and 15% of adults with primary education, the next generations fail to replicate their educational status, which once again shows the need for additional educational and economic support for these communities.

– Type of settlement

The type of settlement mainly affects the chances of completing secondary education. In the capital and regional cities of the country, most of the representatives of the Roma community acquire secondary education, while in small towns and villages, their share is lower.

The share of higher education graduates is small and relatively evenly distributed in the different types of settlements. As shown in FIGURE 4 for the youngest age groups, the share of higher education graduates in the small towns and villages is higher.

TABLE 15.
Educational attainment by type of locality

— What is his/ her highest education attained?

	Capital city	Regional city	Town	Village
Has never attended school or other type of training	5.4%	8.1%	8.0%	7.9%
No education	23.8%	11.8%	10.7%	10.5%
Primary education (1-4 grade)	8.5%	20.0%	25.6%	20.7%
Basic education (5-8 grade) or junior secondary education (5-7 grade)	33.8%	36.3%	37.4%	41.9%
Secondary education (stage one and stage two)	26.2%	19.7%	16.1%	16.4%
College (2 or 3 years)		1.5%	0.6%	0.5%
Higher education	1.5%	1.8%	1.1%	1.1%
Doesn't know	0.8%	0.8%	.4%	1.1%

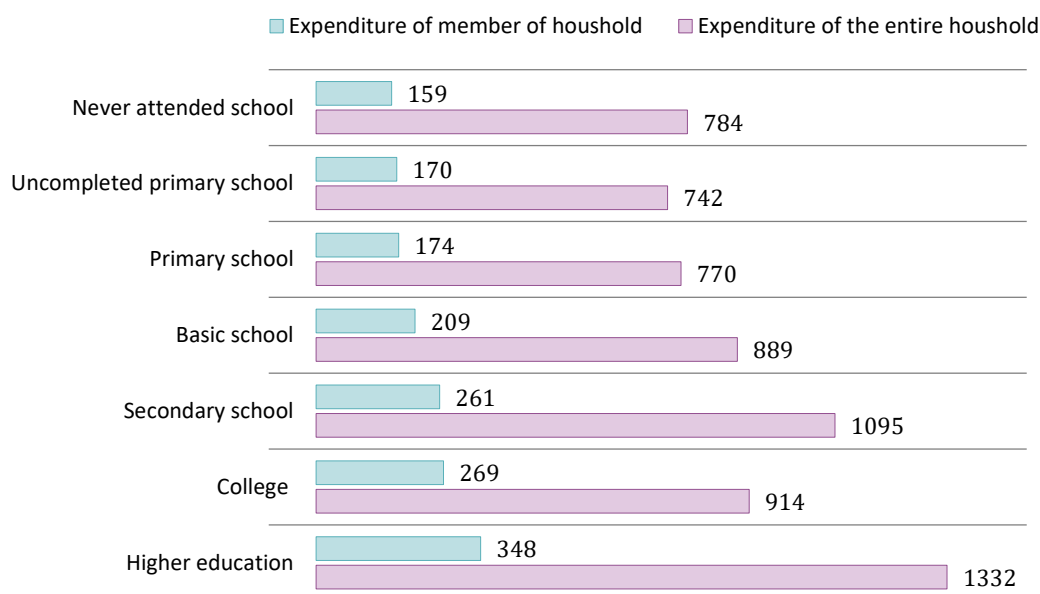
The correlation is statistically significant if $P < 0.05$

– Household expenditure and average expenditure per household member

The survey shows that forms of economic stratification in Roma communities already exist, which also affects the educational outcomes of young people. Although there are exceptions, and among young higher education graduates there are people who come from low-income households, in general, the income status of the three groups differs significantly. The presence of exceptions among high school graduates shows that the different forms of targeted support have a positive effect, and that young people from poor households also manage to complete higher education.

FIGURE 16.

Correlation between monthly household expenditures and highest level of educational attainment for 18-27 year olds



The correlation is statistically significant if $P < 0.05$

TABLE 16.

Correlation between income and educational attainment for respondents aged 18-35

— What is the approximate total net monthly household income?	— What is his/ her highest education attained?		
	Basic (5-8th grade or junior secondary and lower)	Secondary	Higher
Less than BGN 150	0.6%		
BGN 151–320	7.5%	4.4%	16.7%
BGN 321–510	16.8%	7.0%	8.3%
BGN 511–899	28.3%	16.7%	16.7%
BGN 900–1199	14.5%	13.2%	16.7%
BGN 1200–1499	15.6%	23.7%	
BGN 1500–1999	6.9%	14.9%	16.7%
More than BGN 2000	9.8%	20.2%	25.0%

The correlation is statistically significant if $P < 0.05$

4.2 Attitudes towards education

The survey measures the attitudes of representatives of Roma communities towards the educational attainment of Roma boys and girls. The results from these questions are optimistic on the whole, but it must be acknowledged that they are also characterized by a high degree of social desirability. Especially in the context of public discussions on the importance of education, representatives of the Roma community are most likely aware that more conservative attitudes towards early school leaving do not correspond to social expectations. Even if these results look too optimistic, they show the extent to which such public discussions and campaigns could contribute to a more sustainable change in attitudes in the long run. Also, in addition to the attitudes of adult Roma, the motivation of young people is a strong factor that can influence their decision as to whether to continue their education. This motivation is influenced by their subjective perception of being part of the educational environment, which is often accompanied by negative experiences and negative attitudes towards Roma students by other students, teachers and the parents of other children. Therefore, work in this direction will benefit from activities both with representatives of Roma communities and with key participants in the educational process – school leaders, teachers, parents of children of non-Roma ethnic groups, experts in the field of educational policies, etc.

TABLE 17.

Attitudes concerning what level of education is sufficient for girls and boys

	2019		2011		
	Sufficient for a boy	Sufficient for a girl	Sufficient for a boy	Sufficient for a girl	
Primary education (1-4)	0.5	0.7	0.4	0.6	
Basic education 5-8	5.2	10.6	18.9	23.2	
Total number of those who reported secondary education	66.0	61.0	63.0	59.6	
Stage one secondary education 9-10 grade*	17.7	16.6	Secondary vocational*	32.8	27.3
Stage two secondary education 11-12 grade*	48.3	44.4	Secondary general *	30.2	32.3
College	2.4	2.4	College	1.5	2.5
Higher education	25.9	25.1	Higher education	16.0	14.1
Other	0.3	0.3	Other	0.1	0.1

**The data from the two surveys in this part of the table are not comparable*

It is clear that more people believe that boys should spend more time in education than girls. However, when it comes to the younger age groups, the girls are more active with respect to completing higher education. At the same time, in the age group 19–25, the share of girls who have completed higher education is significantly lower than the share of boys (17 percentage points) (TABLE 15).

An increasing number of Roma believe that it is good for Roma youth to complete higher education levels, with secondary education mentioned most frequently followed by higher education. Correspondingly, a decrease can be observed in the share of those who believe that primary education is sufficient, with a drop of 13 percentage points for both boys and girls.

TABLE 18.
Attitudes concerning what level of education should be completed

— **What would you recommend to your children/ grandchildren?**

Since 2016 secondary education has been divided into two stages (the first stage of upper secondary education up to 10th grade and the second stage of upper secondary education up to 12th grade)

	MAIN SAMPLE 2019	BOOSTER 2019
To complete the first stage of upper secondary education up to 10 th grade	21.3%	9.8%
To complete the second stage of upper secondary education up to 12 th grade	49.0%	46.0%
To continue their studies at the university level	26.0%	43.0%
I don't know/ Can't judge	3.7%	1.2%

The share of those who support the completion of higher levels of education among boys and girls has increased (within 11 percentage points for girls and 10 percentage points for boys). Despite positive attitudes towards higher educational attainment for Roma youth, there is a slight increase in the number of respondents who think that it is normal for girls to have a lower educational achievement than boys. Such attitudes have been reported by a larger share of those interviewed in 2019 compared to those who took part in the 2011 survey (11% of those interviewed in 2019 compared to 9% of those interviewed in 2011). This opinion is often shared by young Roma community members, people who got married early (before the age of 18), and those with low educational status (including those who cannot read). There is minimal difference in the opinions of men and women on this issue, with a slightly higher proportion of women reporting as sufficient lower educational levels for girls compared to boys. Along with the deepening of this conservative trend, another more positive change in attitudes can be observed. With the introduction of the first and second secondary education stages²⁴ there is a

²⁴ According to Article 73, para 3 of the Law on preschool and school education, the instruction for the attainment of a secondary education degree shall be provided from grade VIII to grade XII inclusive in the following two stages: 1. lower gymnasium – grades VIII to X inclusive; and 2. high gymnasium – grades XI to XII inclusive.

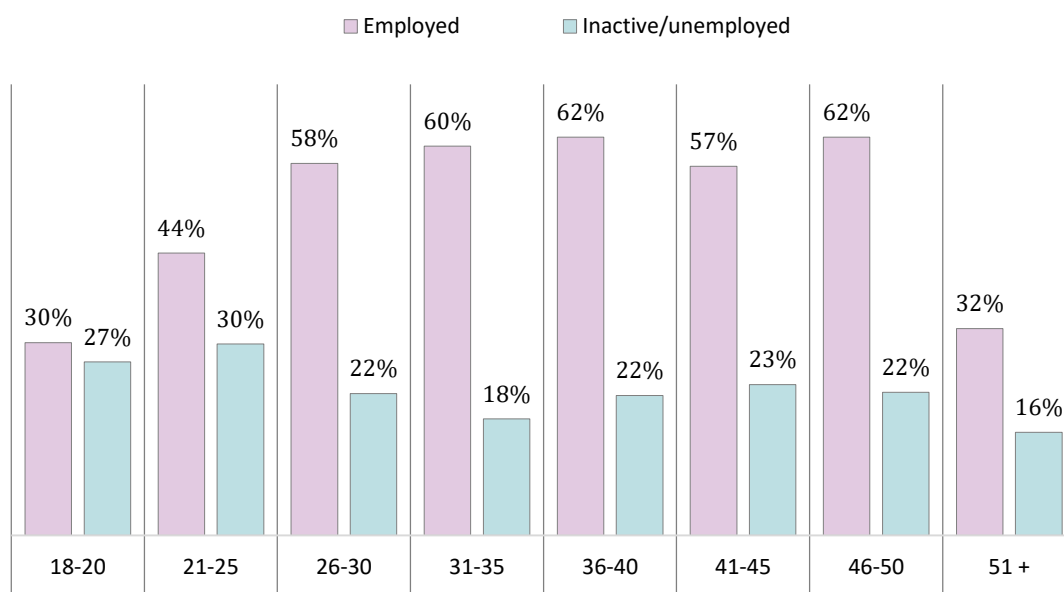
slight increase in the share of those who believe that it is sufficient for young people to complete the second stage of secondary education at the expense of those who believe that the first stage of secondary education is sufficient (a decrease of 13 percentage points). These attitudes have been accompanied by an increase in the share of people who believe that the sufficient level of education for Roma youth is higher education (an increase of 10 percentage points for boys and 11 percentage points for girls) (TABLE 17).

As of now, it can be assumed that the educational changes introduced with the new education law in 2016 will not have a negative impact on the decision of Roma youth to complete one or both of the two stages of secondary education. Instead, these changes may minimize the share of Roma with lower levels of education, at least as far as the reference group and the attitudes of the surrounding environment are concerned. However, there are many other factors that influence the decisions and real actions of young people, including the educational environment itself, their interest and motivation for acquiring education, their chances of finding employment, and the perceptions young people have about themselves and the factors that define them.

4.3 Employment

Compared to 2011, an increase in the employment rate among Roma can be observed in 2019. At the same time, despite the overall higher employment rate, the survey identifies young Roma aged 19-25 as a specific vulnerable group. Among them, the share of unemployed Roma is the highest and includes almost every third member of this age group. In the other age groups, the unemployed comprise about one fifth (20%).

FIGURE 17.
Share of employed respondents by age cohort



Employment by gender is also characterized by clear inequalities. The share of employed women in the individual age cohorts is almost twice lower than the share of men.

FIGURE 18.
Share of employed respondents by age cohort and gender

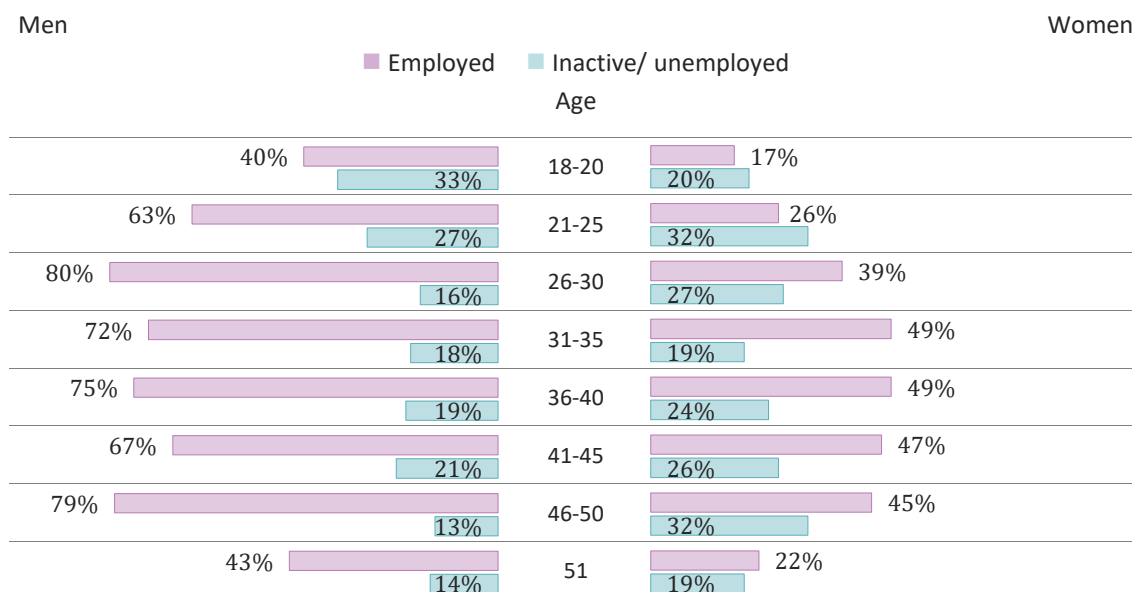
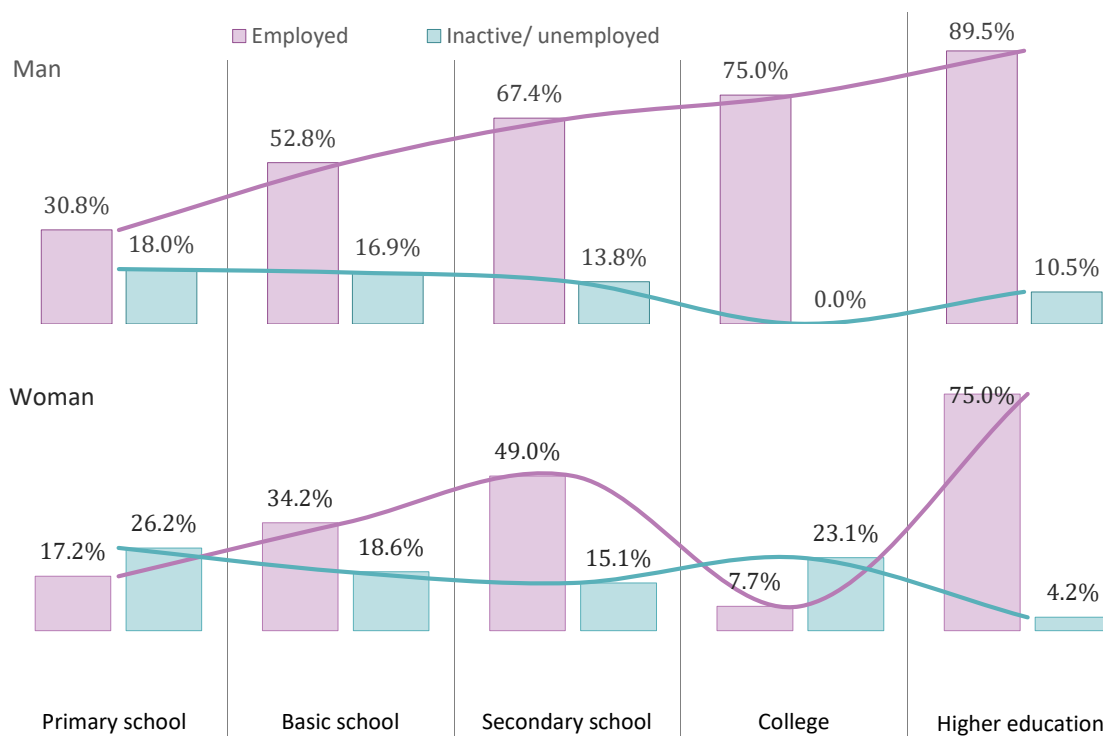


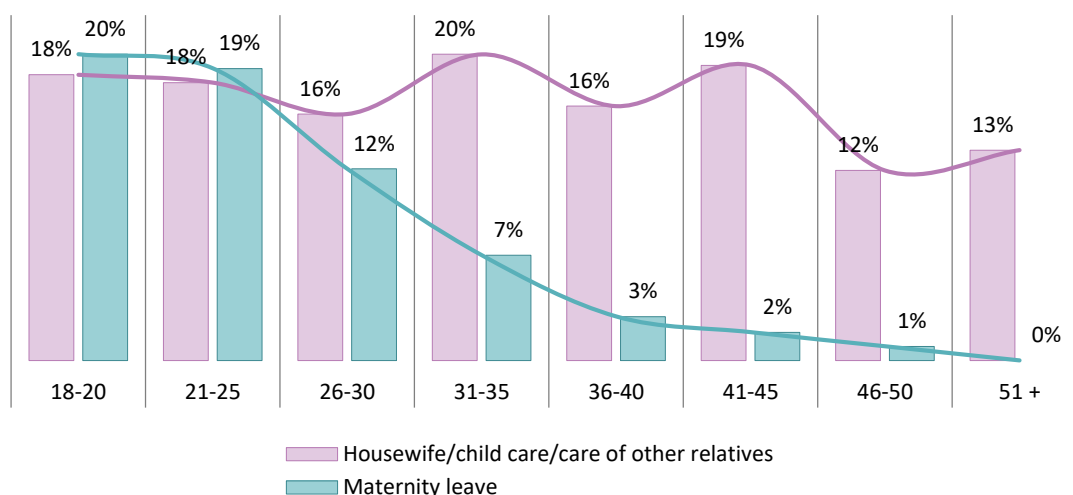
FIGURE 19.
Share of employed respondents by level of educational attainment and gender



The positive impact of education on employment is visible, with a lower employment rate among women compared to men with the same educational attainment. The reason for this trend is connected to the percentage of women (16% and 20%) in all age grounds that are housewives. The only exception is for women over 46, for whom the share of housewives drops to 12–13%. The share of housewives varies among different educational groups, and it is almost absent among girls who have completed higher education. Among girls who have completed secondary education, it is two times lower than the overall average (up to 8.5%). The highest share of housewives is among girls who have completed only primary or basic education.

Apart from the fact that some of the girls are housewives, another reason for the low employment rate has to do with the fact that in the age group 18–25 almost one fifth of the women are mothers. This share decreases among women older than 26.

FIGURE 20.
Women with the status „housewives” and women on maternity leave by age cohort



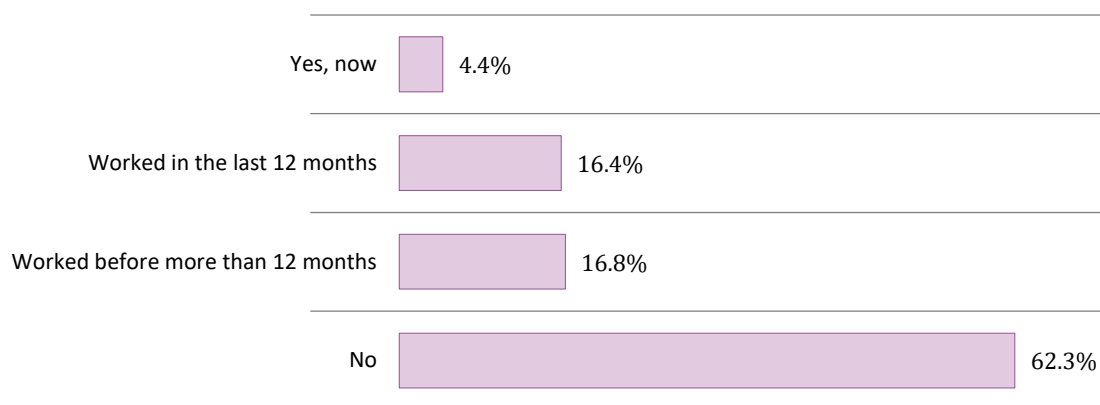
Clear employment-based profiles can be distinguished within the different educational groups, which reflect both the person’s chances for employment and the type of work they do. TABLE 47 clearly shows the trend of people without education remaining outside of the labor market. Only 17% of people without education and 14% of people with incomplete primary education are employed. Persons with primary and basic education are most often employed as low-skilled or unskilled workers. Persons with secondary education are more likely to find work as skilled workers, and higher education graduates occupy managerial or expert positions. Both people who have completed higher and secondary education start their own business more often than respondents with lower levels of educational attainment. Among those groups with less education, the number of entrepreneurs is three times lower.

Young women are almost never involved in self-employment. The share of self-employed Roma women over 30 is about 2.8–3%. In comparison, the share of self-employed men is 6–7%. In the age group 46–55, the percentage of self-employed men reaches 11% which is a result of, on the one hand higher entrepreneurial activity in these groups, and on the other hand, the economic

situation over the last 20 years, which hampered the realization of the Roma ethnic group on the labor market both by structural labor market changes and some discriminatory practices.

About one third of Roma over the age of 18 have worked abroad. The share of people who are currently abroad at the time of the survey (December 2019) is 4%. In the last 12 months, 16% have worked abroad and another 16% worked abroad more than a year ago.

FIGURE 21.
Share of respondents aged 18+ who have worked abroad



Men have lived abroad more often than women. A trend can be observed of more educated Roma remaining abroad for longer periods of time.

FIGURE 22.
Share of respondents who have lived abroad by educational attainment and gender

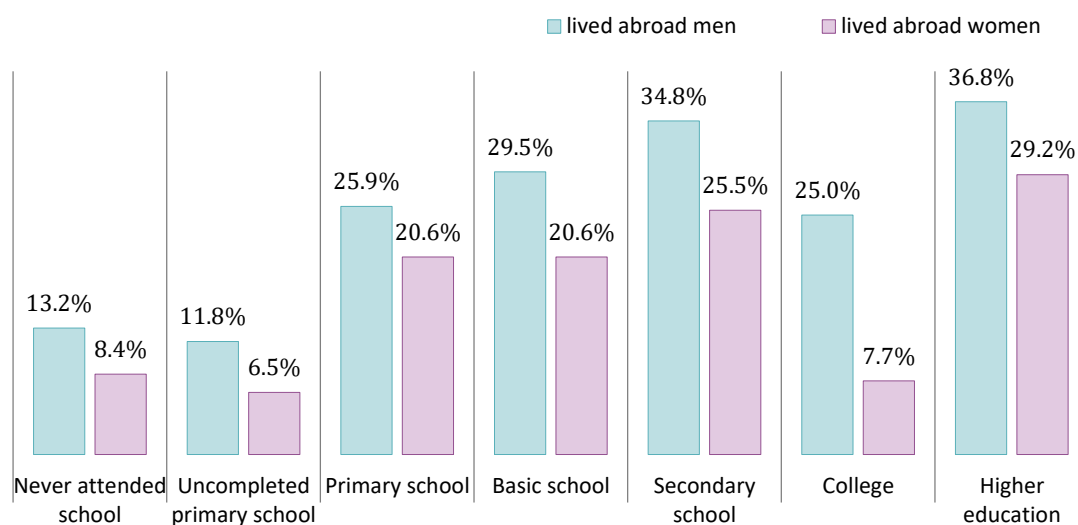
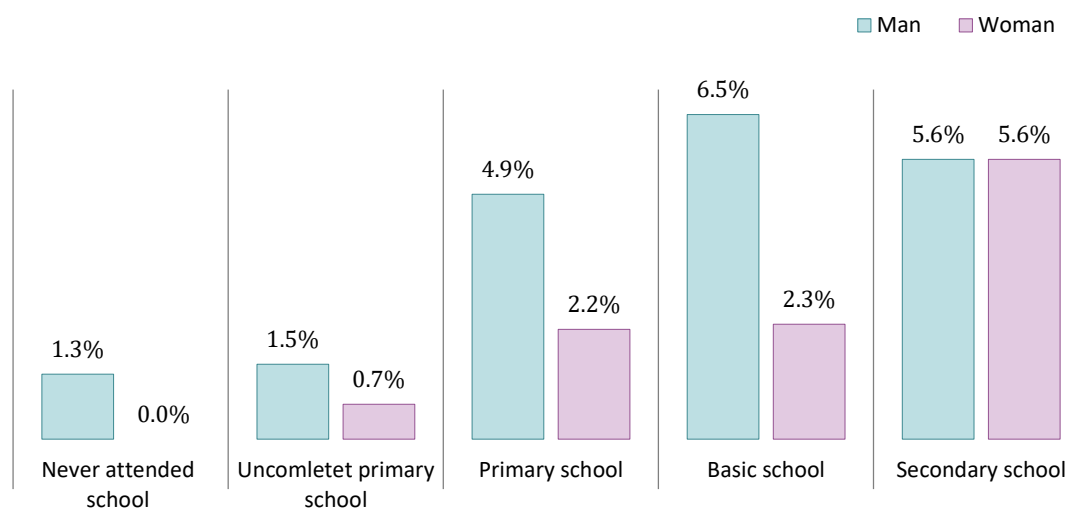


FIGURE 23.

Respondents currently (December 2019) working abroad by educational attainment and gender



Nearly 20% of the Roma over age 18 are unemployed. A total of 10% of men and 17% of women are long-term unemployed²⁵, with persons with primary and basic education falling into this category most frequently. The share of the long-term unemployed who have not had a job for a period of 13 to 24 months is almost four times smaller than the share of those who have been unemployed for more than 24 months.

TABLE 19.

Share of long-term unemployed men and women by educational attainment as a percentage of all respondents

		Primary school	Basic school	Secondary school	Higher education	Total
Man	13-24 months	0.60%	1%	0.60%	0%	2.20%
	More than 24 months	3.60%	3%	0.80%	0%	7.40%
Woman	13-24 months	0.50%	1.80%	0.40%	0.40%	3.10%
	More than 24 months	7.50%	4.70%	1.30%	0.10%	13.60%

²⁵ Long-term unemployed are persons who have no employment for more than 12 months.

4.4 Attitudes towards independent economic activity

There is a decrease in the share of Roma who show an interest in, and a willingness to carry out, independent economic activity. This is likely due to the availability of better employment opportunities. These Roma comprise about 9% of those who live in neighborhoods with a compact Roma population and 18% of the Roma who live in neighborhoods with a mixed population. According to other national surveys that Global Metrics has conducted on similar topics, this share reaches 18% among all working people at the national level, and 12%²⁶ among the long-term unemployed (these other surveys include respondents from all ethnic groups.) At the same time, it should be noted that compared to the 2011 data, the share of self-employed Roma has increased. In 2011, among persons over 18 the share of self-employed persons was 2.5% and in 2019 their share reached 3.7%. Among the active population (persons who are not unemployed), the percentage of self-employed Roma has increased almost three times (from 2.6% to 8.3%). This trend has likely influenced the declining interest in entrepreneurship, as those who had the willingness to engage in entrepreneurship may have already done so.

4.5 Characteristics of households

4.5.1 Average number of household members

Over the period of eight years, the average number of persons in Roma households has seen no significant increase. In 2019, the average number of members in Roma households located in separate neighborhoods was 4.07 persons, while in the survey conducted in 2011 the average number of household members for the Roma population was 4.01. Although there was no significant change with respect to the averages, a more significant trend change is observed with respect to the growing share of households with 4 or 5 members. Thus, from a more skewed distribution of the number of household members in 2011, we have a distribution with a higher peak and lower end values in 2019.

27.5% of Roma households in separate neighborhoods have 4 members, 15.3% are five-member households, and 18.6% are households with more than 5 members. In 2011 the share of households with 4 members was 21.5%, and the share of households with 5 members reached 13.9%. In 2011, 18.6% of the households had 6 or more members. These data, along with the higher share of households with close relatives, show that the share of households with two or more generations has decreased at the expense of an increase in the share of households composed of one (nuclear) family.

²⁶ Global Metrics, "A Survey on the opportunities for increasing income from employment and promoting the employment of long-term unemployed and inactive persons", January 2020. Commissioned by the MLSP.

FIGURE 24.

Share of respondents by number of household members in 2019 and 2011

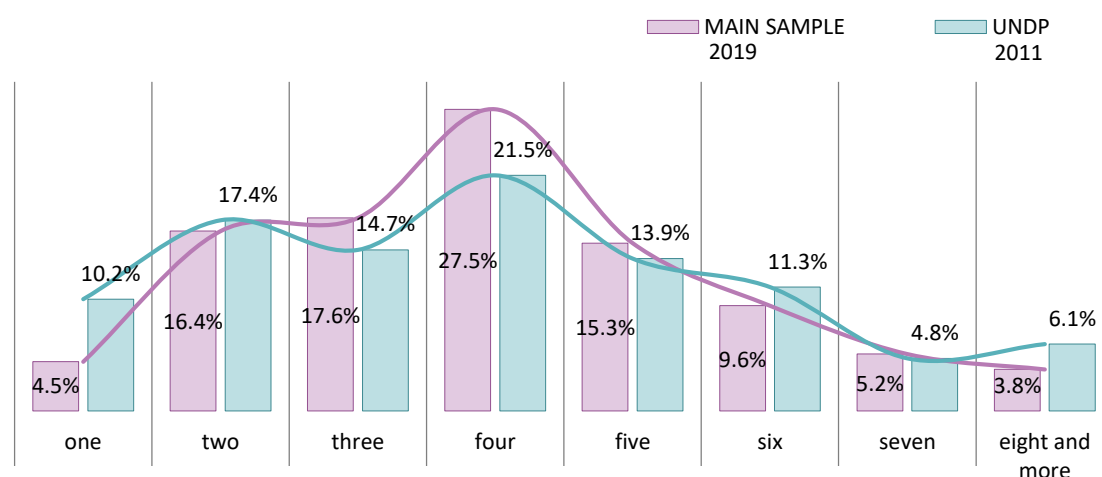


TABLE 20.

Comparative data on the number of members in a household in 2019 and 2011

Total number of household members	MAIN SAMPLE 2019	BOOSTER 2019	UNDP 2011	UNDP NON-ROMA 2011
1	4.5%	4.8%	10.2%	23.2%
2	16.4%	23.3%	17.4%	33.2%
3	17.6%	24.7%	14.7%	19.4%
4	27.5%	29.5%	21.5%	16.7%
5	15.3%	8.2%	13.9%	4.9%
6	9.6%	5.5%	11.3%	1.1%
7	5.2%	2.1%	4.8%	0.8%
8+	3.8%	2.1%	6.1%	0.6%
Average number of household members	4.07	3.49	4.01	2.56

For the sake of comparison, the average number of household members in Roma households located in predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population areas is 3.49 persons. The majority of Roma in these territories live in households with 2–4 members.

The average number of household members over the age of 18 living in Roma households in separate neighborhoods is 2.64 people. For the sake of comparison, among the households of Roma in predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population areas, the average number of persons over the age of 18 is 2.46 per household.

4.5.2 Average number of children

TABLE 21.
Number of children per household

Number of children in the household	MAIN SAMPLE 2019	BOOSTER 2019
0	31.5%	38.4%
1	22.4%	27.4%
2	28.5%	29.5%
3	11.7%	2.7%
4	3.8%	2.1%
5	1.1%	
6+	1.1%	
Average number of children	1.42	1.03

The average number of children in Roma households located in separate neighborhoods is 1.42 persons. For the sake of comparison, in Roma households in predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population areas, the number of children per household is 1.03. There are no children under the age of 18 in 31.5% of Roma households in separate neighborhoods, compared to 38.4% of Roma households located in territories with predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population.

28.5% of Roma from separate neighborhoods live in households with 2 children, and 22.4% live in households with only 1 child. The share of households with 3 children is 11.7%, and the share of households with 4 children is 3.8%. Within this group there are also households with a larger number of children. 1.1% of the Roma households in separate neighborhoods have 5 children, and another 1.1% have 6 or more children.

For the sake of comparison, 29.5% of Roma living in territories with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population live in households with 2 children, and 27.4% of them live in households with only 1 child. Only 2.7% of Roma living in territories with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population live in households with 3 children, and 2.1% of them live in households with 4 children.

According to the survey conducted in 2011, there are no children in 41.2% of Roma households. The share of households with 1 or 2 children is 47.3%, and in 11.0% of households there are 3 or 4 children. Only 0.5% of Roma in 2011 have more than 5 children. In 2011, 79.5% of households living among the non-Roma population did not have any children. The share of households with 1 or 2 children was 18.6%, and only 1.9% had 3 or 4 children.

TABLE 22.
Number of children per household 2019 and 2011

Number of children in the household	MAIN SAMPLE 2019	BOOSTER 2019	UNDP 2011	UNDP NON-ROMA 2011
0	31.5%	38.4%	41.2%	79.5%
1-2	50.9%	56.9%	47.3%	18.6%
3-4	15.5%	4.8%	11.0%	1.9%
5+	2.2%		0.5%	

4.5.3 Average age

The average age of Roma living in neighborhoods with a predominantly Roma population is 30.14 years (for the sake of comparison, the average age of the Bulgarian population in 2019 was 44.6). In general, the average age as well as the age structure of the Roma population remains unchanged compared to the data from 2011.

TABLE 23.
Share of respondents per age cohort in 2019 and 2011

	MAIN SAMPLE 2019	BOOSTER 2019	UNDP 2011	UNDP NON-ROMA 2011
0-5 years	10.5%	7.3%	12.1%	4.4%
6-10 years	10.3%	10.3%	8.9%	4.1%
11-15 years	9.8%	7.9%	7.6%	4.6%
16-20 years	8.2%	7.3%	8.8%	6.0%
21-25 years	6.3%	9.1%	9.5%	3.2%
26-30 years	8.8%	9.5%	8.1%	3.9%
31-35 years	8.0%	6.7%	7.0%	7.4%
36-40 years	7.8%	6.3%	6.3%	7.8%
41-45 years	6.3%	8.1%	5.8%	5.5%
46-50 years	5.8%	8.3%	6.7%	7.4%
51-55 years	4.3%	6.3%	5.5%	6.2%
56-60 years	5.0%	3.9%	4.8%	9.5%
61-65 years	3.9%	3.9%	4.1%	7.6%
Over 65 years	4.9%	5.1%	4.8%	22.6%
Average age	30.14	32.1	30.12	45.81

FIGURE 25.
Age structure of the Roma population in 2019 and 2011

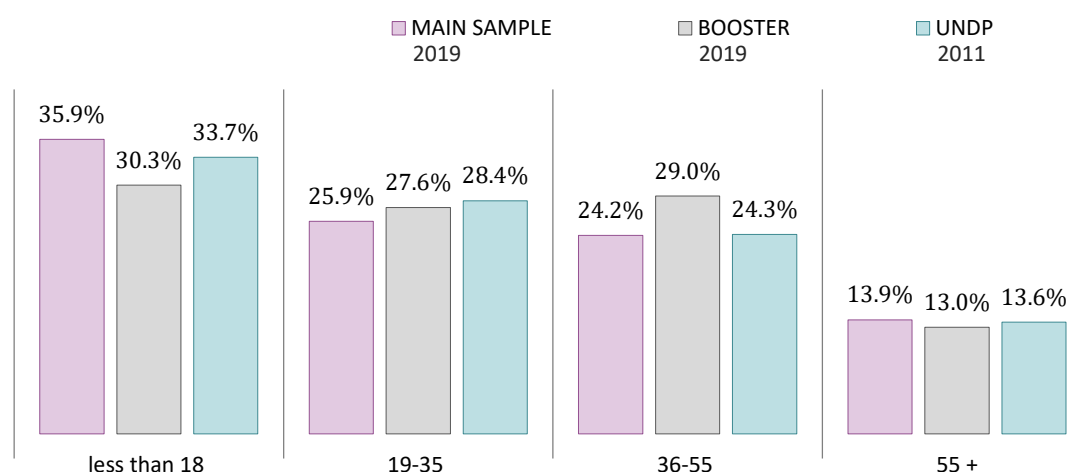
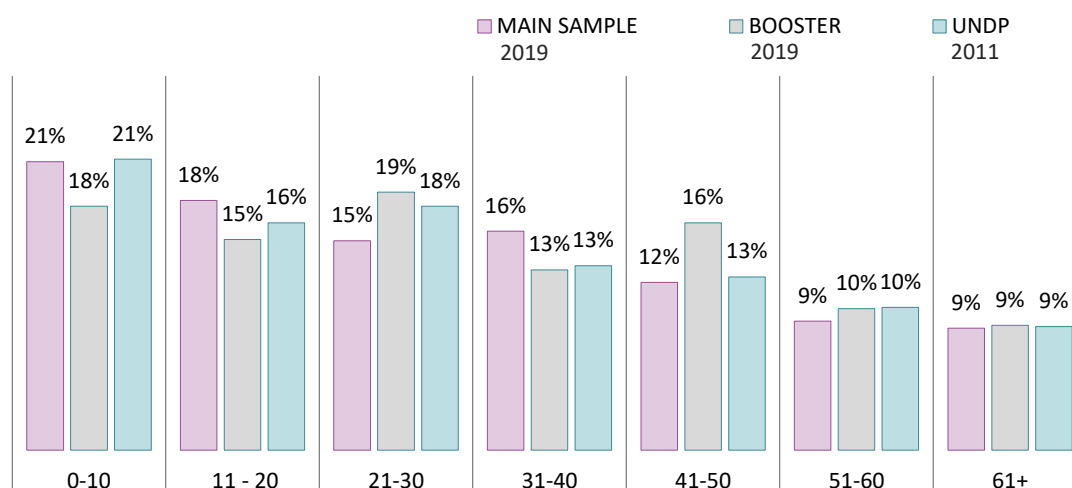


FIGURE 26.
Age structure of the Roma population by 10-year increments in 2019 and 2011



In 2019, the average age of Roma living in areas with a predominantly Roma population is 30 years and 1 month. 35.9% of them are under 18. The share of Roma aged 19–35 is 25.9% and the share of those aged 36–55 is 24.2%. 13.9% of Roma living in neighborhoods with a predominantly Roma population are over 55 years old.

The average age of Roma living in territories with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population in 2019 is 32 years. 30.3% are under 18 years. The share of people aged 19–35 is 27.6%, and those aged 36–55 comprise 29%. 13% of Roma living in neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population are over 55 years old.

In the 2011 survey, the average age of Roma was 30 years and 1 month. 33.7% were under 18 years old. The share of those aged 19–35 was 28.4%, and 24.3% were aged 36–55. 13.6% of

Roma were aged over 55. In general, the data do not show any change in the age structure of the Roma population living in areas with predominantly Roma households.

The distribution of the population by ten-year age groups shows that there is a slight decline in the age group (21–30 years), but in general, the same distribution by age has been maintained.

4.5.4 Marital status

53% of Roma living in separate neighborhoods are married, with the majority (28.6%) having a formal civil marriage and 24.1% being "married in accordance with custom". Most of the officially married people are over the age of 46, while those married according to custom are mainly from the age group 19–45. 28.1% of Roma from separate neighborhoods have never been married, this mostly includes young people under 18 years of age.

55.6% of Roma living in territories with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population are married. Here again the share of those who have entered into an official civil union is higher (34.8%), while the share of those who are married according to customs is 20.8%. Among people with official marriages, those over the age of 46 predominate. 26.9% of Roma living in territories with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population have never been married, mostly represented by young people under the age of 25.

In 2011, 39.2% of Roma were married or cohabiting, with 21% being married according to customs and 18.2% having a civil marriage. 39.2% of Roma in 2011 had never been married.

As the next section illustrates, the changes in data have to do with the higher share of early marriages (under 18), which has reduced the share of persons who have never been married.

TABLE 24.
Marital status in 2019 and 2011

— **Is the person married?**

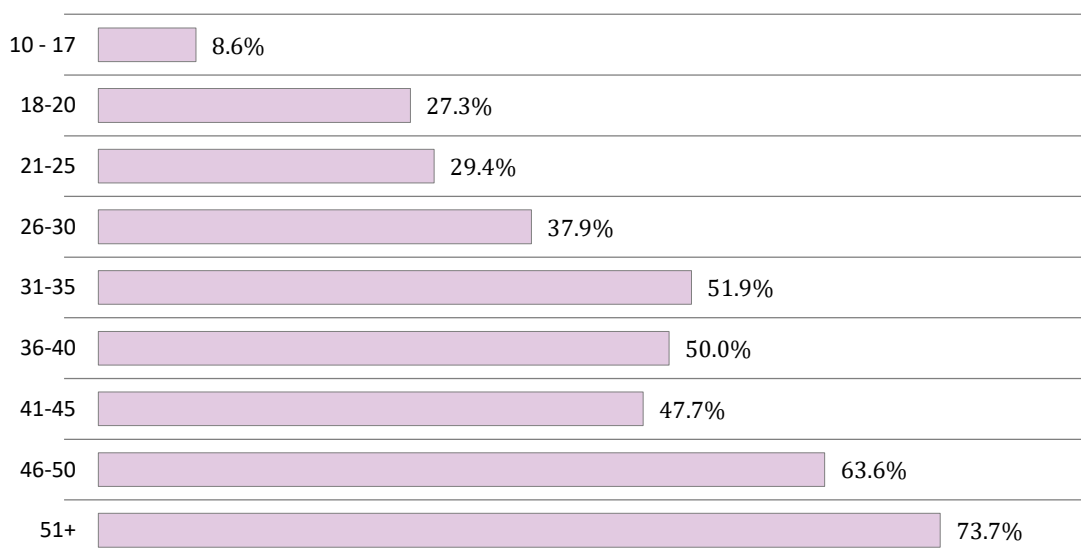
	MAIN SAMPLE 2019	BOOSTER 2019	UNDP 2011	UNDP NON- ROMA 2011
Married – according to customs	23.8%	20.8%	21.0%	16.3%
Married – officially	28.2%	34.8%	18.2%	34.9%
Divorced	1.8%	1.1%	1.8%	3.3%
Separated	3.1%	3.2%	2.3%	1.0%
Widowed	4.4%	4.1%	4.8%	12.6%
Cohabitation	9.8%	9.0%	12.7%	4.9%
Has never been married	28.9%	26.9%	39.2%	27.1%

The distribution of types of marriage in different age groups shows a decrease in the number of official marriages and an increase in the number of cohabitations and marriages by custom. As the next section shows, the share of early marriages has increased, which has reduced the average age at first marriage. As of 2019, about 5% of children aged 10–17 have experienced a form of cohabitation with a spouse or partner.

TABLE 25.
Marital status of each age cohort

	Age									Total
	10-17	18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	51	
Married—according to customs	3.2%	23.4%	33.6%	39.1%	29.7%	34.3%	40.3%	28.3%	18.8%	24.1%
Married—officially	0.3%	8.8%	14.0%	23.9%	32.1%	34.3%	36.8%	49.5%	52.8%	28.6%
Divorced			1.3%	1.9%	2.4%	2.8%	3.0%	1.9%	3.2%	1.9%
Separated	0.3%	1.8%	6.1%	5.6%	3.4%	3.8%	5.2%	4.2%	2.1%	3.1%
Widowed	0.3%			0.9%	0.3%	0.7%	0.4%	6.6%	16.8%	4.5%
Cohabitation	1.2%	8.2%	15.3%	16.5%	25.6%	19.2%	9.5%	7.1%	3.0%	9.9%
Has never been married	94.6%	57.9%	29.7%	12.1%	6.5%	4.9%	4.8%	2.3%	3.4%	28.1%

FIGURE 27.
Share of all marriages described as “official” for each age cohort



Among younger age groups, formal marriage has lost its significance, with less than a third of persons in these age groups reporting that they are married. Among older Roma, the share of officially married people is twice as high, and in the group over 51 this share reaches three quarters.

4.5.5 Average age at time of marriage

The average age at the time of marriage among Roma living in separate neighborhoods is 18 years and 11 months. There are also gender differences – the average age for men in these Roma communities is 20 years and 4 months, and for women – 17 years and 10 months. For the sake of comparison, in 2018 the average age of first marriage in Bulgaria for men and women respectively was 31 years and 9 months and 28 years and 9 months²⁷. This means that the difference between the Roma communities and the entire population of the country is 11 years. Slightly more than half of Roma (54.7%) living in areas with a predominantly Roma population got married before they turned 18, and 39.7% of them got married between the age of 19–25.

By comparison, the average age of marriage among Roma living in territories with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population is 19 years and 8 months. About half got married between the age of 19-25. The share of those who got married before the age of 18 is 39.8%.

In the 2011 survey, the average age at the time of marriage among Roma was 19.7 years. 47.0% of Roma got married before the age of 18, and 44.1% between the age of 19-25.

TABLE 26.
Age at first marriage for each age cohort

— **How old were you when you got married?**

	MAIN SAMPLE 2019	BOOSTER 2019	UNDP 2011	UNDP NON- ROMA 2011
Up to 18	54.7%	39.8%	47.0%	18.1%
19-25 years	39.7%	52.1%	44.1%	61.5%
26-35 years	5.0%	7.8%	7.2%	18.2%
Над 35 years	0.5%	0.3%	1.7%	2.3%

TABLE 27.
Average age at first marriage for all respondents in 2019 and 2011

— **How old were you when you got married?**

	MAIN SAMPLE 2019	BOOSTER 2019	UNDP 2011	UNDP NON- ROMA 2011
Average age at first marriage	18.99	19.95	19.70	22.56

²⁷ National Statistical Institute,
https://www.nsi.bg/sites/default/files/files/pressreleases/Population2018_ZG7X53J.pdf

4.5.6 Self-identification by ethnic belonging

77.6% of surveyed respondents living in separate neighborhoods self-identify as Roma. The second largest share of those interviewed self-identify as Turkish (8.2%). Approximately 2.1% of those interviewed self-identify as Bulgarians.

TABLE 28.
Ethnic self-identification of respondents in 2019 and 2011

Ethnic identity	MAIN SAMPLE 2019	BOOSTER 2019	UNDP 2011	UNDP NON-ROMA 2011
Bulgarian	2.1%	3.5%	0.1%	90.1%
Roma	77.6%	79.0%	98.0%	0.5%
Turkish	8.2%	6.7%	0.2%	6.1%
Millet	5.2%	4.9%		
Rudari	1.4%			
Arab	0.0%			
Carders		0.8%		
Ukrainka	0.0%			
Other			1.7%	3.3%
Refusal	0.0%			
No response	5.5%	5.1%		

For the sake of comparison, a larger share of surveyed respondents living in territories with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population identify themselves as Roma (79%). The share of those who self-identify as Bulgarian is also higher (3.5%). The share of surveyed respondents from territories with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population who self-identify as Turks is lower than the share in separate neighborhoods (6.7%). In this case, it should be clarified that some of the respondents from the booster sample were recruited through the snowball method which may have had a role in the formation of the sample.

In 2011, 98% of surveyed respondents self-identified as Roma. However, this difference between the individual surveys might be due to the fact that some of the other types of self-identification options were not part of the 2011 survey questionnaire.

4.5.7 Languages spoken in the household

As of 2019, the share of Roma who speak Bulgarian at home has increased compared to 2011. Half of Roma living in separate neighborhoods most often speak Romani at home, and 27.8% of

them mainly speak Bulgarian. About 20% of Roma who live in separate neighborhoods mostly speak Turkish at home. 69.3% of them report that they also speak Bulgarian at home, and about 40% also speak Romani.

TABLE 29.
Languages spoken most often in the family in 2019 and 2011

— **What language is spoken most often at home?**

	MAIN SAMPLE 2019	BOOSTER 2019	UNDP 2011	UNDP NON- ROMA 2011
Bulgarian	27.8%	51.9%	19.5%	90.4%
Romani	50.8%	33.8%	63.7%	1.6%
Turkish	20.3%	14.3%	15.1%	7.1%
Romanian /Wallachian	1.0%		0.8%	0.3%
Other			0.7%	0.3%

TABLE 30.
Other language/ languages spoken in the family in 2019 and 2011

— **What other languages do you speak at home?**

	MAIN SAMPLE 2019	BOOSTER 2019	UNDP 2011	UNDP NON- ROMA 2011
Bulgarian	69.3%	56.2%	78.5%	72.4
Romani	38.5%	40.4%	19.0%	20.7
Turkish	19.4%	16.4%	8.9%	3.4
Romanian/Vlahi	1.7%			
Other	0.4%	2.1%		3.6%
Italian	0.1%			
Russian	0.1%			
Arab	0.1%			
English		0.7%	0.3%	
Hungarian	0.1%			
Albanian			0.2%	3.4%
Croatian			0.3%	
Spanish			0.2%	
Does not speak other languages	0.7%			

For the sake of comparison, almost half of Roma from territories with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population mostly speak Bulgarian at home. About 34% of them speak mainly Romani, and only 14% mainly speak Turkish. 56.2% of Roma living in territories with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population report that they also speak Bulgarian at home and 40.4% also speak Romani.

4.5.8 Religious affiliation

Compared to 2011, there are no serious changes in the religious affiliation of Roma communities in Bulgaria. About two-thirds of Roma identify as Christians and a quarter as Muslims.

TABLE 31.
Religious affiliation of respondents in 2019 and 2011

Religious affiliation	MAIN SAMPLE 2019	BOOSTER 2019	UNDP 2011	UNDP NON-ROMA 2011
TOTAL Christian	63.9%	72.5%	66.2%	89.1%
Christian – Orthodox	38.2%	46.8%	60.1%	88.8%
Christian – Catholic	1.7%		0.1%	0.1%
Christian – Protestant/ Evangelists	24.0%	25.7%	6.0%	0.2%
Sunni Muslim (mosque)	23.3%	16.7%	25.4%	8.6%
Aliani Muslim (tekke)	0.1%			
Atheist	0.8%		1.4%	1.3%
Jehovah’s Witness	0.2%	0.4%		
Other	0.0%	0.2%	2.0%	0.1%
Not religious	4.9%	4.1%		
Refusal	0.8%		1.0%	0.3%
Doesn’t know	0.8%		3.1%	0.3%
No answer	5.1%	6.1%	1.0%	0.2%

38.2% of Roma living in separate neighborhoods are Orthodox Christians and 24% are Protestants/ Evangelicals. Those who identify as Sunni Muslims comprise 23.3%.

The share of Orthodox Christians among Roma living in territories with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population is 46.8%, and the share of Protestants/ Evangelicals is 25.7%. A much smaller share of this group self-identify as Sunni Muslims (16.7%).

In the survey conducted in 2011, 60.1% of Roma indicated that they were Orthodox Christians, and a quarter of them self-identified as Sunni.

4.5.9 Household structure (generations and types of members)

79.5% of Roma from separate neighborhoods live in one household with their close relatives – head of the household, husband/wife and son/daughter, while about 20% of Roma live in one household with their more distant relatives. Among 59% of Roma, the more distant relatives include a grandchild and among 24.1% it includes a son-in-law/daughter-in-law. 10.8% of this group live in the same household with their father/mother. Although their share is very low, some of the Roma from separate neighborhoods live in the same household with their sister/brother (2.4%), other relatives (2.1%), niece/ nephew (1.3%) and other people who are not their relatives (0.3%).

TABLE 32.

Share of households with extended families in 2019 and 2011

	MAIN SAMPLE 2019	BOOSTER 2019	UNDP 2011	UNDP NON- ROMA 2011
Households with closer relatives	79.5%	86.1%	76.0%	87.8%
Households with more distant relatives	20.5%	13.9%	24.0%	12.2%

TABLE 33.

Breakdown of household members in extended families in 2019 and 2011

Members of households with more distant relatives	MAIN SAMPLE 2019	BOOSTER 2019	UNDP 2011	UNDP NON- ROMA 2011
Brother-in-law/ Sister-in-law	24.1%	24.3%	25.2%	20.2%
Grandson	59.0%	60.0%	59.2%	38.6%
Niece/ Nephew	1.3%		1.2%	
Father/ Mother	10.8%	15.7%	7.6%	27.2%
Father-in-law/ Mother-in-law			0.8%	3.5%
Sister/ Brother	2.4%		2.2%	6.1%
Other relatives	2.1%		2.6%	3.5%
Other, who are not relatives	0.3%		1.0%	

For the sake of comparison, 86.1% of Roma living in territories with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population reside in households with their close relatives – head of the household, husband/wife and son/daughter. The share of those living in households with their more distant relatives is 13.9%. 60.0% of them live in the same household with their grandson, and 24.3% live with their son-in-law/daughter-in-law. 15.7% live with their father/mother.

In 2011, 76% of Roma lived in households with their closest relatives – head of household, a husband/wife and a son/daughter. About a quarter lived in households with their more distant relatives. 59.2% of these households include grandchildren and 25.2% of them included a son-in-law/daughter-in-law. 7.6% of Roma lived with their mother/father. In rare cases, the more distant relatives included a brother/sister (2.2%), another relative (2.6%), or a niece (1.2%).

4.5.10 Share of adults who have lived and worked abroad

The share of Roma living in separate neighborhoods and over the age of 18 who have worked abroad is 37.6%. 28.2% of Roma over the age of 18 living in separate neighborhoods have lived abroad for more than one month. About 10% of Roma have worked abroad, but when asked if they have lived abroad for more than one month, they provided a negative answer, which indicates that part of the employment of this group is likely short-term. The educational background for this group indicates that 90% were with primary or lower education, which may serve as an additional indication that they were involved in seasonal or other types of employment abroad or were involved in a failed attempt for longer employment.

Among the main sample of the survey in age group of 18+, 16.4% have worked abroad over the last 12 months, and 16.8% worked abroad more than 12 months ago. Only 4.4% of the respondents covered in the survey currently work abroad.

The majority of those who have lived abroad have also worked there (87.9%). The Roma who have lived abroad but have not worked there are mostly women and children. There are persons under the age of 18 who have worked abroad, including about one third of the children in the age group under 7. The data show that in these groups, child labor is still a serious problem that needs special attention. Among Roma children living in Bulgaria, the survey shows that the share of those who work in the age group 8-18 is 5%.

The share of Roma over the age of 18 living in territories with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population who have lived abroad is 32.1%. The share of Roma over 18 who have worked abroad is 36.3%. The largest percentage of this group worked abroad more than 12 months ago (19.6%), while 11.9% have worked abroad over the last 12 months. Only 4.8% of them currently work abroad.

TABLE 34.
Share of all respondents who have lived abroad

— Has the person ever lived abroad for more than a month?		
Among people 18 and above	MAIN SAMPLE 2019	BOOSTER 2019
Yes	28.2%	32.1%
No	71.8%	67.9%
Among people under 18		
Yes	8.4%	12.9%
No	91.6%	87.1%

TABLE 35.

Share of all adults who have worked abroad**— Has the person ever worked abroad?**

Among people 18 and above	MAIN SAMPLE 2019	BOOSTER 2019
Yes, currently	4.4%	4.8%
Yes, over the last 12 months	16.4%	11.9%
Yes, more than 12 months ago	16.8%	19.6%
No	62.3%	63.7%

4.5.11 Share of children who have lived abroad

The majority of children under 18 from Roma households living in separate neighborhoods have never lived abroad (91.6%). Only 8.4% of them are reported to have lived abroad. For the sake of comparison, the share of Roma under 18 from territories with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population who have never lived abroad is 87.1%, with 12.9% reporting that they have lived abroad.

The study shows that younger children are more often left with relatives while their parents are abroad, while older children are almost twice as often go abroad with their parents. This trend is similar for both types of surveyed groups - Roma living in separate neighborhoods and Roma living in predominantly Bulgaria or mixed-population neighborhoods.

TABLE 36.

Share of children who have lived abroad**— Has the person ever lived abroad for more than a month?**

	MAIN SAMPLE 2019	BOOSTER 2019
Total		
Yes	8.4%	12.9%
No	91.6%	87.1%
Under age of 7		
Yes	5.9%	2.3%
No	94.1%	97.7%
Age 8-18		
Yes	9.9%	18.0%
No	90.1%	82.0%

4.5.12 Place of residence

More than half of Roma living in separate neighborhoods reside in the same dwelling as their parents. For the sake of comparison, the share of Roma from neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population living in their parents' homes is 26 percentage points lower (27.4% compared to 53.4% in the main sample).

TABLE 37.

Total time at current residence

— Since when has your household lived here (in this dwelling)?

	MAIN SAMPLE 2019	BOOSTER 2019	TOTAL
For....years	43.3%	61.6%	45.9%
My parents lived here as well/ We have always lived here	53.4%	27.4%	49.8%
Doesn't know	3.2%	4.1%	3.3%
No response		6.8%	1.0%

People living in neighborhoods with a mixed population or predominantly Bulgarian population are more mobile, and in most cases were not born in the dwelling where they currently live. 57% of them have moved in in the last 10 years and another 23% in the last 11-20 years. In the main sample, the share of persons who have moved in in the last 10 years is 20 percentage points lower.

TABLE 38.

Number of years at current residence

— How many years have you lived in this household?

	MAIN SAMPLE 2019	BOOSTER 2019	TOTAL
Up to 10 years	37.2%	57.0%	40.9%
11-20 years	28.4%	23.3%	27.4%
21-30 years	17.7%	7.0%	15.7%
31-40 years	9.6%	8.1%	9.4%
More than 40 years	7.0%	4.7%	6.6%

37.2% of Roma living in separate neighborhoods report that they have lived in this household for less than 10 years, compared to 28.4% who have lived in the household for 11-20 years. 17.7% of respondents indicate that they have lived in the household for 21-30 years.

For the sake of comparison, the majority (57%) of Roma living in neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population report that they have lived in their household for less than 10 years, and 23.3% of them have lived in their household for 11–20 years.

4.5.13 Financial status of households

– Household income

- **Sources of income**

Wages or salaries seem to be the main source of income for both groups of Roma, with a higher share relying on income from paid employment among Roma living in areas with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population than the share of the Roma living in separate neighborhoods.

The lower economic status of Roma living in separate neighborhoods is also illustrated by the fact that two thirds of households are eligible for child allowances and rely on these allowances as a main income source. For the sake of comparison, only a quarter of Roma living in areas with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population rely on child allowances as a source of income. This difference is also due to the fact that Roma in mixed neighborhoods have higher incomes and therefore most of them are not eligible for child allowances, as well as to the fact that a large percentage of this group live in individual households and not in households where three or more generations are represented.

Pensions and income from sporadic/temporary employment have been reported as sources of income for about a quarter of Roma living in separate neighborhoods. A smaller share of Roma living in neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population rely on the above-mentioned sources of income, respectively 23.3% and 18.5%.

16.1% of Roma living in separate neighborhoods mention social assistance as a source of income. For the sake of comparison, the share of Roma from neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population who rely on other social assistance is three times smaller (5%).

Unemployment benefits have been reported as a source of income by 7.1% of Roma living in separate neighborhoods and only by 3.4% of Roma in neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population.

A larger share of Roma living in neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population than the Roma in separate neighborhoods rely on other sources of income such as money from friends or family members living outside of the household and income from investments, savings and insurance, as well as income from property and scholarships.

An approximately equal share of Roma living in separate neighborhoods and Roma in neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population have reported remittances (transfers) received from friends and relatives living abroad (respectively 15.5% and 14.4%) and self-employment (9.4% and 9.6%, respectively) as sources of income.

For the sake of comparison, in 2011 53% of respondents cited wages or salaries as the main sources of income, but due to the lower employment rate, these sources had less weight in Roma households. The changes in the economic situation led to an increase in the employment rate of Roma, and as of December 2019 two thirds of Roma households have income from wages, and one third from sporadic/temporary employment. Other sources of income that formed a significant share in the income of Roma households in this period are child allowances (49.3%) and pensions (41%). 18.5% of Roma have reported other social assistance as a source of income, and 12.1% have reported remittances (transfers) received from friends and relatives living abroad. In practice, these sources of income have retained their weight in 2019.

TABLE 39.
Sources of household income

— **Sources of income of your household?**

	MAIN SAMPLE 2019	BOOSTER 2019	UNDP 2011	UNDP NON- ROMA 2011
Wages or salaries (income from paid employment)	60.9%	67.1%	53.0%	53.2%
Incomes from self-employment (including farming)	9.4%	9.6%		
Incomes from sporadic/ temporary employment	25.0%	18.5%		
Income from scholarships	1.4%	2.7%		
Pensions	26.5%	23.3%	41.0%	64.9%
Unemployment benefits	7.1%	3.4%	7.2%	4.7%
Child allowances	37.5%	25.3%	49.3%	14.9%
Other social assistance	16.1%	4.8%	18.5%	5.8%
Money from friends and family members who live abroad	5.4%	8.2%		
Incomes from investments, savings, insurances or own business	0.9%	3.4%		
Remittance from friends and relatives	15.5%	14.4%	12.1%	3.5%

- **Income**

The predominant share of Roma living in separate neighborhoods have a monthly household income ranging from BGN 511–899. For the sake of comparison, the predominant share of Roma living in neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population also fall into this income range, but their incomes are closer to the higher end of the range and about one third of them have a household income of over BGN 1,500.

The distribution of income in 2019 compared to 2011 illustrates the ongoing process of social stratification within Roma communities (FIGURE 28). Unlike the distribution of income in 2011, which is strongly pulled to the left with a predominant share of Roma falling in the income group of BGN 151–320, the distribution in 2019 has been shifted to the right to the higher income

intervals and has a more pronounced bell shape. This contrasts with the 2011 distribution, which has a large section at the base and a small section towards the top. This change is indicative of the formation of a working "middle class" in Roma communities and is largely a result of both the positive economic situation in recent years and the increased educational attainment among the younger generations of Roma.

FIGURE 28.
Statistical distribution of household income levels across respondents in 2019 and 2011

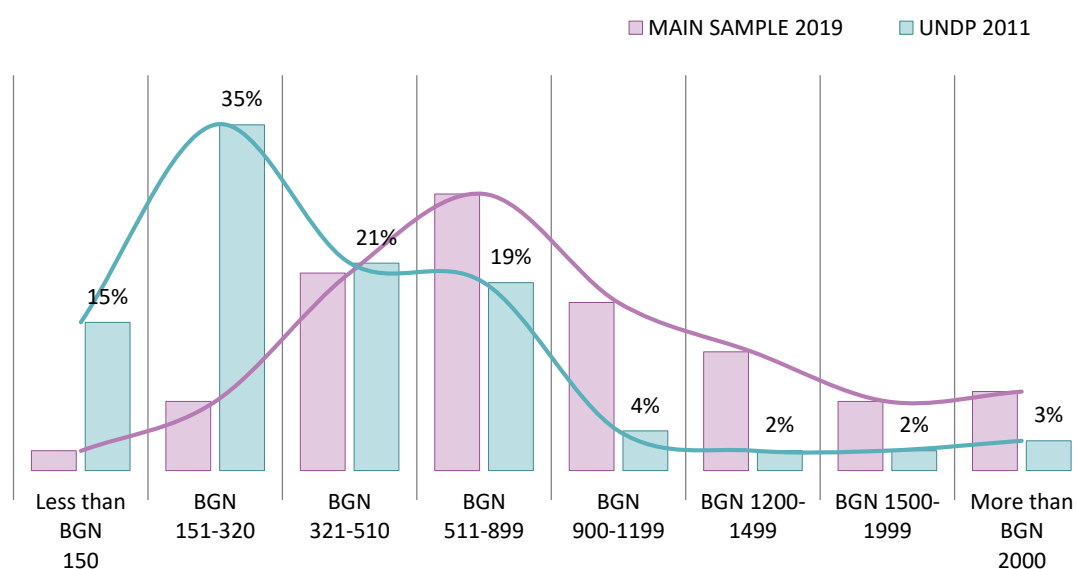


TABLE 40.
Income structure of households

— **What is the approximate net monthly household income?**

	MAIN SAMPLE 2019	BOOSTER 2019
Less than BGN 150	2.3%	1.9%
BGN 151–320	6.7%	5.7%
BGN 321–510	19.5%	13.2%
BGN 511–899	28.0%	24.5%
BGN 900–1199	16.8%	8.5%
BGN 1200–1499	12.2%	11.3%
BGN 1500–1999	7.0%	16.0%
More than BGN 2000	7.5%	18.9%

28.0% of Roma living in separate neighborhoods have a monthly household income between BGN 511-899, and 19.5% have an income between BGN 321-510. For the sake of comparison, a smaller share of Roma living in neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population belong to these two income groups, as the distribution of their income is drawn to the right (higher) end of the scale. 24.5% of persons in this group have an income between BGN 511-899, and 13.2% have an income between 321-510 BGN. About one third of Roma living in neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population report a household income above BGN 1,500.

FIGURE 29.
Share of household members earning different levels of income

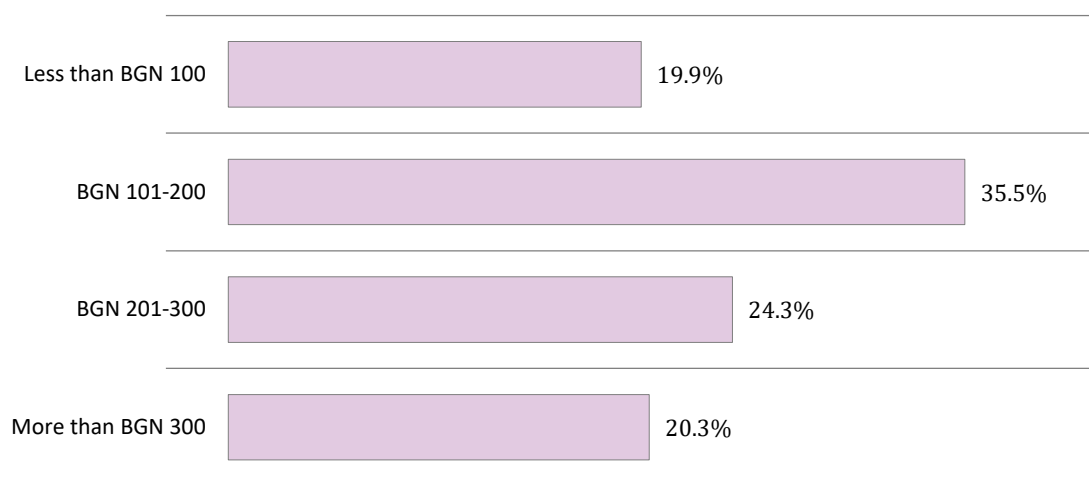
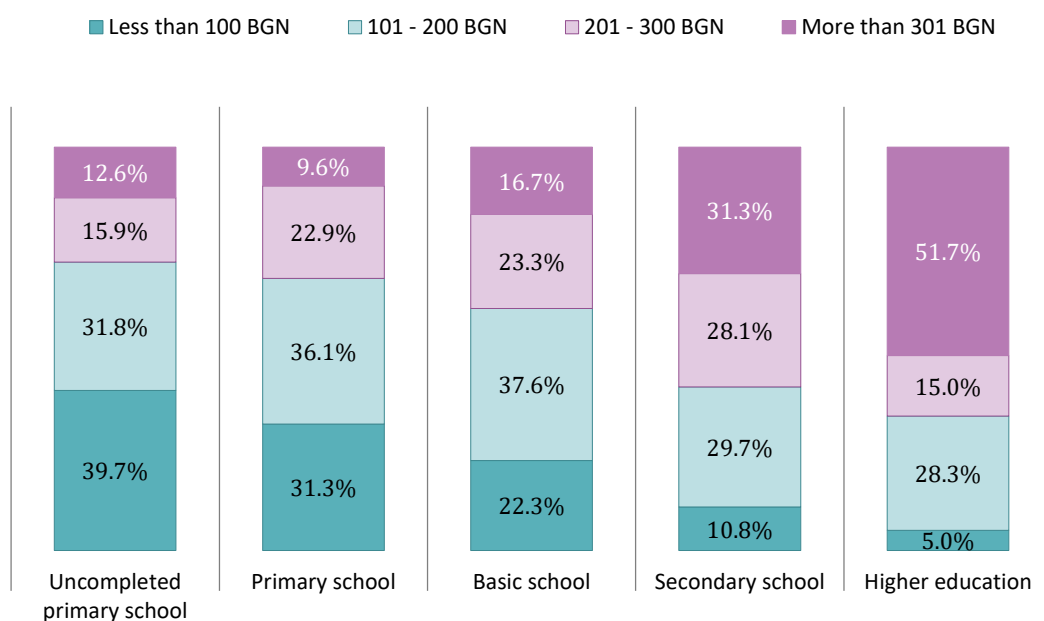


FIGURE 30.
Statistical distribution of income per household member by level of educational attainment



The distribution of income per household member shows that despite the increase in employment and income of the Roma households, their disposable income per household member remains low.

The survey clearly shows that there is a strong, statistically significant correlation between an individuals' education and their income. Income increases with an increase in educational attainment. This statistical correlation has been analyzed on the basis of the income of a household member. The total household income could distort the picture due to the accumulation of higher nominal income in large households, which, however, divided by the number of household members actually positions the individual members at lower intervals. Those who have completed higher education are clearly positioned in the highest income groups, while those who have completed secondary education have been equally distributed in three income groups. Most of those who have completed basic and lower education have low income (up to BGN 100 and between BGN 100 and 200 per household member).

– Household expenditure

The average expenditure of Roma households located in separate neighborhoods in the last month²⁸ was BGN 890.59. 23.7% of those households spent between BGN 511-899 and 18.5% spent between BGN 900-1199. The share of Roma who had household expenses in the last month between BGN 321-510 was 18.4%, and those who spent less than BGN 320 comprised 14.1%. About 17% of Roma living in separate neighborhoods had household expenses of over BGN 1,200.

TABLE 41.
Household expenditures in 2019 and 2011

— **When you think about your household for the last month, how much money did you spend in total?**

	MAIN SAMPLE 2019	BOOSTER 2019	UNDP 2011
No response	7.8%	7.5%	1.9%
Less than BGN 150	2.4%	2.1%	13.3%
BGN 151–320	11.7%	8.2%	35.6%
BGN 321–510	18.4%	17.1%	23.9%
BGN 511–899	23.7%	20.5%	17.4%
BGN 900–1199	18.5%	15.8%	4.5%
BGN 1200–1499	5.4%	8.9%	1.5%
BGN 1500–1999	6.9%	11.6%	1.0%
More than BGN 2000	5.2%	8.2%	1.0%

²⁸ The period for conducting the survey was November-December 2019, i.e. the period to which the incomes refer is October- November 2019 r.

For the sake of comparison, the average value of the expenditures in the last month of Roma households in neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population is BGN 1,032.81 (which is about BGN 140 more). 20.5% of this group spent between BGN 511-899 and 17.1% spent between BGN 321-510. The share of Roma who had household expenses in the last month between BGN 900-1199 is 15.8%, and those who spent less than BGN 320 comprise 10.3%. About 35.1% of Roma living in neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population had household expenses over BGN 1,200.

– Expenditure on educational activities

The largest household expenses at the beginning of the school year are for clothes (including shoes). The average value of clothing expenses of Roma households living in separate neighborhoods is BGN 211.45. For the sake of comparison, the average value of these expenses for Roma households in neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population is BGN 221.36.

The next largest expense at the beginning of the school year is for textbooks. The average value of these expenses for Roma households living in separate neighborhoods is BGN 67.22. For the sake of comparison, the average value of these expenses for Roma households in neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population is BGN 76.14.

The average value of the expenses of Roma households living in separate neighborhoods for notebooks is BGN 50.01. The average value of these expenses for Roma households in neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population is BGN 46.37.

Roma households located in separate neighborhoods have spent an average of BGN 52.90 on educational supplies. For Roma households in neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population, the average value of these expenses is BGN 32.96.

The average value of the other expenses of Roma households in separate neighborhoods accrued at the beginning of the school year is BGN 131.40. For the sake of comparison, the average amount directed toward the same expenses for Roma households in neighborhoods with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population is BGN 182.50.

The average cost of notebooks and school supplies for Roma living in separate neighborhoods is slightly higher than for Roma living in areas with a predominantly Bulgarian or mixed population. This trend could be explained by the limited access of Roma households in separate neighborhoods to different stores (including limited access to larger stores with discounts and competitive prices) and the correspondingly higher prices in these more accessible stores located in their neighborhoods. ●

5 Summary

The comparative data of the surveys conducted in 2011 and 2019 show a marked change in the educational status of Roma communities in Bulgaria, which in turn has had an influence on their employment and lifestyle. A larger share of Roma children go to school, which has increased their chances to complete higher educational levels.

The increase in the employment rate in this period has led to higher incomes and has raised the standard of living for some Roma, with salary income having a greater weight in the income of Roma households in 2019 compared to 2011. The increase in educational status has also led to an increase in the share of skilled and low-skilled workers and a decrease in unskilled workers. The share of households that receive cash transfers from friends and relatives abroad has increased, which also reflects an increased number of representatives of the Roma community working abroad.

More people within Roma communities believe that both boys and girls should complete higher educational levels, but the stereotype that girls need less education than boys remains and is shared by an increasing number of Roma.

More and more people within Roma communities believe that young boys and girls should stay in education longer (measured by the age at which they should leave school). Again, the most common response is 18 years for both groups, and the 2019 data demonstrate increased ages for both boys and girls. The difference between the two sexes is very slightly in favor of the boys. Moreover, generational differences clearly illustrate that the younger generations are staying in education longer than their parents and grandparents did.

The presented data show that, although slowly, modernization processes related to improvements in the educational status of the Roma are taking place. This, in turn, is leading to higher employment rates. It can be expected that these trends will be observed in the long run, with the respective processes only slowing down in the event of an economic crisis and a corresponding decrease in employment rates. ●

ANNEXES

TABLE 42.
Highest level of education attained for all respondents in 2019 and 2011

	MAIN SAMPLE 2019	UNDP 2011
Children under 7	13.2%	12.2%
Did not attend school	6.9%	
None / unfinished Primary	10.0%	22.1%
Primary (1-4 grade)	18.9%	28.2%
Basic (junior secondary) school (5-7/8 grade)	33.6%	27.9%
Secondary school	15.5%	9.3%
Associate's (professional) degree (2 or 3 years); college	0.7%	0.1%
Tertiary	1.2%	0.2%

TABLE 43.

Highest level of education attained by age cohort and gender

MAIN SAMPLE 2019		— What is his/her highest attained education level?							
		Has never attended school or other type of training	No formal education/ incomplete primary education	Primary (1-4 grade)	Basic (5-8 grade) or junior secondary (5-7 grade)	Secondary education	College (2 or 3 years)	Higher education	Doesn't know
Male	Up to age 7	57.4%	37.4%	2.6%	0.9%				0.9%
	Age 8–18	3.6%	21.1%	33.2%	33.8%	7.8%			0.3%
	Age 19–25	1.8%	3.6%	10.7%	37.9%	43.2%	0.6%	1.8%	0.6%
	Age 26–35	5.2%	6.6%	16.7%	40.3%	27.1%	1.0%	2.8%	0.3%
	Age 36–45	3.5%	4.7%	18.8%	45.5%	25.1%	.8%	.8%	0.8%
	Age 46–55	2.2%	5.9%	15.1%	43.5%	30.6%	.5%	1.6%	0.5%
	Age 56–65	3.4%	2.0%	15.0%	53.7%	21.8%	1.4%	1.4%	1.4%
	Age 65+	6.6%	8.8%	19.8%	41.8%	17.6%	1.1%	1.1%	3.3%
	<i>Total</i>	<i>7.5%</i>	<i>11.0%</i>	<i>18.9%</i>	<i>38.3%</i>	<i>21.6%</i>	<i>0.7%</i>	<i>1.2%</i>	<i>0.7%</i>
Female	Up to age 7	70.3%	25.3%	3.3%	1.1%				
	Age 8–18	2.6%	23.1%	34.5%	33.6%	4.6%	1.0%	.7%	
	Age 19–25	3.2%	5.2%	17.4%	40.6%	26.5%	1.9%	3.2%	1.9%
	Age 26–35	7.2%	8.2%	20.7%	39.5%	20.4%	0.6%	3.1%	0.3%
	Age 36–45	3.2%	10.4%	26.4%	42.0%	15.6%	0.4%	1.6%	0.4%
	Age 46–55	2.8%	7.9%	23.2%	47.5%	16.4%	0.6%	1.1%	0.6%
	Age 56–65	5.7%	5.7%	27.4%	49.1%	9.7%	0.6%		1.7%
	Age 65+	9.4%	8.2%	24.7%	41.2%	8.2%	2.4%	1.2%	4.7%
	<i>Total</i>	<i>8.4%</i>	<i>11.9%</i>	<i>24.2%</i>	<i>38.7%</i>	<i>13.6%</i>	<i>0.8%</i>	<i>1.5%</i>	<i>0.8%</i>

TABLE 44.

Educational profile of the population in different age groups

— What is his/her highest attained education level?		Age								Total
		18-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	50 +	
Male	Has never attended school or other type of training	1.1%	1.8%	6.1%	4.3%	4.3%	2.6%		4.7%	3.6%
	No formal education/ incomplete primary education	4.3%	2.7%	7.4%	5.7%	4.3%	5.1%	5.0%	5.3%	5.1%
	Primary (1-4 grade)	17.0%	10.0%	12.2%	21.4%	18.1%	19.7%	18.8%	15.2%	16.3%
	Basic (5-8 grade) or lower-secondary (5-7 grade)	43.6%	34.5%	39.2%	41.4%	44.9%	46.2%	41.6%	48.4%	43.5%
	Secondary	34.0%	46.4%	30.4%	23.6%	27.5%	22.2%	32.7%	22.4%	28.2%
	College (2 or 3 years)		0.9%	1.4%	0.7%	0.7%	0.9%		1.2%	0.9%
	Higher education		2.7%	2.7%	2.9%		1.7%	2.0%	1.2%	1.6%
	Doesn't know		0.9%	0.7%			1.7%		1.6%	0.9%
Female	Has never attended school or other type of training		4.4%	4.7%	10.2%	2.1%	4.5%	3.8%	5.7%	4.9%
	No formal education/ incomplete primary education	5.3%	7.1%	7.6%	8.8%	12.9%	7.3%	6.6%	7.3%	8.0%
	Primary (1-4 grade)	17.3%	16.8%	20.9%	20.4%	29.3%	22.7%	21.7%	26.3%	22.9%
	Basic (5-8 grade) or lower-secondary (5-7 grade)	48.0%	39.8%	38.4%	40.8%	35.7%	50.0%	48.1%	46.5%	43.3%
	Secondary	28.0%	23.0%	23.3%	17.0%	18.6%	11.8%	17.9%	10.3%	17.1%
	College (2 or 3 years)		2.7%	1.2%			.9%		1.2%	0.8%
	Higher education		4.4%	4.1%	2.0%	0.7%	2.7%	1.9%	0.3%	1.8%
	Doesn't know	1.3%	1.8%		0.7%	0.7%			2.4%	1.1%

TABLE 45.

Share of respondents enrolled and graduating from higher education by gender

MAIN SAMPLE 2019		— Has the person ever been in higher or college education?		— Has the person completed higher or college education?		Graduation coefficient
		Yes	Currently in education	Yes		
Male	Up to age 7					
	Age 8–18		1.0%			
	Age 19–25	2.9%	2.3%	2.3%		79.31%
	Age 26–35	4.2%	0.7%	3.1%		73.81%
	Age 36–45	1.6%	0.4%	0.8%		50.00%
	Age 46–55	2.6%		1.6%		61.54%
	Age 56–65	4.0%		2.7%		67.50%
	Age 65+	2.2%		2.2%		100.00%
	<i>Общо</i>	<i>1.8%</i>	<i>0.6%</i>	<i>1.3%</i>		
Female	Up to age 7	0.4%				
	Age 8–18	0.3%	1.1%			
	Age 19–25	4.5%	4.5%	3.2%		71.11%
	Age 26–35	4.0%	0.9%	3.4%		85.00%
	Age 36–45	3.1%	0.4%	2.0%		64.52%
	Age 46–55	2.2%		1.7%		77.27%
	Age 56–65					
	Age 65+	3.4%		3.4%		100.00%
	<i>Общо</i>	<i>2.1%</i>	<i>0.8%</i>	<i>1.5%</i>		

TABLE 46.

Last completed grade in school by age cohort and gender

MAIN SAMPLE 2019		— What is the last grade that the person completed?											
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Male	Up to age 7	92.9%							7.1%				
	Age 8–18	7.2%	9.1%	11.3%	15.7%	9.6%	11.6%	9.6%	9.4%	6.1%	5.2%	3.0%	2.2%
	Age 19–25	2.5%	1.2%	1.2%	5.0%	.6%	6.2%	6.2%	24.8%	3.1%	3.1%	6.2%	39.8%
	Age 26–35	2.3%	3.1%	1.9%	9.7%	3.1%	5.4%	5.8%	35.9%	0.4%	2.7%	4.6%	25.1%
	Age 36–45	1.3%	3.0%	1.7%	9.7%	8.0%	4.6%	5.1%	38.0%	0.4%	2.1%	13.1%	13.1%
	Age 46–55	0.6%	1.1%	3.4%	5.1%	3.4%	7.3%	5.6%	37.9%	4.0%	4.0%	14.1%	13.6%
	Age 56–65	1.4%	2.1%		9.2%	2.8%	4.3%	5.0%	48.9%		5.0%	14.2%	7.1%
	Age 65+	1.3%		6.4%	12.8%	10.3%	6.4%	9.0%	30.8%	1.3%	3.8%	12.8%	5.1%
	<i>Общо</i>	3.9%	3.8%	4.4%	10.1%	5.7%	7.1%	6.7%	29.2%	2.6%	3.7%	8.3%	14.4%
Female	Up to age 7	100.0%											
	Age 8–18	8.0%	10.2%	10.8%	13.3%	9.9%	13.3%	10.5%	9.0%	7.1%	3.4%	3.4%	0.9%
	Age 19–25	1.4%	1.4%	2.2%	10.8%	7.2%	5.8%	7.2%	23.0%	4.3%	2.9%	7.2%	26.6%
	Age 26–35	1.4%	3.5%	3.9%	13.3%	6.3%	4.9%	6.3%	30.9%	1.1%	3.5%	5.3%	19.6%
	Age 36–45	2.2%	4.7%	6.0%	12.5%	5.2%	6.5%	6.5%	35.8%	1.3%	2.2%	6.5%	10.8%
	Age 46–55	1.2%	2.4%	4.3%	12.2%	6.1%	7.9%	4.9%	39.6%	0.6%	3.0%	9.8%	7.9%
	Age 56–65	1.9%	3.1%	3.1%	17.6%	8.2%	6.3%	5.7%	43.4%		1.3%	5.7%	3.8%
	Age 65+	1.4%	6.8%	2.7%	16.4%	13.7%	9.6%	6.8%	30.1%		1.4%	6.8%	4.1%
	<i>Общо</i>	3.7%	5.1%	5.6%	13.4%	7.6%	8.0%	7.2%	28.1%	2.6%	2.7%	5.9%	10.3%

TABLE 47.

Correlation between educational attainment and employment opportunities

— Highest attained education level?

Position taken at the current or last job of the interviewed person:	Has never attended school or other type of training	No formal education/ incomplete primary education	Primary (1-4 grade)	Basic (5-8 grade) or lower-secondary (5-7 grade)	Secondary education (stage one and stage two)	College (2 or 3 years)	Higher education
Own business	1.3%	.8%	3.5%	3.3%	8.7%	21.1%	8.3%
Manager of the enterprise/ department				.1%	.7%		2.8%
Specialist					2.9%		27.8%
Employee with management functions				.1%	2.0%		16.7%
Office Employee			.3%		1.3%		16.7%
Team/ brigade leader/ technician	1.3%	1.6%	.5%	.1%	1.1%		
Skilled worker	2.5%	6.3%	5.6%	16.3%	41.6%	26.3%	16.7%
Low-skilled worker	20.3%	27.3%	25.8%	36.9%	20.5%	10.5%	5.6%
Unskilled worker	53.2%	44.5%	53.6%	34.3%	14.5%	26.3%	
Civil servant (teacher, policeman, etc.)					.9%		5.6%
Farmer/ Agricultural worker without own land/ Stock-breeder	5.1%	3.9%	2.5%	2.7%	1.6%	5.3%	
Other	0.00%	1.60%	1.40%	0.50%	1.10%	5.30%	0.00%
Has never been employed	16.5%	14.1%	7.0%	5.7%	3.1%	5.3%	



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