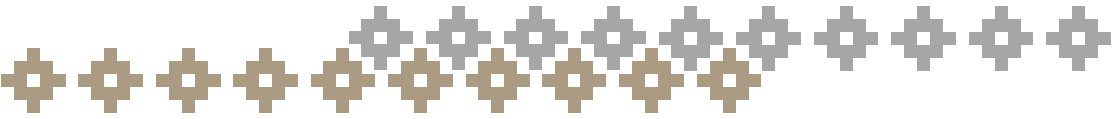
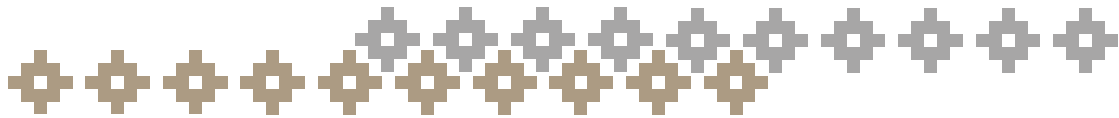


# Profile of Roma Women and Girls





# *Profile* of Roma Women and Girls



## “Profile of Roma Women and Girls”, 2016

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This analytical note is part of a **series of profiles related to women and girls** that belong to certain underrepresented groups from Moldova, who are coming from disadvantaged socio-economic or geographical backgrounds (*migrant women, women from rural areas, Roma women and women who are victims of violence*), those with special health conditions (*women with disabilities, women living with HIV or elderly women*) or who are less noticeable in certain sectors (*women in elected and appointed positions, women in decision-making positions and women involved in the economic and business sector*).

The purpose of these profiles is to inform the public, based on evidence/data, about the advantages, capabilities and potential of women's groups that have been analysed and the contribution they can make to the development, their interaction environments, the opportunities that they benefit from or are deprived of, as well as the limitations and obstacles they face. The profiles include a factual analysis of the described vulnerable group (by its subpopulations) and its comparison with the opposite group (invulnerable) of women (sometimes also with the corresponding group of men). Quantitative and qualitative data from various available official (official and administrative statistics) and independent independent sources (studies, surveys) were combined and used.

The document is intended for decision makers, policy makers, civil society and the general public and aims at increasing the understanding of data and exemplifying the use of the multi-dimensionally disaggregated statistical data with a view to identifying the intervention measures necessary to promote equality, inclusion and cohesion, non-discrimination and acceptance of the underrepresented groups of women.

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“PROFILE OF ROMA WOMEN AND GIRLS”, author VIORICA TOARTA,  
UNDP & UN WOMEN, 2016.

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# Abbreviations

- CHI – Compulsory Health Insurance
- NEA – National Employment Agency
- CEDAW – Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- CESCR – Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- CERD – Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
- ISCED – International Standard Classification of Education
- MDG – Millennium Development Goals
- OSCE – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
- PPP – Purchasing Power Parity

# Introduction

The recommendations of different organizations including CEDAW, CESC, CERD, the United Nations, and other assessment bodies of the Council of Europe and OSCE addressed to the Republic of Moldova in recent years reiterate the need to reduce race, ethnicity and gender based discrimination of Roma women and girls, and improve their access to education, health, the labour market, political life and justice. In its endeavours to deal with the situation of the Roma community, the Republic of Moldova goes by these recommendations, as well as by other tools and policies implemented by the European Union, such as: “Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005-2015,” “Lisbon Strategy, Europe 2020 Strategy,” “European Platform for Roma Inclusion,” “European Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies – 2020” etc.

The second *Action Plan Supporting the Roma People in the Republic of Moldova* for 2011-2015 was launched in 2011. It was developed with the support of specialised international institutions and Roma civil society. This Plan, besides the 7 key priorities, contains a set of actions to address the needs of Roma women in such areas as employment, education, health, social inclusion, participation in the decision-making process and public life. However, according to some representatives of the Roma civil society, a large share of priorities included in this Plan have not been implemented yet due to underfunding<sup>1</sup>. However, without an assessment in this regard, it is too early to make an objective appreciation of the Plan’s implementation level.

Accordingly, to determine and guide efficiently and effectively the priorities, measures and resources provided in the next plan, which is to be drawn up, it is important to know better the particularities of this sub-group of women, their opportunities for participation in sustainable development, disparities and barriers that they face in accessing the social and economic well-being. Another aspect in this context refers to the identification of gaps in statistics, in order to improve the monitoring mechanism and capture fully all determinants of their vulnerability to social exclusion, as well as to measure the progresses in key areas. This analytical note aims at achieving the above-mentioned goals.

<sup>1</sup> The Action Plan Supporting the Roma People has been implemented in proportion of 20%. <http://trm.md/ro/social/planul-de-actiune-pentru-sustinerea-romilor-este-realizat-in-proportie-de-20-opinie/IPP/Soros-Moldova/SOIR> (2015). The Phenomenon of Discrimination in Moldova: Perceptions of the Population. A Comparative Study. [http://www.soros.md/files/publications/documents/The%20Phenomenon%20of%20Discrimination%20in%20Moldova\\_0.pdf](http://www.soros.md/files/publications/documents/The%20Phenomenon%20of%20Discrimination%20in%20Moldova_0.pdf)

# I. Presentation of the Group

The recommendations of international human rights institutions, based on submitted national periodic reports and data of performed surveys reiterate that Roma women and girls are one of the most disadvantaged groups from the Republic of Moldova. Their vulnerability to social exclusion is determined by the interaction of gender, class, ethnicity, race based discrimination factors, as well as by traditionalism and paternalism that determine their status and role in Roma communities (including in households and interfamily relations), as well as in society as a whole. All these factors lead to uneven access of this group of women to services and outcomes of social well-being, limited participation in the decision making at different levels and limited contribution to development. Generally speaking, Roma women and girls, as a distinct sub-group of the majority women's group, may be characterised by a low education level, early marriages, poor health, lack of skills and qualifications needed for employment, as well as high risk of poverty, violence and other violations of human rights, and an obvious low level of self-esteem and motivation<sup>2</sup>.

As for the social and demographic profile of this social sub-group, the lack of updated official statistics on the number of Roma people in the Republic of Moldova makes it difficult to produce any objective analysis in this regard. Even if the data on "ethnicity and language spoken" from the 2014 Population and Housing Census are still being processed, some of the administrative sources and studies show an important figure, from 14,000<sup>3</sup> to over 200,000 Roma people. This disparity again confirms that the problem of self-determination and tendencies to hide their ethnicity still exist. Based on the national distribution by genders, with a share of 51.9% for women in the total resident population<sup>5</sup>, hypothetically we may believe that in the case of Roma people the same proportions are maintained. From the geographic perspective, the 2012 mapping data show that Roma people live in concentrated groups within the Moldovan communities. However, we identified about 107 settlements in the country (or 10% of all settlements in the country) where Roma population's density in comparison with the majority varies from 0.5% to over 40%<sup>6</sup>. There are also dozens of Roma rural slums isolated from local authorities, with substandard social infrastructure<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> UN Women/OHCHR/PNUD (2014). Study on the situation of Roma girls and women in the Republic of Moldova. <http://www.un.md/publicdocget/130/>

<sup>3</sup> MTIC (2012). According to the data from the State Population Registry, the number of citizens of Roma ethnic group counted for 14,208, si paranteza de dupa link - (accessed on 4.07.2015). [http://www.registru.md/news\\_2011/165210/](http://www.registru.md/news_2011/165210/); (accesată la data de 04.07.2015).

<sup>4</sup> UN Women/OHCHR/PNUD (2014). Study on the situation of Roma women in the Republic of Moldova. p.17, <http://www.un.md/publicdocget/130/>

<sup>5</sup> NBS (2015). Structure of the resident population of the Republic of Moldova by sex and age, as of 1 January 2015. <http://www.statistica.md/newsview.php?l=ro&idc=168&id=4769>

<sup>6</sup> UNDP (2013). Raport reprezentativ privind cartografierea localităților dens populate de romi din Republica Moldova [Representative Report on Mapping of Settlements Densely Populated by Roma People in the Republic of Moldova]; [http://mpsf.gov.md/file/rapoarte/Raport\\_Cartografiere\\_2012.pdf](http://mpsf.gov.md/file/rapoarte/Raport_Cartografiere_2012.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> IWCM (2013). Roma Briefing: Republic of Moldova, March 2013. <http://www.iwcm.md/uploads/images/images/Roma%20Briefing%20Moldova%20March%202013.doc>

The way Roma women and girls assert themselves in the society is influenced by society's perceptions of their personality and character, which continues to be controversial. These perceptions fluctuate between negative stereotype, derived from a preconceived thinking, which was caused by a history of social exclusion and institutional racism, and relatively positive stereotypes, derived from exotic-romantic and endearing-empathic images promoted in written literature, modern cinematography<sup>8</sup>. Thus, from the negative perspective, over 70 percent of the respondents in a 2014 survey on people's perceptions of discrimination in the Republic of Moldova believe that most Roma women are fortune tellers, ready to cast curse you if you do not give them money<sup>9</sup>. Comparing this situation with the 2010 data, when the first such survey was carried out, we see that the share of respondents with negative perceptions toward Roma women has increased by 11 p.p.<sup>10</sup>. However, from the positive perspective, Roma woman can only be a "beautiful, passionate Gypsy with a Gypsy heart" and by no means an intellectual, well-mannered woman, who may say valuable things in a certain area. This is how positive and negative stereotypes blend to create a misleading image, potentially discriminatory against Roma women. Sometimes, this stigma is internalised, determining Roma women to feel frustrated in the society and react correspondingly, according to social label put on them. All these are the result of different existential failures<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Comanescu S. (2011). Problematika femeii rome din România [The Issue of Roma Women in Romania]. Article from the "Roma Women: between the tradition and modernisation" publication of the CSCPDS under the "Etfimie Murgu" University from Resita, under BARRABARRIPEN – an International Model of Inclusion for Roma women" Project, co-funded by European Social Fund through Human Resources Development Sectoral Operational Programme 2007 - 2013.<http://www.barrabarripen.ro/upload/Problematika-femeii-rrome-din-Romania.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> IPP/Soros-Moldova/SOIR (2015). The Phenomenon of Discrimination in Moldova: Perceptions of the Population. A Comparative Study.<http://www.soros.md/files/publications/documents/The%20Phenomenon%20of%20Discrimination%20in%20Moldova.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Soros Moldova (2012). Percepțiile populației Republicii Moldova privind fenomenul discriminării: studiu sociologic. [The Phenomenon of Discrimination in Moldova: Perceptions of the Population. A Sociological Study].<http://soros.md/files/publications/documents/Studiu%20Sociologic.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Comanescu S. (2011). Problematika femeii rome din România [The Issue of Roma Women in Romania]. Article from the "Roma Women: between the tradition and modernisation" publication of the CSCPDS under the "Etfimie Murgu" University from Resita, under BARRABARRIPEN – an International Model of Inclusion for Roma women" Project, co-funded by European Social Fund through Human Resources Development Sectoral Operational Programme 2007 - 2013.<http://www.barrabarripen.ro/upload/Problematika-femeii-rrome-din-Romania.pdf>

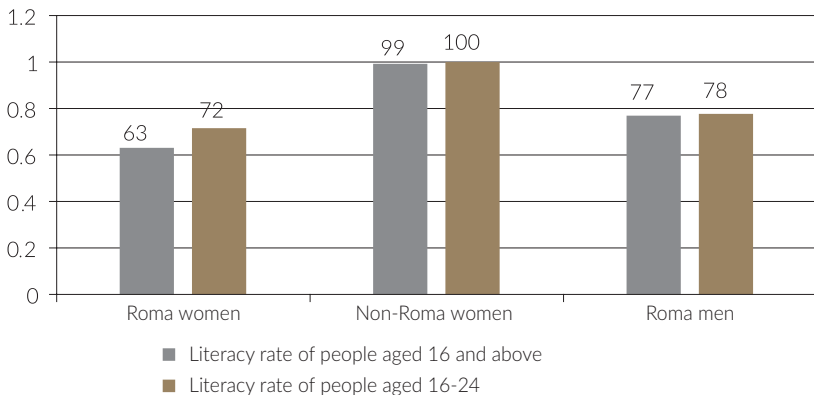


## II. Social Capital and Potential of Roma Women and Girls

Social capital is one of the main resources that people can use to cope with social exclusion and precariousness<sup>12</sup>. Education and health status are the main attributes/values in empowering Roma women and girls that define their quality of human potential. The data of Regional Survey on the Situation of Roma People, carried out in 2011, shows that only 63 percent of Roma women from the Republic of Moldova aged over 16, and 72 percent of women aged 16 to 24 can read and write. In this context, the gaps of ethnicity and gender are also presented, the former being particularly strong. Thus, the share of literate Roma women aged 16 and above and of young women aged 16-24 is 36 p.p. and 28 p.p lower than non-Roma women from the same age groups. The gender gaps for the same age groups, even if are less pronounced, constitute 14 p.p. and 5 p.p.<sup>13</sup> (Figure 1).

Note that the literacy rates of Roma women are among the lowest in the Central and South-Est Europe countries, the Republic of Moldova is situated in close proximity with Romania (64% - Roma women aged 16 and above and 76% - Roma women of 16-

Figure 1. Literacy Rates of Roma Women versus Non-Roma Women, by Age Groups, %



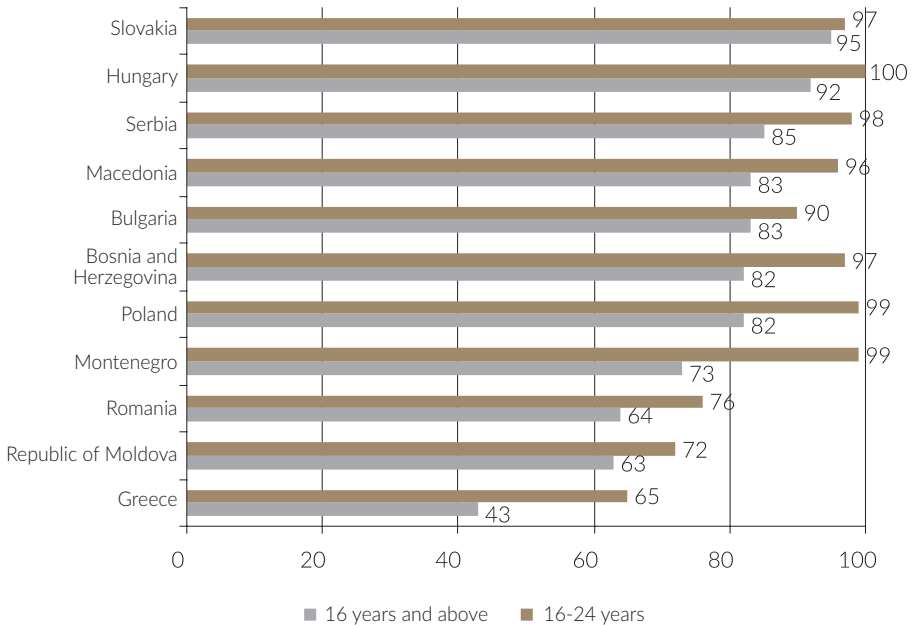
Source: Regional Survey UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

<sup>12</sup> National Agency for the Roma (2008). *Vino mai aproape. Incluziunea și excludiunea romilor în societatea românească de astăzi*. [Come Closer. Inclusion and Exclusion of Roma People from Today's Romanian Society] [http://www.anr.gov.ro/docs/Publicatii/Vino\\_mai\\_aproape.pdf](http://www.anr.gov.ro/docs/Publicatii/Vino_mai_aproape.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> UNDP/UN Women/UNICEF/Sida (2013). *Analytical Study on the Situation of the Roma in the Communities Densely Populated by Roma People*.

24 years), followed only by Greece (43% - Roma women of 16 years and over and 65% - Roma women aged 16-24)<sup>14</sup> (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Literacy Rate of Roma Women, by Countries and Age Groups, %



Source: EU FRA & UNDP on the basis of data of the regional survey UNDP/WB/EC, 2011.

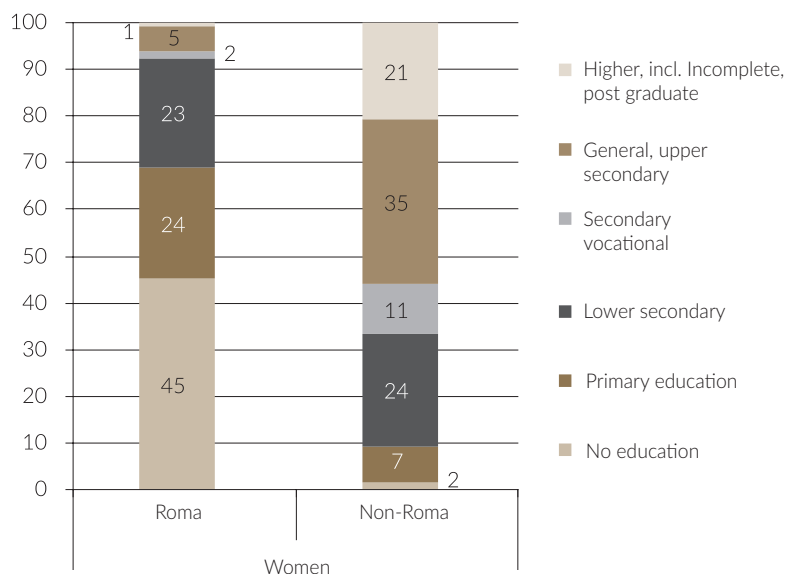
Over 45% of Roma women aged 16 and over have no education (compared to 2% of non-Roma women), 24% of them have only primary education (ISCED 1<sup>15</sup>), while 23% — only lower secondary education (ISCED 2). Only 5% of Roma women have general or upper secondary education (35% — non-Roma women), 2% — vocational secondary education (11% — non-Roma women (ISCED 3)). Only 1% of Roma women have higher education, including incomplete or post graduate education, if compared to 21% of non-Roma women (ISCED 4+) (Figure 3). On average, Roma women aged 5-65 spend 3.8 years in education, which is about 2.8 times lower than non-Roma women.

<sup>14</sup> FRA (2013). Analysis of FRA Roma survey results by gender; <http://fra.europa.eu/en/sites/default/files/ep-requestroma-women.pdf>; UNDP (2012). Roma education in comparative perspective. Findings from the UNDP/WB/EC Regional Roma survey. <http://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/dam/rbec/docs/Roma-education-in-comparative-perspective.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Structure of the education system of the Republic of Moldova according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011), Article 12 of the Code of Education of the Republic of Moldova No 152 of 17.07.2014; <http://lex.justice.md/md/355156/>

In turn, the average number of full years that young Roma women aged 16-24 spent in education is 4.1 years, in comparison with 10.9 years that non-Roma women did<sup>16</sup> (Figure 4). All these are the results that show the limited participation of Roma women in all stages of education (starting with the pre-school stage), together with absenteeism and school drop-out rate due to early marriages, a lack of money and household chores, as well as their parents' and their own personal views about the sufficiency, value of and need for education in the future.

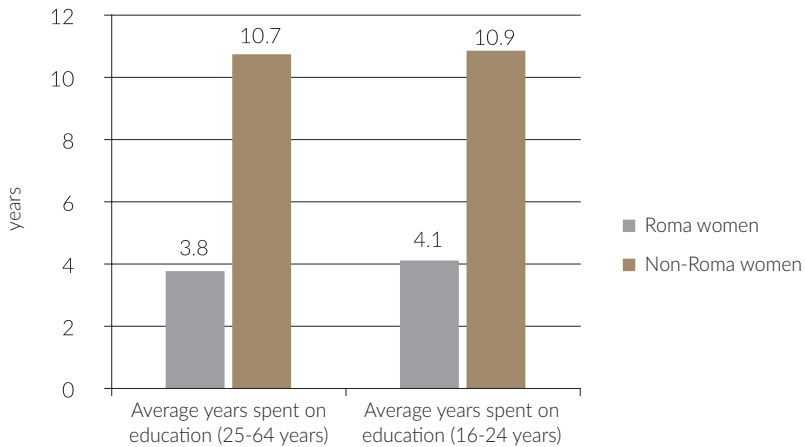
Figure 3. The Highest Education Level Achieved by Roma versus Non-Roma Women, by Education Levels, %



Source: Regional Survey UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

<sup>16</sup> The estimations according to the data for Moldova of the UNDP/World Bank/EC regional Roma survey 2011.

Figure 4. Average Number of Full Years Spent on Education by Roma versus Non-Roma Women



Source: Regional Survey UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

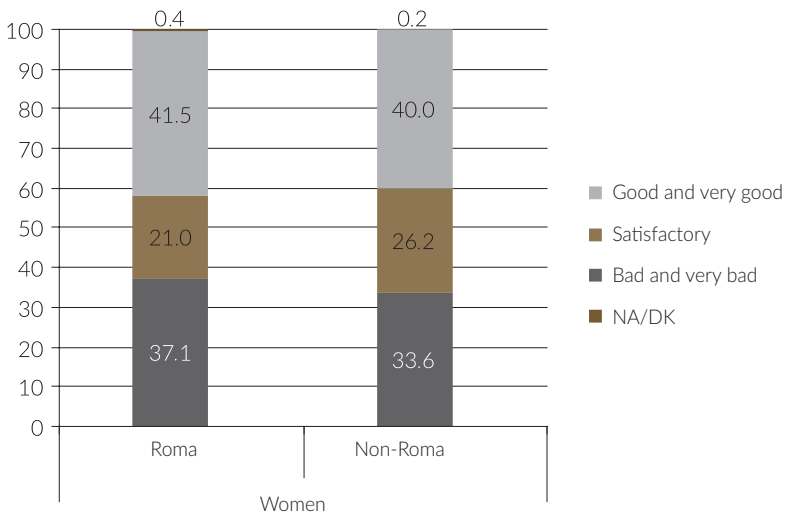
Health is the second component characterising the potential of Roma women and girls, and it correlates with their capacity to implement affirmative actions in economic and social fields. The subjective perceptions of what is healthy have an important influence in this context. In the case of Roma women, these perceptions are more pessimistic and, 37 percent of them consider their health condition to be poor and very poor, which is by 3.5 p.p. higher than among non-Roma women (33.6%) (Figure 5).

Even if Roma women are more critical of their health, the visions on the presence of chronic diseases and health conditions affecting the performance of their current activities, including the indicators of morbidity by non-communicable diseases, do not significantly differ from non-Roma women. Thus, 28.3% of Roma women reported having a chronic disease or some health issues (compared to 30.4% of non-Roma women), while 32.4% of them mentioned that in the last six months they were limited and very limited in everyday activities (if compared to 35.6% of non-Roma women)<sup>17</sup>. At the same time, 41.7% of Roma women suffer from high blood pressure (compared to 45.5% of non-Roma women), 38.4% - muscular and osteoarticular disorders (compared to 47.7% of non-Roma women), 17% anxiety and chronic depression (compared to 15%

<sup>17</sup> UNDP/UN Women/UNICEF/Sida (2013). Analytical Study on the Situation of the Roma in the Communities Densely Populated by Roma People.

of non-Roma women) and 8.3% diabetes (compared to 7.3% of non-Roma women). However, it should be mentioned that the share of Roma women (24%) who suffer from pulmonary diseases (asthma, chronic bronchitis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or COPD, or emphysema) is almost twice as high than that of non-Roma women (13%) (Figure 6). This may be explained by the following: (i) Roma women do not visit or postpone visits to the doctor; (ii) often they have poor living conditions, as well as (iii) effects of harmful habits, especially smoking, which among them (16%) are about 6 times more frequent compared to non-Roma women (3%)<sup>18</sup>.

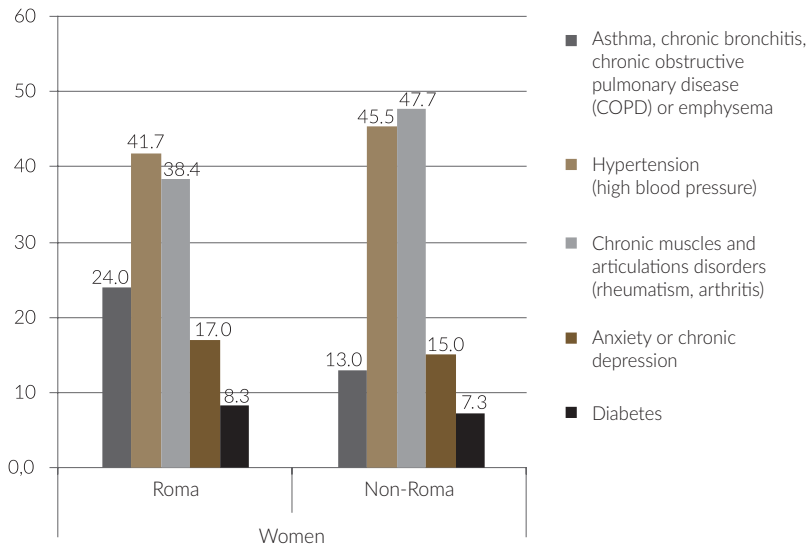
Figure 5. Roma Women Perceptions on Health Quality versus Non-Roma Women, %



Source: Regional Survey UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem.

Figure 6. Percentage of Roma Women with Health Issues versus Non-Roma Women, %



Source: Regional Survey UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

The reproductive health condition of Roma women is an additional criterion that reflects the quality of their health. Studies in this field show that, although most pregnant Roma women went monthly or, optionally, every three months for a medical examination, 21% of them had at least one miscarriage (due to other reasons than abortion). These figures are really alarming, being about twice as high as among non-Roma women (14%). The high incidence of gynecological diseases, miscarriages, termination of pregnancy and unwanted pregnancies among Roma people is caused mainly due to insufficient knowledge about family planning and contraception<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> UNDP (2007). Roma in the Republic of Moldova. UN (2014). Study on the Situation of Romani Women and Girls in the Republic of Moldova.

### III. Interaction Environment

Roma women and girls interact mostly inside their families, which, is also the environment where they belong. The family is the first priority in the organisation of Roma communities and accordingly, everything gravitates around it: social and economic relationships, education and the transmission of learning crafts and traditions, individual security and protection. Any girl or woman is a part of Roma community as a member of a family, primarily, and her interactions are perceived as interactions between families. Even if with economic progress (radio, TV, mobile communication and internet) and the intensification of migration, Roma women obtained more freedoms and began slowly to modernise and take on other social roles and responsibilities, the traditional roles, related to housekeeping, however still remain the anchor of a mainly “patriarchal” society. Therefore, the behavioural patterns which they adopt in the community to which they belong to is the result of the status they have, on the basis of the levels of responsibility they have<sup>20</sup>.

The importance of Roma women in transmitting educational, traditional and cultural values from one generation to another should be mentioned. By doing so, Roma children are taught about the sense of cohesion and family/social solidarity in the Roma community (brotherhood, mutual respect and responsibility for others), but also about establishing relations with the reference community, ie society in general. The education provided to Roma girls is mainly focused on learning how to take on a housekeeping role, starting even from 5-6 years old, but also on assuming the gender role by educating them in the spirit of shame, which implies sexuality euphemisation by wearing loose, flared skirts, so that the legs are not seen, avoiding any contacts with strangers and behaving in accordance with the limits and recommendations about purity in the Roma concept<sup>21</sup>.

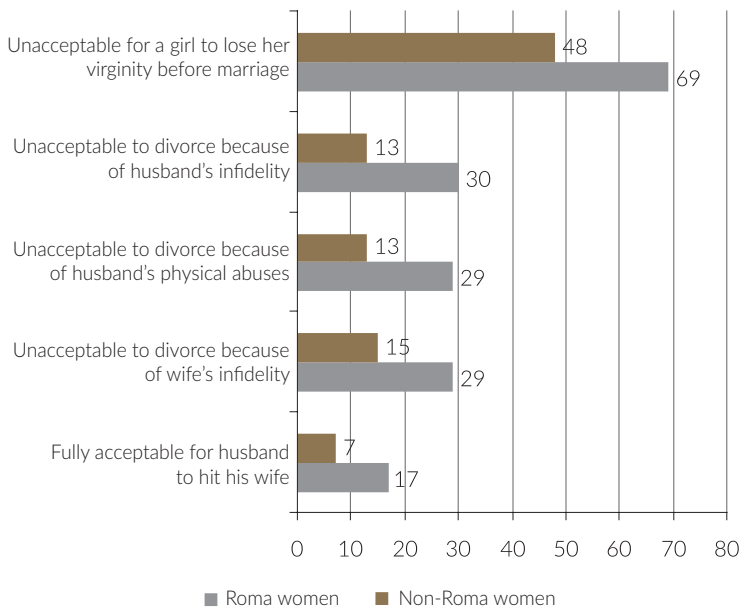
When reaching maturity, Roma girls are captives of gender-based discriminatory social norms, such as: the lack of the capacity to decide on their own when to start their sexual life, vituperation of divorce in particular circumstances, their economic dependence on men, toleration of domestic violence etc., thus ensuring, in their turn, further transmission and maintenance of these norms. As a confirmation, the data of the 2011

<sup>20</sup> Comanescu S. (2011). Problematicefemeirome din România [The Issue of Roma Women in Romania]. Article from the “Roma Women: between the tradition and modernisation” publication of the CSCPDS under the “EtfmieMurgu” University from Resita, under BARRABARRIPEN – an International Model of Inclusion for Roma women” Project, co-funded by European Social Fund through Human Resources Development Sectoral Operational Programme 2007 - 2013.<http://www.barrabarripen.ro/upload/Problematicefemeii-rome-din-Romania.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> Prof. Dr. Dogaru A. (2011). Comunitatearroma din România, statutulfemeiroma [Roma Community from Romania, the Status of Roma Woman]. Article from the “Roma Women: between Tradition and Modernisation” publication of the CSCPDS under the “EtfmieMurgu” University from Resita, under BARRABARRIPEN – an International Model of Inclusion for Roma women” Project, co-funded by European Social Fund through Human Resources Development Sectoral Operational Programme 2007 - 2013.<http://www.barrabarripen.ro/upload/Problematicefemeii-rome-din-Romania.pdf>

Regional Survey on the Situation of Roma People show that 63 percent of Roma women believe that loss of virginity before marriage is absolutely unacceptable (if compared to 48 percent of non-Roma women), while about one-third of them believe that it is unacceptable to divorce because of the husband's infidelity or physical abuse, their share is twice as high as that of non-Roma people<sup>22</sup>. Although Roma women are often exposed to domestic violence, they do not report on it because they are afraid, ashamed, insecure about the future of their children or they give up reporting on the basis that there are few hopes in the possibility of changing something<sup>23</sup>, and in its turn, it leads to repeated victimisation and distortion of the perceptions related to normality of such acts. Therefore, the share of Roma women (17%) who regard as fully acceptable for a husband to hit his wife is about 2.4 times higher than among non-Roma women (7%) (Figure 7).

Figure 7. Visions of Roma Women versus Non-Roma Women on Discriminatory and Abusive Norms and Attitudes in the Family, %.



Source: Regional Survey UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

<sup>22</sup> UNDP/UN Women/UNICEF/Sida (2013). Analytical Study on the Situation of the Roma in the Communities Densely Populated by Roma People.

<sup>23</sup> UN (2014). Study on the Situation of Romani Women and Girls in the Republic of Moldova.



As regards the participation of Roma women in decision-making, studies show that although Roma women often participate in joint meetings where Roma community's problems are discussed or even if women meet each other to discuss, their capacity to make decisions is still low. Thus, they are not present when men make decisions to build something, such as digging a well etc. Consensual decisions, as a rule, refer to the children's education and are taken in the family. Even if a Roma woman decides which goods to buy and which renovations to make inside the house, these decisions must be discussed with and approved by her husband. The husband is also the one who has the last word in disputes or important decisions. Roma women not always take it negatively and they do not try and argue: sometimes they conform because it was always like that, and because they know that even if they try, they will fail, sometimes they wait for the man to assume this responsibility, because they trust his intellect and wisdom<sup>24</sup>.

Roma women and girls interact with the reference of general society at school (Roma parents participate in school meetings and events), when contacting local authorities and existing services to solve their problems, as well as when participating in community meetings and events. Community mediators play an important role in making the relationships with public authorities and services easier. Most community mediators are women and since they were vested, they became the driving force that draw Roma people into addressing and voicing their problems. According to the Action Plan Supporting the Roma People in the Republic of Moldova for 2011-2015<sup>25</sup>, by the end of 2014, 48 community mediators were supposed to be employed and funded from the State budget in 44 settlements, densely or partly inhabited by Roma. Since 2015, the financing of these positions was transferred to local public authorities, but due to the lack of funds they have suspended these services in several settlements<sup>26</sup>.

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem.

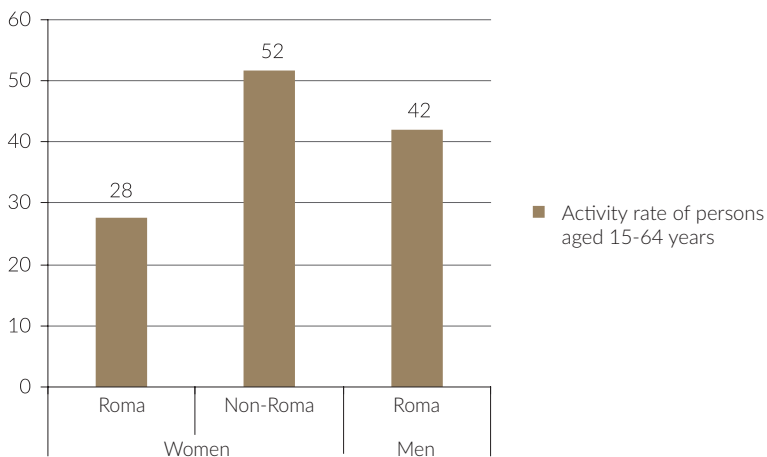
<sup>25</sup> Government Decision No 494 of 08 July 2011 approving the Action Plan Supporting the Roma People in the Republic of Moldova for 2011-2015;

<sup>26</sup> IPP/Soros/SOIR (2015). The Phenomenon of Discrimination in Moldova: Perceptions of the Population. Comparative study. <http://www.soros.md/files/publications/documents/The%20Phenomenon%20of%20Discrimination%20in%20Moldova.pdf>

## IV. Opportunities that Roma Women and Girls Enjoy or Are Deprived of

Even if the objectives of national policies, which flow from international recommendations<sup>27</sup>, provide for enhanced women's opportunities, their integration in labour market, reduction of occupational segregation, over-representation in badly paid sectors, difference of salaries, presence in informal sectors of the economy, discrimination, and development of mechanisms to integrate them in social protection system, their accomplishment is challenging in the case of Roma women. On the labour market they are characterised by low level of activity and employment, a high rate of unemployment, and the incidence in unofficial activities and sporadic and low income. In addition, the gaps between ethnicity and gender under these indicators are strongly highlighted. Thus, only 28% of Roma women aged 15-64 are active<sup>28</sup>, their percentage is 1.9 times lower than that of non-Roma women (53%) and the rate is 1.5 times lower than Roma men (42%) from the same age category (**Figure 8**). The occupation rate of

Figure 8. Activity Rates of Roma versus Non-Roma Women and versus Roma Men, %



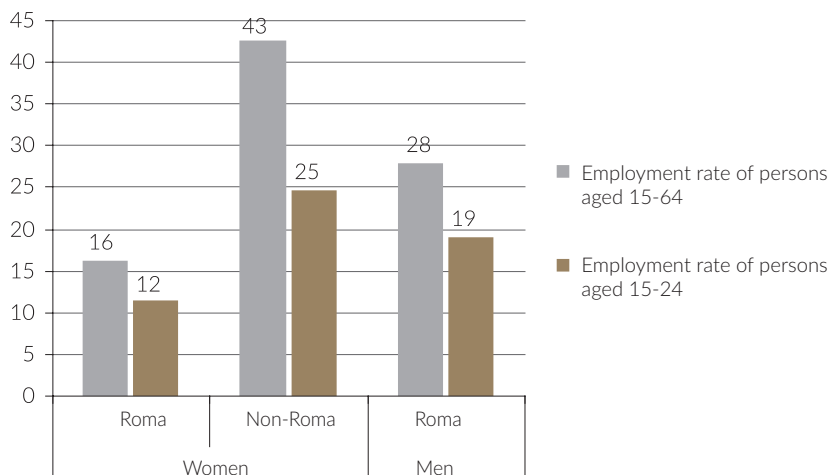
Source: Regional Survey UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

<sup>27</sup> CEDAW (2013) Concluding on the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of the Republic of Moldova.

<sup>28</sup> The economically active population (or Labor force) comprises all persons aged 15 and over which provides the available work force for the production of goods and services during the reference period, including the occupied population and the unemployed. <http://www.statistica.md/pageview.php?!=ro&idc=302&id=2255>

Roma women is even lower (16%), which is about 2.7 times lower than among non-Roma women (43%) and 1.8 times than among Roma men (28%). The issue of the low employment rate is more acute among young Roma women aged 15-24 (12%), which is twice and even more lower than among non-Roma women (25%) and about 1.8 times lower than among Roma young men (19%) (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Activity Rates of Roma versus Non-Roma Women and versus Roma Men, %



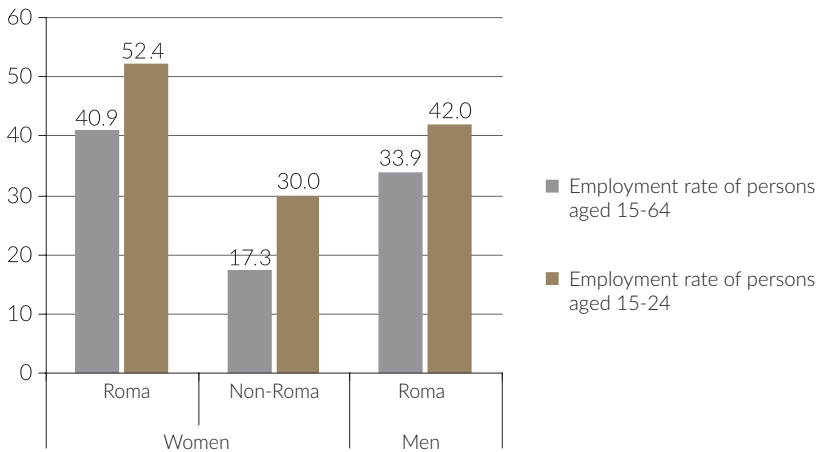
Source: Regional Survey UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

Note that the employment rate of Roma people, including Roma women, their unemployment rate and possibilities to earn income are influenced by a number of factors, such as: (i) the quality of social capital, i.e. education level, skills and qualifications, as well as their health condition; (ii) residence environment and economic opportunities available in the respective region; (iii) discriminatory attitudes of employers who, often, refuse to employ or pay Roma people at the same level as the other employees who have similar qualifications, as well as (iv) proper views on regular, safe work place and decent remuneration for the efforts made, etc. All these factors for marginalization and discrimination are common for representatives of this ethnicity, in most Central and South-East Europe countries, and the Republic of Moldova is not an exception in this regard<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> UNDP RBEC (2012). Roma and non-roma on Central and Southeast European labour markets (policy brief). Elaborated by Niall O'Higgins, Universtita di Salerno.

As stipulated in Chapter II of this Analytical Note, the quality of educational capital of Roma women is extremely low, which significantly reduces their competitiveness on the labour market. Forty-five percent of Roma women have no education, while 47 percent of them have only primary and lower-secondary education. After graduating from the mandatory educational stages, only 12 percent of Roma girls remain in the educational system (upper secondary education or vocational secondary education), which is 7.3 times lower than the share of non-Roma women (88%). In addition, the employment opportunities are even lower for Roma women because they lack of professional qualifications and skills to use modern digital technologies, which often is a basic condition for a wide variety of vacancies. Thus, only 4 percent of Roma women have ever attended an educational or vocational training course for adults, which is 8 times lower than the share of non-Roma women (32%). At the same time, only 14% of Roma people aged 15-64 know how to use a computer, if compare to non-Roma people - 35%. Only 11% of Roma women are computer literate<sup>30</sup>.

Figure 10. **Unemployment Rates of Roma versus Non-Roma Women and versus Roma Men, %**



Source: Regional Survey UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

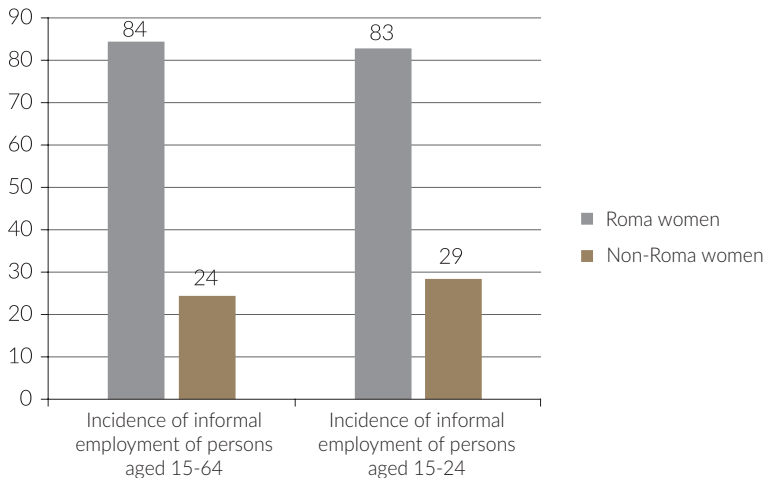
Even if Roma women manage to find a job, their chances of keeping it are very low. Thus, the unemployment rate of Roma women aged 15 and above is 41 percent which is 2.4 times higher if compared to non-Roma women (17%) and by 7 p.p. higher than

<sup>30</sup> UNDP/UN Women/UNICEF/Sida (2013). Analytical Study on the Situation of the Roma in the Communities Densely Populated by Roma People.

Roma men. The unemployment rate of young Roma women aged 15-24 is even higher - 52 percent which is 1.7 times higher than among non-Roma women (30%) and 1.3 times higher than among Roma men of the same age group (42%) (Figure 10).

In recent years, a growing number of Roma people have registered themselves with the National Employment Agency as unemployed job seekers. In late 2014, there were 528 unemployed Roma people registered with NEA, 44.5% of which were women (235 persons)<sup>31</sup>. At the same time, only 6 percent of the registered persons could be employed as a result of the applied active measures, since it is difficult to integrate them on the labour market, as explained by NEA employees, due to their limited education (98% of registered persons have only primary/lower/upper secondary education) and because their inherited traditional crafts are outdated<sup>32</sup>. In addition, they confirmed the fact that employers often refuse, under different pretexts, to employ Roma people because of ethnic stereotypes, without openly recognising this fact. Some experts explain this growing number of Roma people registered with NEA by their desire to receive social welfare which includes the confirmation of the unemployed status as an eligibility condition<sup>33</sup>.

Figure 11. Incidence of Informal Employment among Roma versus Non-Roma Women, %



Source: Regional Survey UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

<sup>31</sup> Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family (2015). Information about the implementation, during 2014, of the Action Plan Supporting the Roma People in the Republic of Moldova.

<sup>32</sup> NEA (2014). 2013 Annual Report; <http://anofm.md/files/elfinder/Raport%20de%20activitate%20ANOFM%202013.pdf>

<sup>33</sup> UNDP/UN Women/UNICEF/Sida (2013). Analytical Study on the Situation of the Roma in the Communities Densely Populated by Roma People.

The incapacity to integrate into the labour market, particularly in rural areas, the lack of agricultural land, which would secure food for over 56% of Roma households<sup>34</sup> and the need to earn income for survival increase informal employment. The informal employment rate among Roma women is 84%, which is 3.5 times higher than among non-Roma women (24%) (Figure 11).

According to relevant studies, most Roma people (64%) take on poorly paid jobs, which do not require special qualifications, or work as day labourers in agriculture (10%) or abroad, mainly in Ukraine and the Russian Federation. At the same time, Roma people practically do not work in such fields as health care, education, science and renovation, as well as in public order and security - fields that require higher education as a basic condition. As for the business environment, efforts made by Roma people to start and legalise a private business are half the level of non-Roma; they prefer not to get involved in formal businesses, but in trade-related activities<sup>35</sup>.

The visions about regularity, work safety and expected remuneration also influence their participation in the labour market. Thus, even if most Roma women of working age (59.8%) recognise the importance of a stable job, with a determined weekly schedule, they (40.2%) are more likely than non-Roma women (28.9%) to choose an unstable job, which would allow them to manage their own time as they wish. In addition, they prefer higher incomes, even though the pay is not regular and guaranteed (38.6% of Roma women versus 31.8% non-Roma women), rather than lower but guaranteed income from a stable job (61.4% Roma women, compared to 68.2% non-Roma women) (Figure 12).

The incidence of poverty among Roma women is high, about 66 percent of them are under the national absolute poverty threshold<sup>36</sup>, which is by 27.1 p.p. higher than among non-Roma women living in their neighbourhood (38.9%). If using income against the international poverty threshold of USD 4.30<sup>37</sup>, the share of Roma women under the poverty line (65.4%) is by 37.2 p.p. higher than among non-Roma women (28.2%). Applying the same poverty threshold on expenses, the gap between poor Roma (50.6%) and non-Roma women (24.2%) is lower by 22.4p.p. In the case of extreme poverty, when we use the threshold of USD 2.15 applied against income, the trends are the same. Thus, the share of poor Roma women (38.1%) is by 31.2 p.p. higher than among non-Roma women (6.9%). The smallest difference between these groups, of 17.6 p.p.,

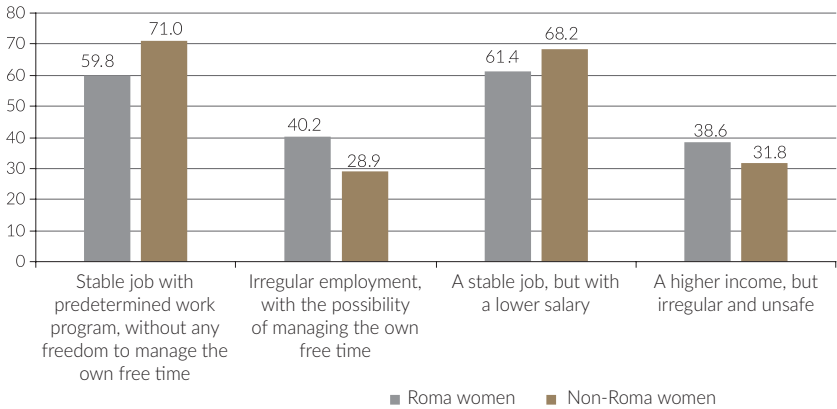
<sup>34</sup> UNDP (2007). Roma People in the Republic of Moldova.

<sup>35</sup> UN (2014). Study on the Situation of Romani Women and Girls in the Republic of Moldova.

<sup>36</sup> In 2011, when the Regional Survey of UNDP/WB/EC on the Situation of Roma People was carried out, the national poverty threshold, estimated by NBS, was of MDL 1.093.

<sup>37</sup> The thresholds of USD 4.30 and USD 2.15 were calculated and adjusted to the Purchasing Power Parity (PPP).

Figure 12. Preferences of Roma versus non-Roma Women on Regularity, Safety of Work Place and Expected Remuneration, %

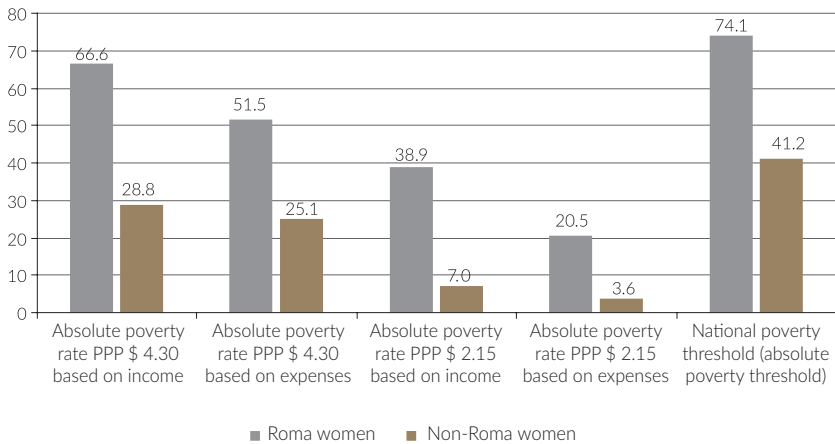


Source: Regional Survey UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

is registered for expenses, with a poverty incidence of only 3.1 percent for non-Roma women. In its turn, it hints to underreported income in relation to expenses made by Roma women (Figure 13). All these raise concerns regarding the full achievement of the first MDG objective by the Republic of Moldova, as well as of one of the priority areas of the *Action Plan Supporting the Roma People in the Republic of Moldova* for 2011-2015, particularly “labour and economic well-being”<sup>38</sup>.

<sup>38</sup> Government Decision No 494 of 08 July 2011 approving the Action Plan Supporting the Roma People in the Republic of Moldova for 2011-2015.

Figure 13. Poverty Incidence by Income and Expenses among Roma versus Non-Roma Women, %



Source: Regional Survey UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

Roma women are not part of the State social insurance system, the access to which is based on contributions made in relation to the accumulated work years. The relevant research show that about 53 percent of Roma people aged 15 and above have less than 10 years of work experience, which is twice lower than among non-Roma people (25%). Roma people have an average of 13.6 years of formal employment (compared to 22.9 years for non-Roma people), which makes them illegible for a minimum old-age pension from the public social insurance system. Thus, only 7 percent of Roma households receive social benefits, compared to 25 percent for non-Roma households. Though the social insurance system provides the option of individual insurance with a fixed amount, it is not popular among Roma people. The main reasons are the following: lack of money to buy the insurance, few and low-value advantages offered by the insurance (old-age pension and death grant). After the annual indexation of 1 April 2015, the minimum old-age pension amounts to MDL 861.80<sup>39</sup> or 59.7 percent of the pensioners' minimum subsistence level, determined by the NBS for the 1st quarter of 2015, which does not guarantee an old age free of poverty<sup>40</sup>.

<sup>39</sup> Government Decision No 61 of 6 March 2015, on Indexation of Social Insurance and State Social Benefits.

<sup>40</sup> Author's calculations according to data from the NBS Statistical Databank.



Roma women apply for cash benefits from the social assistance system, because they do not have enough money and are poor. Cash benefits represent 9 percent of the Roma households' income, if compared to 4 percent of non-Roma households<sup>41</sup>. Though social welfare is currently regarded as the most targeted on the poor households, some analyses show that due to the recording shortfalls there is an increased likelihood that a big share of Roma families are not able to benefit from these payments, because of the difficult procedure to obtain the required documents and the inability to confirm their occupational status<sup>42</sup>. According to a recent survey, Roma women encounter the following issues: (i) local public authorities' representatives are reluctant to provide information about the procedure of obtaining social welfare (ii) they propose jobs that are inappropriate for Roma women's skills or abilities, which leads to them refusing jobs and, as a result, it leads to suspension of these social welfare payments<sup>43</sup>. In addition, the lack of some data on ethnicities in the social protection system does not allow for the disability among Roma women and girls to be analysed, as well as their access to primary and specialised community-based social services.

Access to houses with an appropriate infrastructure is important in appreciating the household deprivation among Roma people, including Roma women's vulnerability, which is a strategic objective of the Action Plan Supporting the Roma People in the Republic of Moldova for 2011-2015<sup>44</sup>. Studies show that the lack of infrastructure in Roma households is at higher rates than most households of non-Roma people. Thus, the share of Roma people living in dilapidated houses or in poor neighborhoods (18%) is more than three times higher than non-Roma households (5%). Only 16% of Roma households have indoor toilets, 20% have an indoor shower or bathroom, and 23% of them are connected to public sewerage system or sanitary water reservoir. About 13% of the Roma households are not connected to the electricity network (compared to 3% of non-Roma households), 35% do not have an indoor kitchen (compared to 14% of non-Roma households), 13% cook using wood and coal (compared to 6% of non-Roma households) and 49% do not have tap water or access to a water pipe inside the house or in the garden/yard (compared to 28% of non-Roma households)<sup>45</sup>. It should be mentioned that these insalubrious conditions are more pronounced in the rural area.

<sup>41</sup> The percentage value of income from social aid payments includes the following: unemployment, maternity, child, and poverty benefits; subsidies and scholarships. UNDP/UN Women/UNICEF/Sida (2013). Analytical Study on the Situation of the Roma in the Communities Densely Populated by Roma People.

<sup>42</sup> Expert-Grup (2011). Analiza experienței implementării legii ajutorului social în Republica Moldova [Analysis of the Experience in Implementing the State Aid Law in the Republic of Moldova]. [http://www.expert-grup.org/old/library\\_upld/d483.pdf](http://www.expert-grup.org/old/library_upld/d483.pdf)

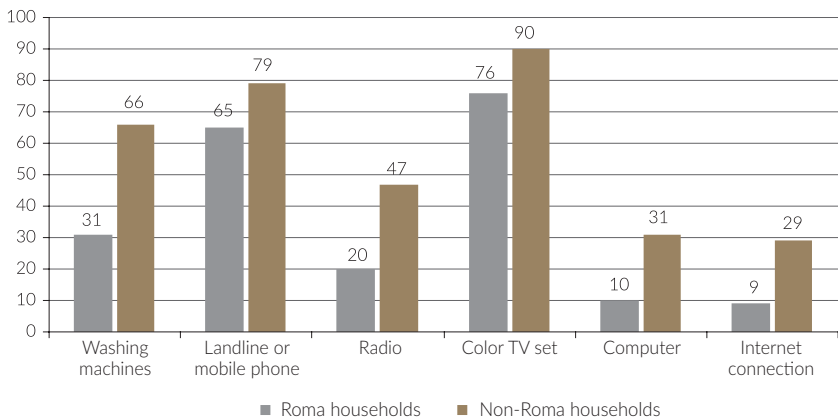
<sup>43</sup> UN (2014). Study on the Situation of Romani Women and Girls in the Republic of Moldova.

<sup>44</sup> Government Decision No 494 of 08 July 2011 approving the Action Plan Supporting the Roma People in the Republic of Moldova for 2011-2015.

<sup>45</sup> UNDP/UN Women/UNICEF/Sida (2013). Analytical Study on the Situation of the Roma in the Communities Densely Populated by Roma People.

The conditions of unpaid work and free time of Roma women are influenced by the available household appliances to ease the housekeeping. According to the existing data, only 31% of Roma households have washing machines (compared to 66% of non-Roma households), only 65% have landline or mobile phones (compared to 79% of non-Roma households), only 20% have radio (compared to 47% of non-Roma households), 76% have colour TV sets (compared to 90% of non-Roma households), about 10% have computers (compared to 31% of non-Roma households) and about 9% have Internet connection (compared to 29% of non-Roma households) (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Roma versus Non-Roma Households' Endowment with Household Appliances, %

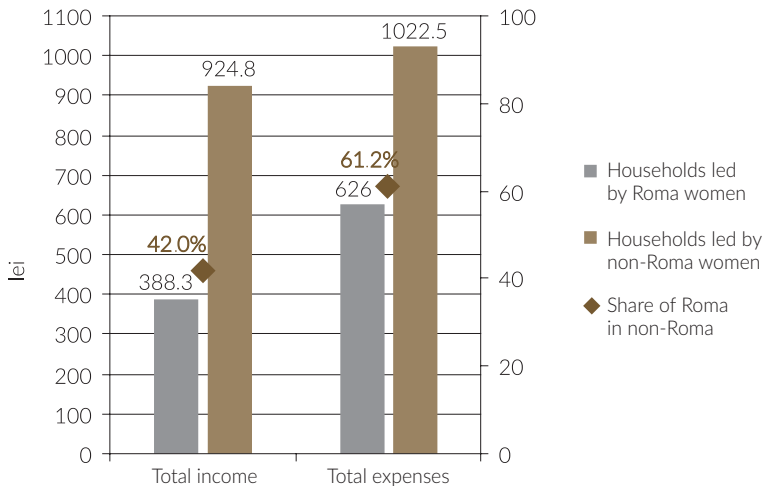


Source: Regional Survey UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

## V. Capacity and Possibility of Roma Women and Girls to Participate in Development

The implementation of sustainable development means recognition of synergies between gender equality and economic, social and ecological development, which ensures human well-being and dignity, the integrity of equity and social justice environment, now and in the future<sup>46</sup>. As a result, women's fair participation in those three sustainable development dimensions is an essential precondition, which is still a goal to be achieved in the case of Roma women and girls. Their capacity to participate in the sustainable development may be measured by the ability to control resources, freedom of movement, the possibility to decide on setting up a family, freedom from the risk of violence, including ability to speak in society and in the political environment.

Figure 15. Total Average Monthly Income and Expenses of Households Led by Roma Women versus Non-Roma Women



Source: Regional Survey UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

<sup>46</sup> UN Women. The World Survey on the Role of Women in Development 2014: Gender Equality and Sustainable Development.

As already stipulated in the previous chapters of this analytical note, Roma women have a reduced capacity for controlling resources, meaning limited abilities and possibilities to earn their own income, to have, manage and use material goods. Studies show that the monthly average income of a person from a household led by Roma women account for 42% of the income earned by non-Roma women, and 70% of the income led by Roma men (MDL 553.8). In their turn, the expenses of households led by Roma women account for 61.2% of the expenses incurred by non-Roma women and 69.4% of the households led by Roma men (MDA 902.6). As already mentioned, a trend was noticed among households led by women to underreport the income, as the household's expenses are 1.6 times higher<sup>47</sup>. This underreporting trend could be explained by psychological factors related to prudence and lack of confidence that the information provided would not be used against them (Figure 15).

The inability to control the resources undermines the negotiation and expression power of Roma women in the household, a situation worsened by the gender-based paternalist norms in the Roma community. In its turn, it contributes to maintaining the dependency on Roma men, who make the final decisions on using the common resources, as well as on other important household issues, such as: women's freedom of movement, child marriages. In addition Roma women's views play an important role in accepting their economic dependency on men. About one-third of them believe that it is not acceptable for a wife to earn more money than her husband, which is twice more than non-Roma women (14%) with the same views<sup>48</sup>.

The marriage of Roma women is an important aspect in terms of social assertion in the Roma community, and the most suitable age for such event, according to the existing norms, is 15-17 years. Even if most Roma parents report in surveys about the irrelevance of marriages at such a young age, the need to ensure own "psychological comfort", related to the control over the evolution of girls' puberty, prevails. Thus, marriages are arranged by negotiation between families, while Roma girls do not have the capacity to decide in this regard. In addition, the limited knowledge about contraception and family planning deprive them from being able to decide about conception of and giving birth to children<sup>49</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> UNDP/UN Women/UNICEF/Sida (2013). Analytical Study on the Situation of the Roma in the Communities Densely Populated by Roma People.

<sup>48</sup> UNDP/UN Women/UNICEF/Sida (2013). Analytical Study on the Situation of the Roma in the Communities Densely Populated by Roma People.

<sup>49</sup> UNDP (2007). Roma in the Republic of Moldova. UN (2014). Study on the Situation of Romani Women and Girls in the Republic of Moldova.

As a result, early marriages, pregnancy and the need to take care of children are the key reasons for dropping out of school, which leads to lack/insufficiency of skills and abilities, followed by failure to integrate into the official labour market and earn their own income to ensure financial independence.

According to relevant studies, women's economic independence decreases significantly their vulnerability to family violence<sup>50</sup>. Often, Roma women and girls are victims of domestic violence (See Chapter III of this analytic note), but these cases are not reported on different grounds, one of which is passivity from the police in intervening in such cases. Although, the police currently have enough regulatory<sup>51</sup> and methodological<sup>52</sup> tools to intervene in domestic violence cases, as a rule, police refrain from protecting Roma women and girls, because as they say Roma community has "its own rules"<sup>53</sup>. This is one of the causes that deprive Roma women and girls from access to "protection orders", as well as from specialist support services for victims of domestic violence. The other cases are related to: failure of LPA representatives to provide information about such services and how to access them; refusal of victims to use these services, for different reasons, among which the lack of trust in changing the situation, and a high dependency on abusers<sup>54</sup>.

Due to the fact they have a limited capacity of controlling resources and limited knowledge, Roma women are practically deprived of the right to justice. According to statistics of the National Council of State-Guaranteed Legal Aid, out of a total of over 111,000 cases, which were legally assisted during 2013-2014 and in the first nine months of 2015, 58 cases dealt with Roma people, of which 6 dealt with Roma women<sup>55</sup>. Note that none of the legally assisted cases were dealt with domestic violence.

<sup>50</sup> Proynk, P., Hargreaves, J., Kim, J., Morison, L., Phetla, G., Watts, C., Busza, J. & Porter, J. (2006) Effect of a structural intervention for the prevention of intimate-partner violence and HIV in rural South Africa: a cluster randomised trial. *Lancet*, 368, 1973-1983.

<sup>51</sup> Law No 45 of 01 July 2007 on Preventing and Combating Family Violence; Law No 140 of 14 June 2013 on Special Protection of Children at Risk; Government Decision No 270 of 8 April 2014 approving the Instruction on the Cross-Sectors Cooperation Mechanism for the identification, assessment, referral, assistance and monitoring of children, who are victims or potential victims of child violence, neglect, exploitation and trafficking.

<sup>52</sup> Ministry of Internal Affairs Order No 275 of 14 August 2008 approving the Methodical Instructions on the intervention of Internal Affairs Authorities in the prevention and combating of domestic violence; GPI/MIA Order No 79 of 28 April 2015 approving the Methodical Instructions on the identification, assessment, referral, assistance and monitoring of cases of child violence, neglect, exploitation and trafficking.

<sup>53</sup> UN (2014). Study on the Situation of Romani Women and Girls in the Republic of Moldova.

<sup>54</sup> LaStrada/OAK Foundation/Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2013). Study on Observance of Rights of Domestic Violence Victims in the Assistance and Protection System of the Republic of Moldova. [http://www.lastrada.md/publicatii/ebook/Violenta\\_raport\\_engl\\_final.pdf](http://www.lastrada.md/publicatii/ebook/Violenta_raport_engl_final.pdf)

<sup>55</sup> <http://statistica.cnaigs.md/>

The presence of Roma women in civic and political life is still insignificant. Currently there is only one non-government organisation of Roma women at the national level. It has challenges with ensuring its financial sustainability. With regard to political life, Roma women are still not present on the parties' lists and in structures managing the election process. Few Roma women work in the public services system, but in non-decision making positions. However, thanks to the support activities promoted in the Republic of Moldova during the past years by the international organisations, it seems that the situation of Roma women has slightly improved. For the first time, following the 2015 local elections, two Roma women were elected as local councillors<sup>56</sup>.

<sup>56</sup> <https://europa.eu/eyd2015/en/un-women/stories/first-roma-women-elected-local-council-moldova>

## VI. Limitations, Barriers, Impediments Encountered by Roma Women and Girls in the Society

The vulnerability of Roma women and girls for marginalisation and social exclusion is caused by a number of barriers to accessing social and economic well-being outcomes and products, which in their turn, undermine the participation and role of Roma women and girls in the sustainable development process. Limited access to education, a low literacy rate and a lack of professional skills/qualifications are the determinants, which correlate closely with Roma women's lack of access to the labour market, their capacity to earn money, poverty and dependence on social welfare, an infrequent use health services, access to justice, socialisation and use of leisure time. In addition, their low level of education impacts their self-esteem, formation of perceptions and critical attitudes, their capacity to negotiate and express opinions in the family, share issues, capacity to influence and lobby the decisions in the community, participation in the political life, as well as maintenance and transmission of traditions and cultural values from one generation to the next. It should be mentioned that paternalist gender-based approaches of Roma women, as well as the preconceived ideas and discriminatory attitudes based on ethnicity, which prevail in Moldova society – taken together, form complementary factors that reinforce these barriers.

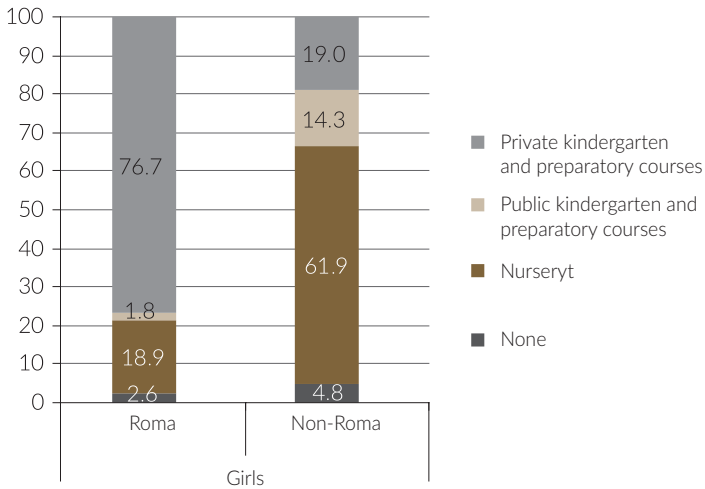
Roma girls have a limited access to education, starting even with pre-school stage (ISCED 0) which, even if it is not mandatory, it is crucial for preparing minority groups for a positive school experience<sup>57</sup>. The gross enrolment rate of Roma girls at this educational stage is only 21%, which is 3.6 times lower than of non-Roma girls. Over 76% of Roma girls aged 3-6 have never attended a pre-school institution. Only 2.6% attended a nursery, 18.9% attended a public kindergarten and preparatory groups/courses (compared to non-Roma girls - 61.9%) and only 1.8% attended a private kindergarten and pre-school preparatory courses/groups (compared to non-Roma girls - 14.3%)<sup>58</sup> (Figure 16).

The gross enrolment rates of Roma girls (in primary and lower secondary education stages) are not only much lower than those of non-Roma girls, but are decreasing even more with the following educational stages. Thus, if the gross enrolment rate of Roma girls in primary educational stage is 54.7%, then in lower secondary education stage it

<sup>57</sup> Embassy of Finland in Bucharest (2014). Background Report about the Roma in Romania. <http://www.finland.ro/public/download.aspx?ID=133754&GUID=%7BAC2C8F55-8AAE-47C8-BA1E-44B6020A2DD8%7D>

<sup>58</sup> Data for the Republic of Moldova taken over from Regional Survey of UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011

Figure 16. Pre-school Attendance by Roma and Non-Roma Girls of 3-6 Years of Age



Source: Regional Survey UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

is already of 49.3%, with ethnicity gaps of 22.6 p.p. and 41.4p.p. The gross enrolment rate of Roma girls in vocational secondary education stage is only 14.4%, or about 5.4 times lower than non-Roma girls (78%) (Figure 17). The statistics on school enrolment level of Roma children are not only alarming, but also show a downward trend over time. Thus, compared to 2005, the gross enrolment in mandatory educational stages of Roma children decreased from 57% to 54%, while in vocational secondary education stage — from 20% to 16%<sup>59</sup>.

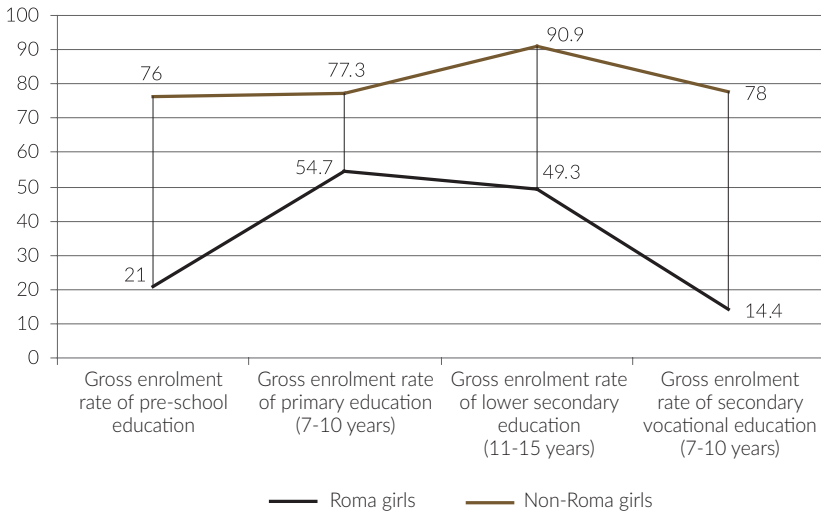
The low level of school enrolment is supplemented by absenteeism, which results in early school dropout. Only 76% of Roma girls attend a school on a daily basis, or by 20 p.p. fewer than non-Roma girls (96%). Thirteen percent of Roma girls are absent for at least one day a week, while 4% of them are absent for more than 4 days a month (Figure 18). The school dropout rate of Roma girls is 56%, which is by 40 p.p. higher than that of non-Roma girls, is one of the highest rate among Central and South Europe Region, beyond this level is only Albania (60%) (Figure 19)<sup>60</sup>.

<sup>59</sup> Data for the first National Comprehensive Study on the Situation of Roma People were collected in 2005, subsequently they were published in 2007 in the "Roma People in the Republic of Moldova" Report of UNDP:

<sup>60</sup> UNDP RBC (2013). Interplay between gender and ethnicity: Exposing structural disparities of Romani women. Analysis of the UNDP/World Bank/EC regional Roma survey data. <http://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/dam/rbec/docs/Exposing-structural-disparities-of-Romani-women.pdf>

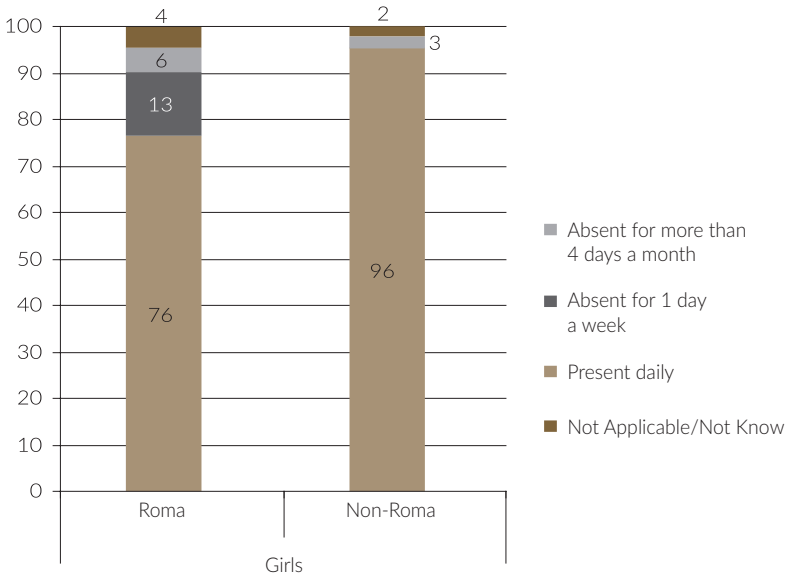


Figure 17. Gross Enrolment Rates of Roma Girls, by education level, %



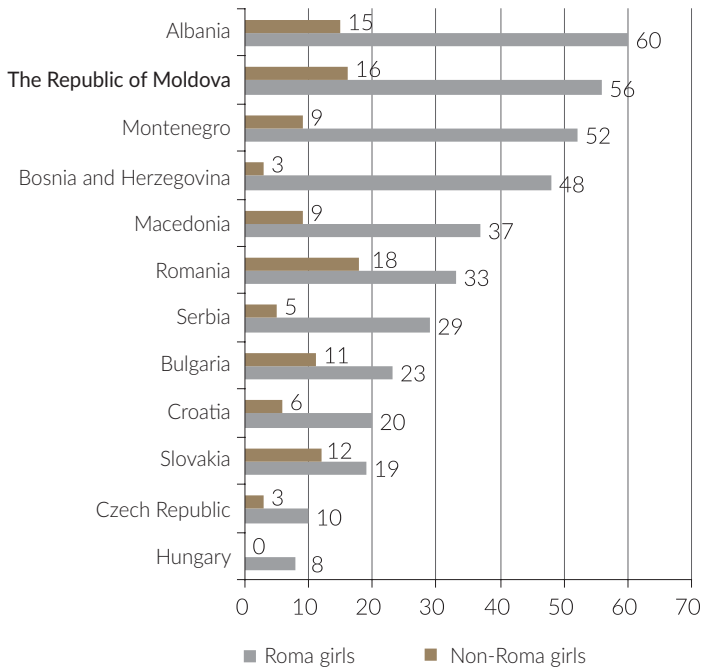
Source: Regional Survey UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

Figure 18. School Attendance of Roma versus Non-Roma Girls, %



Source: Regional Survey UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

Figure 19. School Dropout Rate of Roma versus Non-Roma Girls, by Countries, %



Source: Regional Survey UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

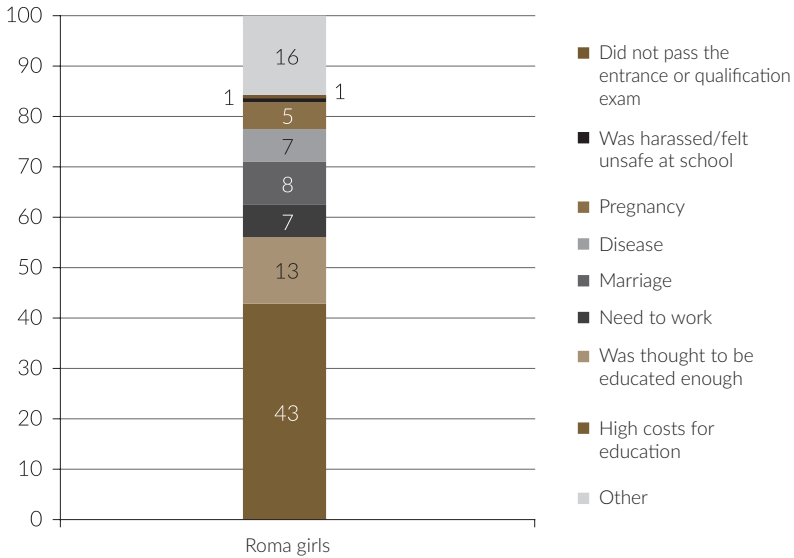
Roma girls reported the following determinants of school absenteeism and early dropout: (i) inability to cover the costs related to education (school supplies, clothing etc.) - 42.7%, (ii) opinion that Roma girl is already sufficiently educated - 13.2%, (iii) early marriages - 8.4% (twice more frequent than Roma boys - 4.2%), (iv) need to work or disease - 6.6%, (v) pregnancy - 5.1% (Figure 20).

It should be mentioned that discriminatory attitudes and an unsafe school environment, even if they are not listed among main determinants of school absenteeism and dropout (1%), their incidence among Roma girls is three times higher than among non-Roma girls<sup>61</sup>. The following are regarded as complementary factors for school absenteeism and dropout: (i) lack of free or affordable school transport services to reach the school, as a result of school infrastructure optimisation; (ii) migration with parents, or need to remain at home to take care of the household; (iii) parental values and attitudes toward girls' educational values and need etc.<sup>62</sup>.

<sup>61</sup> UNDP/UN Women/UNICEF/Sida (2013). Analytical Study on the Situation of the Roma in the Communities Densely Populated by Roma People.

<sup>62</sup> UN Women/OHCHR/UNDP (2014). Study on the Situation of Romani Women and Girls in the Republic of Moldova.

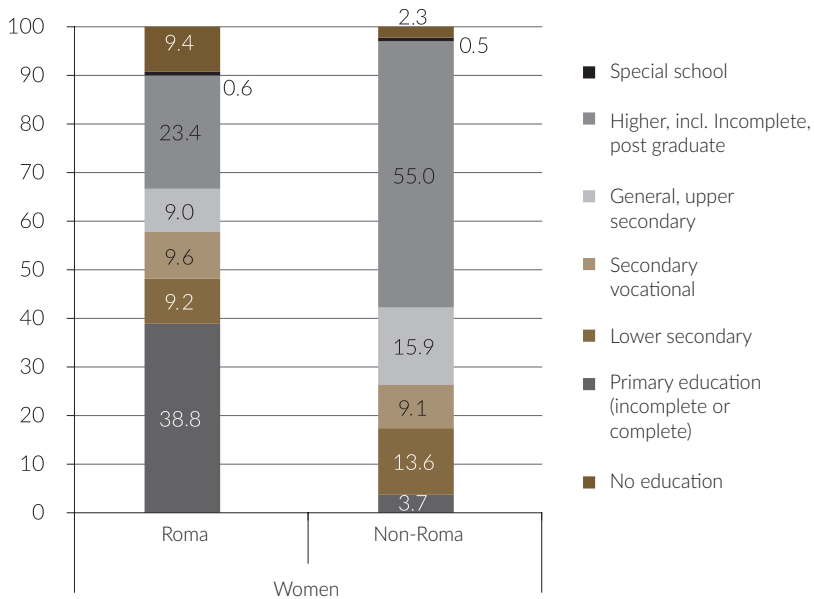
Figure 20. Determinant Reasons for Absenteeism and School Dropout among Roma Women, %



Source: Regional Survey UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

About 39% of Roma women believe that the best educational stage for a girl is primary education, 9% believe it is lower secondary, vocational secondary or specialised upper-secondary education. 23.4% of Roma women recognise the importance of higher education (including incomplete or post graduate education), or about 2.3 times less if compared to non-Roma women (Figure 21).

Figure 21. Perceptions of Roma Women on the Best Educational Levels for Girls, %



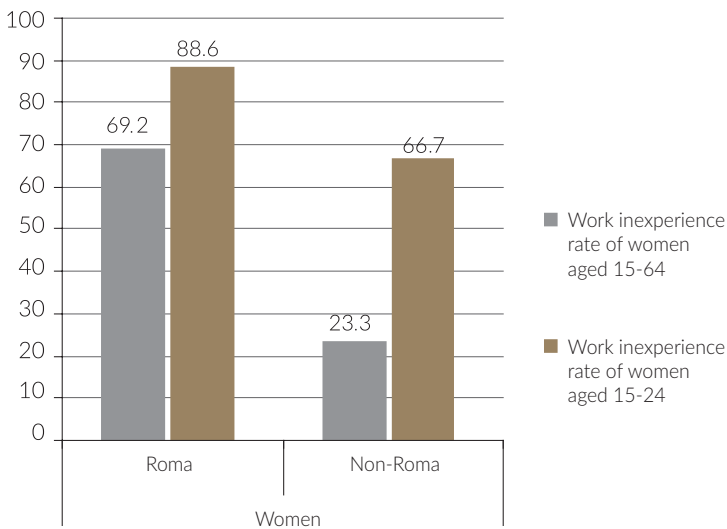
Source: Regional Survey UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

Consequently, only 12% of Roma girls remain in the educational system after graduating the mandatory educational stages. All these suggest that there is a need for some appropriate policy measures designed to enhance the inclusion and maintenance of Roma children, including Roma girls in the educational system, which raises major concerns for the full accomplishment, by the Republic of Moldova, of the second MDG objective by 2015, of recommendations issued by international organisations on educational inclusion of Roma people, including Roma women, including in the priority area of reference under the *Action Plan Supporting the Roma People in the Republic of Moldova* for 2011-2015<sup>63</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> Government Decision No 494 of 08 July 2011 approving the Action Plan Supporting the Roma People in the Republic of Moldova for 2011-2015.

The barriers encountered by Roma women in accessing the formal labour market are caused not only by the low levels of education and skills, but also by the employers' discriminatory attitudes based on ethnicity stereotypes. As a result, 69.2% of Roma women aged 15 and above do not have any work experience, which is about three times higher compared to non-Roma women (23.3%). Some 88.6% of young Roma women aged 15-24 years have never worked, which is 1.3 times higher than among non-Roma women (66.6%) (Figure 22). Taken together, all these particularities diminish Roma women's capacities to control the resources, which keeps them in the "poverty trap", limits their access to health care services, justice, and makes them dependent on the social assistance system. The paternalist norms of the Roma community also play an important role in the Roma women's financial dependence on men and in undermining their decision-making capacities.

Figure 22. Work Inexperience Rates of Roma versus Non-Roma Women, %

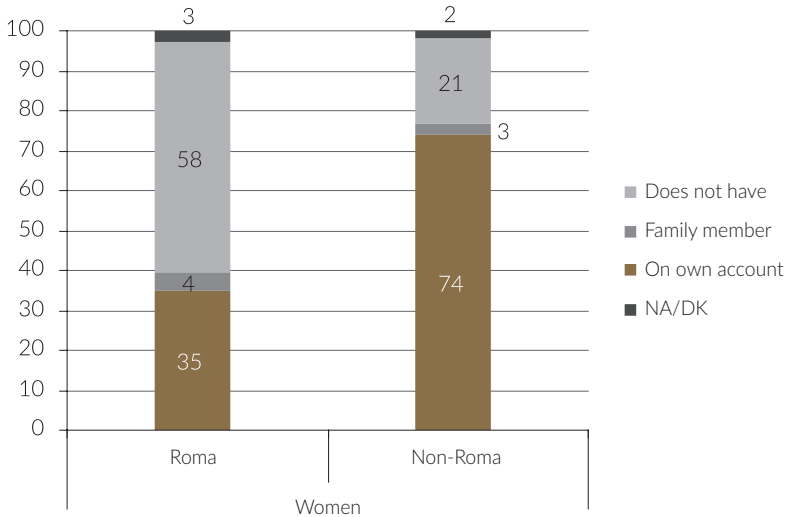


Source: Regional Survey UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

The low level of addressability to health services is mainly caused by the lack of social insurance policies (about 58% if compared to 21% for non-Roma women) and of money to buy them or to pay for health care services and/or prescribed medicines – factors reported by 79.9% of Roma women (if compared to non-Roma women - 69.2%) (Figures 23 and 24). In this manner, about 44% of Roma women did not pay a visit to doctor during the past 12 months, 18.9% paid 1-2 visits, 13.1% – 3-4 visits, 5.9% – 5-10

visits. In terms of the nature of visits, emergency cases - 1 case (23%), 2 cases (16.4%), 3 cases (8.6%) and 4 cases (6.6%)<sup>64</sup>.

Figure 23. Coverage of Roma versus Non-Roma Women in the CHI system, %



Source: Regional Survey UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

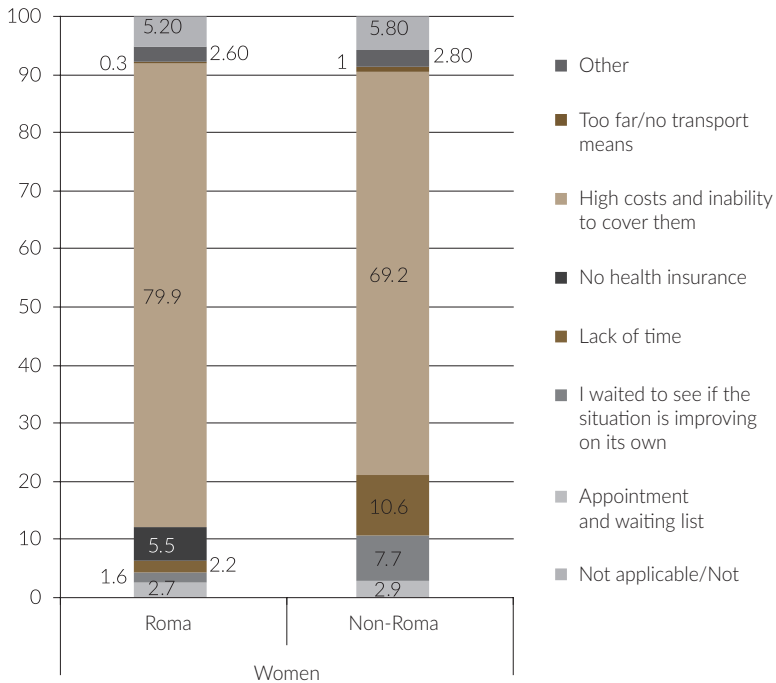
The following are regarded as complimentary factors that reduce addressability to doctors: Roma women's limited knowledge of the types of state free services that they are entitled to, discriminatory attitudes of the health staff and informal payments demanded from the Roma for the provision of free services, such as emergency (often met in rural areas densely inhabited by Roma people)<sup>65</sup>. As a result, 67.9% of Roma women reported that even though they needed, to visit a doctor for a consultation in the past 12 months, they could not afford it, which is by 20.6 p.p. more than in case of non-Roma women (47.3%). In addition, over 75% of Roma women reported that they could not afford event basic medicines, which is 25 p.p. higher than the figure for non-Roma women (50%).<sup>66</sup>

<sup>64</sup> UNDP/UN Women/UNICEF/Sida (2013). Analytical Study on the Situation of the Roma in the Communities Densely Populated by Roma People.

<sup>65</sup> UN (2014). Study on the Situation of Romani Women and Girls in the Republic of Moldova.

<sup>66</sup> Calculations made by the UNDP RBEC expert team, according to the Regional Survey of UNDP/WB/EC, 2011.

Figure 24. Reasons for Not Seeking Health Care by Roma versus Non-Roma Women, %

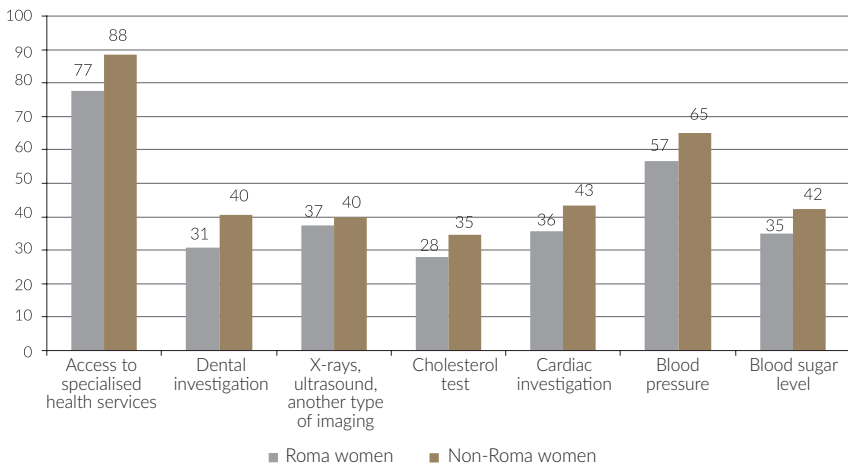


Source: Regional Survey UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

In addition, data show that Roma women (77%) seek specialised medical investigations less often than non-Roma women (88%). Thus, during the last year, the share of Roma women aged 16 and above, who underwent a dental examination (31%), was by 9 p.p. lower than among non-Roma women (40%), 37% of Roma women underwent X-rays, ultrasound or other types of imaging, compared to 40% non-Roma women. At the same time, 28% and 36% of Roma women underwent cardiac investigation and a cholesterol test, compared to 35% and 43% of non-Roma women. There are differences in the shares of those who took a blood pressure test (Roma women - 57%, non-Roma women - 65%), as well in the level of blood sugar concentration (Roma women - 35%, non-Roma women - 42%) (Figure 25).

As a consequence, Roma women seek health care only for preventive care for their children - services that they know are for free, a fact that explains the insignificant difference between the vaccination rates of children aged 0-6 (Roma girls - 95%, non-Roma girls - 97% and Roma boys - 94%).

Figure 25. Incidence of Medical Investigations of Roma versus Non-Roma Women (16 years +)



Source: Regional Survey UNDP/WB/EC, on the Situation of Roma People in the Republic of Moldova, 2011.

The barriers encountered by Roma women in accessing the social welfare system are caused by their low participation in the formal labour market, which does not enable them to accumulate the contributory period so that to gain the right to a pension from the social insurance public system. In its turn, the access of Roma women to social insurance system is influenced by insufficient knowledge, lack of/difficulty in obtaining the required documents to certify the respective status in order to benefit from a social payment, as well as lack/underdevelopment of primary or specialised social services in the rural areas densely inhabited by Roma people. Another barrier in this regard are the discriminatory attitudes of some representatives of local public authorities, while the suspension of community mediators' services due to a lack of funds in the local budgets of several communities will increase the "distance" in this respect.

Limited access of Roma women to justice is caused by the lack of knowledge and capacities to address the justice system and claim their rights when they are violated, but also by a number of institutional discriminatory acts caused by the passivity of law enforcement bodies toward the Roma community.

The limited participation of Roma women and girls in the decision-making process in the family and Roma community, as well as their limited presence in civic and political life is caused by gender-based discriminatory norms of the Roma community, as well as by the preconceived ideas about the society, woman's presence in the political life and her capacity to hold decision-making positions<sup>67</sup>.

<sup>67</sup> IPP/Soros-Moldova/SOIR (2015). The Phenomenon of Discrimination in Moldova: Perceptions of the Population. A Comparative Study, <http://www.soros.md/files/publications/documents/The%20Phenomenon%20of%20Discrimination%20in%20Moldova.pdf>



# Conclusions

Roma women and girls still represent one of the most disadvantaged groups in the Republic of Moldova. Their vulnerability to social exclusion is caused by a number of gender, class, ethnicity, race-based discriminatory factors that influence not only their role and position in the community, but also equal access to education, the labour market, earning of income that brings them above the poverty line, health care, social protection, quality of housing, civic and political life, justice. As a result, all these deprive Roma women and girls from participating and fully contributing to sustainable development, which can be achieved by the synergy between gender equality and its three (economic, social and ecologic) dimensions, which ensure well-being and human dignity, integrity of equity and social justice environment, now and in the future.

Low literacy and education levels, a lack of professional skills/qualification, which are the result of limited access to education, greatly affect Roma women and girls' capacities to take on social and economic roles. The determinant causes of education deprivation are the following: (i) inability to cover the related costs (fees, school supplies, clothing, transport services), (ii) early marriages (which are twice as often than Roma boys) and pregnancies, (iii) parents and their own views regarding the amount of education, its value and use in the future, which derive from the gender role assigned in the Roma community, as well as (iv) discriminatory attitudes in school, insufficient preparation and involvement of the teaching staff when working with Roma children. The quality of educational capital of Roma women and girls is expressed by: a low rate of literacy (only 63% can write and read) and of education (45% have no education, while 47% have only primary and lower secondary education), 2.7 times fewer years spent on education, a high risk of early school dropout (school dropout rate - 56%), lack of professional qualifications and skills.

The capacity to integrate and assert themselves on the labour market is influenced not only by their educational capital, but also by employers' discriminatory attitudes based on ethnicity stereotypes. Thus, Roma women and girls are characterised on the labour market by a low level of activities (28% compared to 52% for non-Roma women) and occupation (16% compared to 43% for non-Roma women), high unemployment rates (41% compared to 17% for non-Roma women), lack of work experience (69.2% compared to 23.3% for non-Roma women), and incidents of informal jobs and low, sporadic income (84% compared to 24% for non-Roma women).

Lack of control over resources keeps Roma women and girls in the "poverty trap" and deprives them from access to health care services, proper housing, social protection, justice, socialisation and leisure time. Thus, over 66% of Roma women are under the

national absolute poverty threshold (compared to non-Roma women - 38.9%), and the income of their households accounts for only 42% of the income earned by non-Roma households led by women. About 58% of Roma women have no compulsory health insurance (compared to non-Roma - 21%), at the same time over 69% of them could not afford to see a doctor during the last year, even if they needed to. In addition, the lack/insufficiency of knowledge about family planning and contraception worsen the maternal health indicators. At the same time, the share of Roma households living in dilapidated houses or in poor districts with a poor social infrastructure is more than three times higher than that of non-Roma households. A total of 49% of Roma households have no running water or access to a water pipe inside the house or in the garden/yard (compared to 28% of non-Roma households), 77% are not connected to public sewerage system or to a sanitary water reservoir, 13% are not connected to the electricity network (compared to 3% of non-Roma households).

Roma women are often out of public social insurance system, and their access to social insurance system is determined by their awareness of the existing advantages, possibility of certifying their eligibility in this regard, and the presence of primary or specialised social services in the communities where they live.

Although Roma women are often victims of various forms of violence, including domestic violence, Roma women usually do not reported them for various reasons, a fact that prevents them from achieving their right to justice. In addition, the lack of referral and addressability to specialised social services results in repeated cases of victimisation that change the perceptions related to the normality of these things.

The paternalist approaches based on gender roles influence the ability of Roma women and girls to participate in the decision-making process in the family and in their community. In 2013, community mediators (most of them women) were put into service and the activity carried out by them contributed to the mobilisation of Roma community in terms of addressing and voicing their problems with the authorities. As a result, the suspension of these services in several settlements since 2015 will deepen the gap between Roma communities and local public authorities.

Roma women and girls are practically invisible in public life. Roma women are still not present on the lists of political parties and structures managing the election process. A few Roma women work in the public services system, but in non-decision making positions. However, it seems that the situation is slightly improving and for the first time and following the 2015 local elections, two Roma women were elected as local councillors.

All these findings raise major concerns about the full achievement, by the Republic of Moldova, of the second MDG objective, recommendations issued by international

organisations on the educational inclusion of Roma people, including Roma women and priorities under the Action Plan Supporting the Roma People in the Republic of Moldova for 2011-2015. The need of some appropriate measures in this regards is obvious. The next Action Plan for 2016-2020 will focus on: (i) increasing and maintaining the educational inclusion of Roma children, including Roma girls, to provide equal opportunities to participate in sustainable development outcomes and reducing the intensity of the Roma community's paternalistic rules; (ii) creating conditions, incentives for integration to the formal labour market; (iii) increasing the access to health care services and social protection; (iv) improving the housing quality, (v) increasing the access to justice and public life, as well as (vi) strengthening the status and role of community mediator, including by empowering them with duties to collect and submit primary statistics on the development of social and demographic phenomenon in the Roma community.

# For notes



# For notes



