
RESEARCH

ON THE STATE OF PLAY OF ROMA GRADUATES IN NORTH MACEDONIA



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1. INTRODUCTION



The state of play of Roma graduates is a very important topic concerning one of the most marginalized communities in North Macedonia in relation with the level of education and employment as key factors for inclusion and empowerment of this community.

From the academic year 2007/2008, secondary education is mandatory for every citizen under equal conditions established by the Law on Secondary Education and according to this requirement, the enrollment policy in secondary schools has been harmonized. This law enables the horizontal and vertical mobility of students. Since 2009, scholarships and mentoring/tutoring have been provided to Roma students. This initiative aims to improve the pass ability and success of Roma students of all educational years, from all public and private secondary schools. To encourage Roma students to continue their education in secondary schools, the enrollment criteria for members of this ethnic community have been eased. Every year, in the competition for enrolling students in secondary schools, it is established that Roma can be admitted to public secondary schools with 10% fewer points than required. Students from the Roma ethnic community can enroll in a certain public secondary school if they have up to 10% less points than the number of required points in accordance with the Competition for the respective curricula and programs and if they satisfy the additional criteria for the knowledge and skills exam in the respective school. The purpose of this affirmative policy was to increase the number of students in public schools with higher criteria. However, the number of Roma students who enrolled in the fourth year of secondary education in the last four years is in constant decline.[1]

[1] Strategy for inclusion of the Roma 2022 – 2030, available on:
<https://ener.gov.mk/PublicDocuments/>

According to the education strategy on tertiary education, it is noted that although the criteria for university enrollment are low, access to tertiary education for various vulnerable groups is limited, and there is not even enough information about the opportunities for their enrollment in universities. According to the decision of the Government, from 2015 the Ministry of Education and Science, through the Administration for the Development and Promotion of the Languages of Community Members, began to award scholarships to Roma students. The purpose of this measure was to encourage Roma to enroll in faculties that produce teaching staff. This measure was in accordance with the National Action Plan for Education 2014-2020, which is part of the National Strategy for the inclusion of Roma in North Macedonia for the same period. According to the data of the State Statistics Office, the number of Roma students enrolled in the first year in tertiary education is decreasing year by year.[2]

Another affirmative action is the university enrollment quota. This is a general policy for all non-majority communities in the country. However, there is no official information on the number of students who used this affirmative action, and its implementation is not precisely defined. According to the Strategy for inclusion of Roma 2022-2030, the number of Roma students enrolled in the 2019/20 school year is 55, but there is no data on the number of graduates students for the same year. The Strategy also points that the number of Roma students is decreasing each year.

Throughout the years, many efforts had been aimed at increasing the education and employment level of the Roma community as one of the major factors to overcoming poverty and social exclusion. However, the situation in this field is constantly changing and we need accurate data to be able to aim further activities and improvements in this area. Therefore, this research aims to provide accurate and time-relevant data of the Roma community in the Republic of North Macedonia, current measures and policies in the area of education and employment targeting the Roma, the rates of enrolling/completing tertiary education, reasons and motivations among Roma population to continue their education, as well as the rates of employment/ unemployment of Roma graduated and their professions and the relation between these categories. This data will be further use to create relevant recommendation for decision-makers for adaptation of current and introduction of new measures and policies in the area of education and employment of Roma in order to provide effective and efficient improvements.

[2] Ibid,

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research objectives

The main objective of the research is to provide recommendations for increasing the number of Roma with tertiary education and improvement of the conditions for employment of the young Roma graduates.

The specific objectives of the research are:

- Providing historic and demographic data of the Roma community in the Republic of North Macedonia.
- To determine rates of enrolling/completing tertiary education of young Roma
- To determine rates of employment/ unemployment of Roma graduated and professions.

Spatial scope

The research will refer to the Municipality of Prilep and Bitola, particularly focusing on the Roma communities in these municipalities. The spatial scope is determined in accordance with the number of Roma living in these places, making them municipalities with significant minority of Roma population.

Hypothetical framework

General hypothesis:

The current conditions/measures regarding the state of education and employment of young Roma do not give satisfactory results and do not lead to higher rates of educated and employed Roma.

Specific hypothesis 1: The rate of Roma who enroll in tertiary education system after completion of secondary education in North Macedonia is very low.

Specific hypothesis 2: There is a very high rate of unemployed Roma with completed both secondary as well as tertiary education in North Macedonia.

Methodological framework

The methodological framework of the research is based on two methods:

A. Desk analysis: Desk analysis contains collection and analysis of secondary sources of data: research on rates, employment, unemployment, professions, historic and demographic data of the Roma communities.

The historic and demographic data, as well as analysis on the current policies, strategies and measures related to education and employment of Roma will be collected from available reports, laws and by-laws related to the topic. The official data on rates of employment/unemployment as well as professions of the young Roma from the municipalities of Prilep and Bitola will be collected from the official statistics of the Agency of employment of Republic of North Macedonia, as well as the available reports and surveys on the topic.

B. Field research – survey to display the real situation on the ground about the state of play of Roma graduates. The survey will be conducted on a representative sample of respondents in two major Roma settlements through a pre-prepared questionnaire.

SAMPLE: The subject population of the research is the Roma population located in the Municipalities of Prilep and Bitola. The research will be conducted on a qualified sample of respondents. The sample is determined as 2% of the total Roma population of the respective municipality with proper gender representation, with the respondents being qualified with completed minimum secondary education, between the age of 17 and 37. This qualification is determined in accordance with the objectives and the hypothesis of the research, having in mind that relevant results and recommendations for improvement of conditions for completing tertiary education and consequent employment, could be drawn only from the community members who already have completed certain level of education (secondary education). The age qualification is set due to the need to provide time-relevant data on the conditions, that is, to avoid obtaining results that reflect long-ago conditions that will not have meaning for the current period.

According to the census in 2021, the representation of the Roma population in Municipality of Prilep is 3966 (52% being male and 48% female) and in Municipality of Bitola is 2890 (51% being male and 49% female). Therefore, the sample for the survey is determined to be consisted of 80 respondents in Prilep (42 to be male and 38 female respondents) and 58 in Bitola (30 of them to be male and 28 female respondents), all of which should have completed minimum secondary education and being between the age of 17 and 37.

3. HISTORIC AND DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

3.1. *Ethnologic and cultural characteristic of Roma*

The cultural heritage of the Roma remains a mystery to many ethnographers and culturologists. The great migration of Roma in the 12th century[3] caused a search for a permanent home and adaptation of cultural values with the majority, in the countries where they settled. The process of adaptation and coexistence with the majority is noted as long and incomplete due to the ethnocentricity of the European peoples as owners of the territory in which they lived. By the time of the World War I, Roma had migrated to Europe and were divided according to their traditional trades. Kovaci, Jambazi, Kalderashi, Kale, Sinti, Romungro and other groups of Roma received names as a result of division between them according to their occupations.[4] Skilled Roma who had a trade were accepted by the majority because of their productivity in the countries where they settled. In the period before the World War I, the Roma were mainly settled in several European nation-states and were segregated.

In 1907, the term "Gypsy policies" was recorded for the first time, which refers to the segregated camps for Roma, where they had to work and live permanently.[5] Already in 1926, the "Gypsy Index" was introduced, which referred to the Roma living in Austria. The Federal Police in Eisenstadt, Austria[6] is introducing this system and registering all Roma with their fingerprints. This system was introduced due to the frequent migration and confinement of Roma living in camps in Austria. [7]

[3] Courthiade, Marcel (2003) "The Gangetic city of Kannauj : original cradle-town of the Rromani people" Wydawnictwonaukowe Poznan

[4] Hübshmanová, Milena (2003) "Roma - Sub Ethnic Groups". Rombase. Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz

[5] Baumgartner, Gerhard (1987) Sinti und Roma in Österreich. In: Pogrom 130, pp. 47-50.

[6] Baumgartner, Gerhard (ed.) (1995) 6x Österreich. Zur Geschichte und aktuellen Situation der Volksgruppen, Klagenfurt.

[7] Ibid.

This practice was widely accepted and implemented by other countries for the "purity" of the territory. During this period, the Roma were prevented from practicing their cultural-symbolic values due to the dominance of the majority in the countries where they were settled. In the period leading up to the World War II, Roma were treated as slaves, restricted and registered as criminals or potential deviants of the common good in European nation states. During the World War II, Roma faced the most brutal treatment and genocide within Hitler's Reich. Until 1971, the Roma did not get a way to organize and unify their values as a nation living in Europe.

Roma are still not in a situation to reach a full level of cultural development due to the collateral damage, agony and torture that was inflicted on them for centuries as a divided and multi-colored people. Historically, it is noted that the Roma are people that adapt, that is, assimilate to the majority and their values and this is a process that initiates the loss of language, tradition, customs, symbols and other features. However, the transmission of the cultural values of the Roma from generation to generation remains one of the greatest sources for the preservation and survival of the Roma culture. Also, the new generations dedicate themselves to the preservation of the identity and also to the historiography, research and advancement of knowledge about the Roma.

3.2. Historical review, demographic and political position of the Roma in North Macedonia

The first settlements of the Roma on the territory of North Macedonia were observed in the Middle Ages, that is, around the 14th century. Their main migration dates back to the time of the Turkish conquests of North Macedonia in the late 14th and early 15th centuries, when they worked as servants of the Turkish generals and nobles. There is also a theory that the Roma have been settled in North Macedonia since the time of Alexander the Great, because they worked as his blacksmiths during his conquest of Egypt. This theory is advocated by a part of the Roma who call themselves Egyptians and are considered a separate ethnic group from the Roma, who originate from the Indian region of Punjab from the Dravidian people.

According to historical records, the Roma in North Macedonia are an ethnic community and it is assumed that they were immigrated from India or Egypt. In North Macedonia they are known by various names: Gypsies, Egypsies or Egyptians, and by religion they are Muslims or Christians.

With the Constitution of 1971, they were recognized as an ethnic group, then they received the status of a minority (1991), and with the Constitution of 2001, they received the status of an ethnic community. Ethnic rights and freedoms have been recognized for the Roma in North Macedonia. The Romani language is taught as optional in primary education, and at the University "St. Cyril and Methodius" there is a center for studying of the Romani language, culture and history.

In 1980, the first grammar of the Romani language was published in Skopje. Romani grammar is a term that covers the orthographic, morphological, syntactic and semantic rules and regulations of the Romani language. The Romani language is an Indo-Aryan language, and therefore has certain similarities with other Indo-European languages. It is important to note that there is no unified standardized grammar of the Romani language, so each major or minor Romani dialect has its own characteristics and influences from the more dominant languages in the areas where those dialects are spoken.

According to the data of the State Statistics Office, seen through the prism of statistical data, before the Balkan Wars (1912-1913), 54,557 Roma lived in North Macedonia, representing 2.42% of the entire population. After the division of North Macedonia (1913), part of the Roma population continued to live in the Vardar part of North Macedonia.

The tendency of the natural increase, according to the data in the period after the Second World War until 2002, was 19,500 (or 1.7%), in 1971 – 24,505 (1.5%), in 1994 – 43,707 (2.25%), in 2002 – 53,879 (or 2.66%) of the population, and in 2021 – 46,433 (or 2.53%).^[8] Demographic data show that the Roma population in North Macedonia, on average, has a younger population compared to the average age in the country. Due to the different rates of birth and mortality in relation to the national average, Roma children have a larger share and the elderly have a smaller share in their own ethnic group.

According to the analysis of vital statistics, the Roma have the highest exponential natural increase according to the Council of Europe, with which it is estimated that there are about 197,000 Roma in the country as an average, while the maximum is considered to be about 260,000, and the minimum is about 134,000.^[9]

Despite the official recognition, where the Roma are explicitly mentioned as an ethnic community in the Preamble of the Constitution of North Macedonia, amended by the Ohrid Framework Agreement in 2001, according to reports at the local, national and international level, the Roma still remain excluded from society in almost every aspect of their lives.

Recognizing the importance of Roma integration in all social streams, and guided by the commitment to achieve an equal society for all communities, the Republic of North Macedonia adopted three National Strategies for Roma in the period 2005-2015, 2016-2020 and 2022-2030, NAPs were adopted for all priority areas, an infrastructure was established for monitoring and coordination of activities, and targeted and mainstream measures aimed at improving the position of the Roma community were implemented. However, the reports of the European Commission, civil society organizations and the community indicate the need for accelerated implementation of public policies and implementation of activities that will be directly aimed at supporting the Roma community to improve the position of the Roma community in society.

[8] Available at: <https://www.stat.gov.mk/>

[9] Council of Europe, "Document prepared by the Support Team of the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on Roma Issues", July 2012

3.3. Roma communities in Prilep and Bitola

The municipality of Prilep is located in the central part of the southern area of the northern part of the largest granary in the country, Pelagonia. The municipality covers a total area of 1,195 km² and is the largest municipality in North Macedonia by area. The municipality includes a total of 59 settlements - the city of Prilep and 58 villages. According to the number of inhabitants, the municipality is in fifth place out of a total of 84 municipalities. The municipality includes a part of the Mariovo plateau, which in a small part borders the Republic of Greece.[10]

Regarding the number of inhabitants according to the data from the last census in 2021, the Municipality of Prilep has 69,025 inhabitants, according to gender 34,208 inhabitants are men, 34,817 are women, of which 3,966 are Roma, of which 2,048 are men and 1,918 are women.[11]

The Roma population in the municipality of Prilep, as in most municipalities, is concentrated in one part of the city, one or more settlements. In Prilep, it is the settlement of Trizla, where this community tends to create new neighborhoods/parts in the settlement.

According to the local population, the Trizla area is divided into 5 settlements: Dabnica/Tri Bagremi, Deboy, Mexico, Umrensko Maalo and Novo Selo.

[10] General information, Municipality of Prilep, <https://www.prilep.gov.mk/opshti-informatsii/>

fbclid=IwAR0DZ3tGsxzqZ0EkjBAMZ7rnGvkbxfLJuPmdZa4c47HRuTikb7pp6T65QU8

[11] Census of the population, households and apartments in the Republic of North Macedonia, 2021 - first set of data, <https://www.stat.gov.mk/PrikaziSoopstenie.aspx?rbtxt=146>

The municipality of Bitola is located in the southwestern part of North Macedonia, at the foot of the Baba mountain with the Pelister peak. The municipality consists of the city of Bitola and 65 surrounding villages with an area of 794 km². Bitola is an administrative, cultural, economic, industrial, educational and scientific center, and it is also known by the name of the city of consuls, because part of the consular representatives of North Macedonia are located there.[12]

According to the number of inhabitants, the municipality is on the third place in size out of a total of 84 municipalities. In terms of the number of inhabitants according to the data from the last census in 2021, the Municipality of Bitola has 85,164 inhabitants, according to gender 30,154 inhabitants are men, 43,724 are women. Roma in Bitola are registered as total of 2,890 residents, out of which 1,488 are men and 1,402 are women.[13]

The Roma population in the municipality of Bitola is concentrated in the Bair settlement, which is divided into the following areas: Central Bair, Smilevski Bair, Ljubojno and Petochna voda.

[12] Profile of the Municipality of Bitola, Municipality of Bitola,
<http://www.bitola.gov.mk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/BITOLA-Profil.pdf>

[13] Census of the population, households and apartments in the Republic of North Macedonia, 2021 - first set of data, <https://www.stat.gov.mk/PrikaziSoopstenie.aspx?rbrtxt=146>

4. DATA ANALYSIS ON THE STATE OF PLAY OF ROMA GRADUATES

4.1. *Analysis of legislation*

-International documents

The Republic of North Macedonia has signed numerous international documents for the protection of human rights, and the position of the Roma and the issue of their inclusion is part of them. International documents mainly regulate the general principles and some of them regulate the rights of minorities individually, like: Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Convention on the Rights of the Child, European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, International Covenant on Civil and Political rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone can enjoy all rights and freedoms regardless of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, age or other status. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights mandates countries to ensure equal rights for men and women in enjoying the protection of economic, social and cultural rights.

The European Social Charter establishes the right of everyone to earn a living through freely chosen work, the right to social security, the right to social and medical assistance, the right to use the social protection services, the right to adequate social, legal and economic protection of children and young people. The resolution of the European Parliament on the social position of the Roma and their access to the labor market in the European Union calls on the member states of the European Union to improve the access of Roma women to vocational education, as well as to take measures to adapt vocational education to the needs in the labor market.

-National legislation

The preamble of the Constitution of Republic of North Macedonia recognizes the Roma as an ethnic community that is equal to the communities of Albanians, Turks, Vlachs, Serbs and Bosnians.[14] Education in RNM is a constitutional category where in article 44 it is emphasized that everyone has the right to education and it is available to everyone under equal conditions.[15]

The Ministry of Education and Science is responsible for the overall education system, starting from primary education to tertiary education, including adult education and non-formal education. The educational system of the Republic of North Macedonia consists of preschool, primary, secondary and tertiary education. The structure of the education system is as follows:

- Primary education lasts nine years and is compulsory and free for all students (6-14 years old). There are 347 primary schools in the country, if regional schools are included, their number is about 1,100.
- Secondary education is also compulsory and free, and is divided into four types: high school, secondary professional education, artistic education and education for students with special educational needs. Vocational secondary education can be of three-year or four-year duration. At the end of the three-year vocational education, students take a final exam and do not have the right to enroll in a university. Students completing a four-year professional education can choose between a final exam and a state matriculation exam, depending on whether they want to continue their education or not, while high school students must take a state or school matriculation exam.[16]
- Tertiary education is realized at three levels: undergraduate, master and doctoral studies.

[14] Constitution of the Republic of Macedonia, November 17, 1991, available at: <https://www.sobranie.mk/content/Odluki%20USTAV/UstavSRSM.pdf>

[15] Ibid.

[16] STRATEGY for education 2018-2025 and Action Plan, Skopje: Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Macedonia, 2018, available at: <http://mrk.mk/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Strategija-za-obrazovanie-MAK-WEB.pdf>

The Law on Primary Education establishes the right to education of every child and establishes the basis on the principles on which primary education is developed. The law emphasizes the protection against discrimination and the promotion of equality, as well as the inclusive nature of primary education. In basic upbringing and education, any kind of discrimination is prohibited, including calling for and inciting discrimination and assisting in discriminatory behavior on any basis.[17]

The law on secondary education was adopted and is applied since 1995. In the meantime, the law had several changes and additions. In 2018, a new Law on Primary Education, a new Law on tertiary education and a new Law on Vocational Education and Training were adopted. Secondary education is mandatory for every citizen, under equal conditions established by law, and is free in public secondary schools. Discrimination based on gender, race, skin color, national and social origin, political and religious belief, property and social position is not allowed. For the members of the communities that follow classes in a language other than the Macedonian language and its Cyrillic script, educational activities in public secondary schools are conducted in the language and script of the respective community in the manner and under the conditions determined by the law.

Changes in the labor market have been observed in the past period. In that direction, the needs of the labor market are not synchronized with the appropriate educational regulation that regulates the system of secondary education (high school, professional and artistic education). In the current Law on Secondary Education, there are no systemic provisions for measuring the quality of education that is implemented in secondary schools, and there are no systemic provisions for inclusive secondary education, as regulated in the Law on Primary Education.

Since last year, a new Law on secondary education has been under preparation in order to achieve the priorities of the Education Strategy 2018-2025 in the section of general education, namely:

- 1.Improving the content of secondary education.
- 2.Increasing the coverage of students and improving inclusiveness and inter-ethnic integration in secondary education.
- 3.Improving human resources capacities in secondary schools.
- 4.Improvement of learning conditions and the quality of education.

[17] Article 5, Law on Primary Education ("Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" no. 161/19 and 229/20), available at:

<https://mon.gov.mk/stored/document/Zakon%20za%20osnovnoto%20obrazovanie%20-%20nov.pdf>

There are several institutions within the system that are responsible for different aspects of education. The Administration for the Development and Promotion of the Education of the Languages of Community Members (ADPELCM) is a body within the framework of the Ministry of Education and Culture. It is competent to take care of teaching for members of ethnic communities, to ensure better access to all levels of education for all marginalized ethnic groups, as well as to coordinate the work of projects aimed at strengthening tolerance between members of different ethnicities communities in the country. ADPELCM is also responsible for the implementation of the Strategy for Education for 2018-2025 and the Strategy for Integrated Education. The administration consists of the Department for Albanian, Turkish, Serbian, Romani, Vlach and Bosnian languages and the Department for peace and children's rights of all communities.

The Law on student standards includes Roma students as a category that is awarded scholarships for secondary education. This law also includes Roma students as a category to which scholarships for tertiary education are awarded.[18]

Affirmative measures

In primary education, affirmative measures are applied in order to overcome discrimination and exclusion of children and adults. Affirmative measures include: the non-application of the rule of regionalization when enrolling students with disabilities, exemption from paying the costs of recognition and equivalence of certificates acquired abroad, free transportation for students with disabilities, educational mediators, monetary compensation for winning first place in a state competition and stimulation for participation and monetary compensation for winning a prize/medal at an international competition.

Students from the Roma ethnic community can enroll in a certain public secondary school if they have up to 10% less points than the number of points provided for, in accordance with the Competition for the respective curricula and programs, and if they satisfy the additional criteria for the knowledge and skills exam in the respective school.

[18] Law on Student Standards ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" No. 15/2013, 30/2013, 120/2013, 41/2014, 146/2015, 30/2016, 178/2016, 64/2018 and 20/2019 and "Official Gazette of the Republic of North Macedonia" no. 124/2019



The purpose of this affirmative policy is to increase the number of Roma students in public schools with higher criteria. Considering the quality received by Roma students and the obstacles they faced, most often students are enrolled in vocational schools or schools that require lower criteria. This measure increased the number of students in higher quality public schools, but practice has shown that secondary schools do not take this policy into account unless the student directly refers to it.[19]

According to the law, schools are obliged to help returnee children from abroad to learn their mother tongue and the language in which they are taught. Unfortunately, this possibility is not applied in practice and is the basis for Roma children dropping out due to language barriers and showing poorer results compared to other students. In addition, it is provided for children who are not included in teaching and are over the age limit for inclusion in appropriate education that they have the right to primary education under equal conditions as other children. For inclusion in education of this category, the Education Development Bureau prepares curricula for inclusion in the appropriate department of education.

Additionally, as an affirmative measure for Roma high school students, the Ministry of Education and Science provides scholarships. For the academic year 2022/2023, 920 scholarships have been provided for Roma high school students, a number that is 50 more than the last academic year. This academic year, 135 scholarships were awarded to Roma students enrolled in public and private tertiary education institutions and universities in RNM. The RNM government decides on the additional quotas for enrolling students belonging to non-majority communities.

An additional affirmative measure in the area of education is the university enrollment quota. This is a general policy for all non-majority communities in the country. There is no official information about the number of students who used this affirmative measure, and its implementation is not precisely defined. In addition, as a risk during the implementation of this measure is the abuse of ethnicity when enrolling in universities.

[19] Roma Inclusion Strategy 2022-2030, available at:

<https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/2022/Strategija%20za%20inkluzija%20na%20Romite%202022-2030%2003-02-2022%20finalna%20verzija.pdf>



Educational mediators

For Roma students who come from socially disadvantaged families or have been out of the education system for a long time, educational mediators can be hired. The educational mediator undertakes activities to improve awareness of opportunities and access to schools, conducts regular meetings to sensitize the population and employees in primary schools to the specifics and needs of vulnerable groups in the field of education, regularly collaborates with professional associates and teachers to improve achievements of the students, undertakes activities to reduce the dropout of the educational process of the students.

Education Strategy 2018-2025

The strategy for the education for 2018-2025 is the basis for the activities of the institutions in the RNM in the field of education in the period until 2025. It starts from the existing conditions in the educational system and aims to gradually improve them, in accordance with the established priorities. The strategy highlights the problem of many Roma students outside the education system. A high percentage of dropping out of education and a low level of literacy among children of Roma ethnicity is also evident. The most common reasons for this situation are: the insufficient knowledge of the Macedonian language, the low level of education of the parents and the poor socio-economic situation.[20] The introduced initiative for scholarships and mentoring/tutoring of Roma students aims to improve the pass ability and success of Roma students of all educational years, from all public and private secondary schools. In order to encourage Roma students to continue their education in secondary schools, the enrollment criteria for members of this ethnic community have been eased. Scholarships are provided for Roma students from socially disadvantaged families who regularly attend classes, as well as scholarships for students from socially vulnerable groups, talented students, athletes, orphans and children with special educational needs. A large percentage of students from marginalized groups are enrolled in Vocational Education and Training (VET), where insufficient integration, quality inclusion and multiculturalism can be observed, especially when it comes to Roma students and students with special educational needs.

[20] STRATEGY for education for 2018-2025 and Action Plan, Skopje: Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Macedonia, 2018

Roma Inclusion Strategy 2022-2030

The Roma Inclusion Strategy 2022-2030 has set eight goals that are in line with the EU's strategic framework and the Poznan Declaration.[21] Two of these goals are horizontal, in the areas of poverty, anti-gypsism, while the remaining six are sectoral goals in the areas of education, employment, housing, health, culture and civil registration. The National Roma Strategic Framework should provide support for decision-making, including decisions related to each of the strategic areas for Roma integration, allocation of funds and creation of a framework that will enable the improvement of the situation of the Roma population.

The general conclusion is that the implementation of the Strategy for Roma in the RNM 2014-2020 and the National Action Plan in the period 2016-2020 had limited progress in terms of achievements in the priority areas. According to the European Union Report[22] regarding the progress of the Republic of North Macedonia, in relation to the inclusion of the Roma, limited progress has been found compared to 2019. It is noted that the implementation of this strategy and the corresponding action plans for education, employment, housing, health are not fully implemented. In terms of employment, there has been an increase in the registered unemployment of Roma, with the largest number of Roma registered as active job seekers as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

[21] See more:

<https://www.rcc.int/romaintegration2020/files/admin/docs/866ab25893dd6d9271ebccbfd195349e.pdf>

[22] Available on: https://nkeu.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/north_macedonia_report_2020_F.pdf



Active policies on the labor market have a limited effect in increasing the employability of the Roma community, which mostly depends on the educational qualification, which is unchanged compared to the initial situation. A positive aspect in the area of employment can be observed in the area of creation of the operational plan for employment, where the intended target for the inclusion of the Roma in the active measures for employment has been reached, but the target for higher income and sustainable employment defined by the indicator for reducing the unemployment rate, notes an increasing number of registered unemployed Roma in the total number of registered unemployed persons.[23]

The strategy notes progress in the area of education, namely: scholarships for Roma students, the measure to reduce the criteria for enrollment in secondary education in public secondary schools, as well as the introduction of educated mediators, tutors/mentors. The strategy emphasizes drastic differences between data from primary and secondary education, which lies in the lack of a single mechanism for data collection by the State Statistics Office and the Ministry of Education.

[23] Roma Inclusion Strategy 2022-2030, available at:
<https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/2022/Strategija%20za%20inkluzija%20na%20Romite%202022-2030%2003-02-2022%20finalna%20verzija.pdf>

School year	I	II	III	IV
2016/17	409	423	345	232
2017/18	556	357	371	228
2018/19	511	413	295	215
2019/20	500	466	382	171

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF ROMA ENROLLED IN SECONDARY EDUCATION
SOURCE: ROMA INCLUSION STRATEGY 2022-2030

Such data indicate several reasons:

1. Lack of a system for collecting relevant segregated data;
2. Dropout of Roma students or abandonment of the educational process.

School year	scholarships	mediators
2016/17	582	/
2017/18	736	20
2018/19	849	28
2019/20	846	35

TABLE 2: NUMBER OF AWARDED SCHOLARSHIPS AND HIRED MEDIATORS
SOURCE: STRATEGY FOR ROMA INCLUSION 2022-2030

In order to encourage Roma students to continue their education in secondary schools, the enrollment criteria for members of this ethnic community have been eased. Every year, in the competition for enrolling students in secondary schools, it is established that Roma can be admitted to public secondary schools with 10% fewer points than required. In addition, scholarships are continuously provided every school year for Roma students from socially disadvantaged families who regularly attend classes. In the academic year 2019/2020, a total of 846 scholarships were awarded. However, there is still no official evaluation of the effectiveness of this systemic measure in the passability of Roma students and the increase of their success in secondary education.

Although the criteria for admission to universities are low, access to tertiary education for various vulnerable groups is limited, and there is not even enough information about the possibilities of enrolling them in universities. According to the data of the State Statistics Office, the number of Roma students enrolled in the first year is decreasing year by year.

Academic year	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	seniors
2016/17	95	51	47	26	4	24	/
2017/18	86	65	42	25	4	3	23
2018/19	75	51	47	16	5	1	29
2019/20	55	37	61	35	1	3	/

TABLE 3: NUMBER OF ROMA STUDENTS ENROLLED IN TERTIARY EDUCATION
SOURCE: STRATEGY FOR ROMA INCLUSION 2022-2030

Measures from the Employment Agency of the Republic of North Macedonia

The Employment Agency of the Republic of North Macedonia is a public institution that performs professional, organizational, administrative and other tasks related to employment and insurance in case of unemployment and provides support, assistance and services for participants in the labor market. The agency continuously implements programs and projects with the aim of reducing long-term unemployment and dependence on a guaranteed minimum income, with the effective inclusion of vulnerable groups in the labor market, through their inclusion in specialized programs and services for skills development.

Vulnerable target groups that the Agency targets are:

- guaranteed minimum income users;
- Roma;
- young people up to 29 years old;
- women;
- persons with disabilities;
- long-term unemployed persons (over 12 months in records)

***Counseling and motivational program**

This program is intended to encourage and assist the process of including beneficiaries of a guaranteed minimum income in trainings and other active employment measures and thereby facilitate the inclusion of these persons in the labor market. The program consists of two types of support:

1. Support through counseling - help to users in the process of activation and integration in the labor market.
2. Mentoring support - detection of personal and professional barriers and difficulties faced by the users during the training or employment process and identification of factors and reasons that make it difficult to integrate the user.

***Employment support program through trainings**

The main goal of the program is to improve the skills and knowledge of beneficiaries of a guaranteed minimum income with the help of trainings, practical work and subsidized employment, in order to facilitate the inclusion of these persons in the labor market. Many beneficiaries of this social assistance are Roma, so this program is largely intended for this target group. The component consists of three measures:

- 1. Training for occupations in demand on the labor market; - Increasing the employability of unemployed persons by acquiring knowledge and skills for occupations in demand on the labor market.*
- 2. On-the-job training (training at a known employer); - Provision of practical experience for unemployed persons, beneficiaries of a guaranteed minimum income, when performing work tasks according to the requirements of employers and improving their employability.*
- 3. Subsidized employment (wage subsidy); - Provision of financial support for the creation of new jobs and the employment of unemployed persons who are beneficiaries of a guaranteed minimum income, with the payment of the funds to the employer, as a subsidy to the salary of the employed person and cover for the costs incurred to prepare the person for employment.[24]*

***Youth Guarantee**

The Employment Agency of the Republic of North Macedonia has implemented the "Youth Guarantee" measure since 2019. This measure enables young people up to the age of 29, who are not employed, nor involved in education or training (NEET), to receive a suitable job offer, continue their education or be included in one of the active programs and employment measures, within a period of 4 months after their registration as unemployed persons in the Employment Agency. The youth guarantee begins with measures for the activation of young people who are registered as unemployed for the first time - active job seekers. After being recorded in the register of unemployed persons, persons are immediately sent to their first interview with employees of the Employment Agency, who profile their employability, using a control questionnaire and draw up Individual Employment Plans. These plans define the activities that enable the young unemployed person, within a period of 4 months, to be re-engaged in the educational process (not in regular education) or to be involved in any of the active employment measures or services, which will enable them to increase his employment opportunities or to be offered suitable employment that matches his education and skills.

[24] Available at: <https://av.gov.mk/labour-market-activation-of-vulnerable-groups.nsp>

***Second chance**

With this measure, registered unemployed persons who have not completed secondary education and are members of a vulnerable group are given the opportunity to complete their secondary vocational education, and receive a diploma for completed secondary vocational education, which they did not acquire while they were involved in regular education. Candidates who complete the educational program will obtain a Diploma for completed secondary vocational education and passed school or state matriculation.

***Training for occupations in demand on the labor market**

With this measure, the registered unemployed persons belonging to the vulnerable target groups will be trained for the occupations demanded on the labor market. The persons involved in the training receive a monthly gross compensation in the amount of 9.000 MKD. Unemployed persons who complete the training, practical work and successfully pass the planned exam, will acquire a Certificate issued by the verified training implementers prescribed by the Ministry of Education and Science.

***Subsidizing wages**

Any employer who hires an unemployed person belonging to vulnerable groups will receive financial support for the payment of a gross salary, in the amount of 19.000 MKD per month, for a period of 6 months, and the Employer who will use this measure is obliged to keep the person in employment after the end of the subsidy for an additional period of another 3 months.

National program for the transformation of undeclared work among Roma in the Republic of North Macedonia

The goal of this program is to reduce undeclared work among Roma from 39% to 25% by 2025.[25] The main focus of the measures to formalize the economy in this program is the reduction of undeclared work within existing enterprises, and to a much lesser extent the reduction of undeclared work outside enterprises. It does not take into account the social situation of workers who perform undeclared work, which is of great importance for rounding off the comprehensive approach in transforming undeclared work. In addition, employment relies to a large extent on active employment measures, which are planned on an annual level within the annual operational plans for active programs and measures for employment and services on the labor market.

[25] National program for the transformation of undeclared work among the Roma in the Republic of North Macedonia, Promotion of declared work among the Roma 2021-2023, Available at:
<https://www.mtsp.gov.mk/content/pdf/2022/Nacionalna%20Programa%20za%20transf%20na%20neprijava.pdf>

4.2. Analysis of data received by Employment agency of the Republic of North Macedonia (EARNM)

In order to obtain a more detailed insight into the data available to EARNM related to the research objectives, two requests for free access to public information were sent. The requested information was related to the municipalities of Prilep and Bitola, as follows:

1. Number of active Roma job seekers with secondary education and educational profile;
2. Number of active Roma job seekers with tertiary education and educational profile;
3. Number of passive Roma job seekers with secondary education and educational profile;
4. Number of passive Roma job seekers with tertiary education and educational profile;
5. Number of Roma employees with secondary education and educational profile;
6. Number of Roma employees with tertiary education and educational profile.

In the response received to the requests, information was provided only for points 1, 2, 3 and 4, and regarding the information related to points 5 and 6, in accordance with the Law on records in the field of labor, it was noted that employers are responsible for keeping records of employees, not EARNM.

- Overview of applications for unemployed persons and other persons looking for work recorded in EARNM - Employment Center Prilep

Level	Level description	Educational institution	Unemployed	Other job seekers
0	no education	without education	605	44
1	below primary	incomplete primary education	343	39
2	primary education	primary school	322	33
2	primary education	incomplete secondary education	9	1
3	secondary vocational education	schools for skilled workers	13	0
4	secondary education	secondary school	32	6
VI B	first cycle of university studies	law faculty	1	0
total for all levels of education			1325	123

TABLE 4: OVERVIEW OF ROMA UNEMPLOYED AND OTHER PERSONS WHO ARE LOOKING FOR JOB, REGISTERED IN EARNM - PRILEP, 31.01.2023
(SOURCE: EMPLOYMENT AGENCY OF REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA)

From the obtained data, divided by municipality, in the Employment Center in Prilep, a total of 1448 persons were registered as unemployed Roma for all levels of education. Of this number, 1325 are registered as unemployed persons, and the remaining 123 are registered as other job seekers.

The largest number of registered unemployed persons, 649, have *0-degree* level, with no education and are registered as *Workers without occupation*, i.e. without primary education. Of this number, 605 are registered as unemployed persons, while 44 are registered as other job seekers.

The next is *level 1*, with the description *Less than basic*, that is incomplete primary education, classified as Unemployed worker with incomplete primary education. A total of 382 persons were recorded in this group, out of which 343 are unemployed and 39 other job seekers.

Next comes *level 2* with the description *Worker without occupation* with completed elementary school. A total of 355 persons were recorded in this category, out of which 322 are unemployed and 33 other job seekers. In this level, persons who do not have a complete secondary education are also registered. Of the 10 persons registered, 9 are unemployed and 1 is registered as other job seeker. In this category, the most represented profile of education is *Agricultural worker* with 5 registered persons, and the other professions with one registered unemployed person each are: Baker, Bookbinder, Construction worker and other profiles.

In *level 3*, the persons who have completed secondary vocational education in schools for qualified workers are registered. In this group, 13 unemployed persons with a different profile of three-year education from different institutions were registered, as follows: wood processing, personal service, metal and mechanical, mining and smelting, textile, chemical-technological and graphic workers.

The *level 4* group is consisted of highly qualified workers and persons who have completed a four-year secondary education. A total of 38 persons were recorded in this group, 32 of them as unemployed and 6 as other persons looking for work. In terms of educational institutions, they are quite diverse and the representation ranges. In terms of the education profile, the profile of a hairdresser is the most represented with 6 registered persons, followed by the professions of physiotherapist and furniture and interior technician with 4 persons each, food technician and mechanical technician with 3 and the rest of the professions are represented by one or two persons.

As for the tertiary education, only one unemployed person with the profile of a law graduate - VI B degree, is recorded.

From these data, we can notice that the largest number of unemployed persons are without education, followed by persons with incomplete primary education. At the end of this list with the lowest number of registered unemployed persons are the persons with higher education. However, we cannot say with accuracy what this number is in the reality, because there are people who have been deleted from the records and have a one-year ban on registering in the system of EARNM, as well as the number and educational profile of the people who are currently employed is unknown.

- Review of applications for unemployed persons and other persons looking for work recorded in EARNM - Employment Center Bitola

Level	Level description	Educational institution	Unemployed	Other job seekers
0	no education	without education	436	42
1	below primary	incomplete primary education	145	8
2	primary education	primary school	201	30
2	primary education	incomplete secondary education	3	0
3	secondary vocational education	schools for skilled workers	10	1
4	secondary education	secondary school	18	3
VI A	first cycle of university studies	faculty economy/law	1	1
total for all levels of education			814	85

TABLE 5: OVERVIEW OF ROMA UNEMPLOYED AND OTHER PERSONS WHO ARE LOOKING FOR JOB, REGISTERED IN EARNM - BITOLA, 31.01.2023
SOURCE: EMPLOYMENT AGENCY OF REPUBLIC OF NORTH MACEDONIA

From the received data, a total of 899 persons were registered as unemployed Roma for all levels of education at the Employment Center in Bitola. Of this number, 814 are listed as unemployed and the remaining 42 are registered as other job seekers. Similar as Prilep, in Bitola the largest number of registered unemployed persons, total of 478, are with *0 degree*, no education, registered as *Workers without occupation*, with the description *without primary education*. Of this number, 436 are unemployed persons, while 42 are registered as other job seekers.

Next comes the *level 1* named as *Lower Primary*, with the description *incomplete primary education*, classified as Unemployed Worker with *incomplete primary education*. A total of 153 persons were recorded in this group, out of which 145 are unemployed and 8 are other job seekers.

Next is *level 2* with the description *Worker without occupation* with completed elementary school. A total of 231 persons were registered in this category, out of which 201 were unemployed and 30 are other job seekers. Persons who do not have a complete secondary education are also recorded in this level. In one of the 3 registered unemployed persons, the education profile is *Support worker*. This wording is very broad and does not give us a concrete information of what kind of profession it is.

In *level 3* the persons who have completed secondary vocational education in schools for qualified workers are registered. In this group, 11 unemployed persons with a different profile of three-year education from different institutions are recorded, and the graphic and textile professions are the most represented.

In the *level 4* are people who have completed four years of secondary education. A total of 21 people were registered in this group, 18 of them as unemployed and 3 as other job seekers. In terms of educational institutions, they are quite diverse and the representation ranges from medical, metal and mechanical, economic, construction, graphic, road traffic, mining, textile and artistic. Regarding the education profile, there are certain differences in the same professions and in the same schools. Is it due to the freedom in registering the education profile or to the non-uniform practice for the systematic selection of the profile.

Regarding the tertiary education, two people were recorded, one with a degree in economics and one with a degree in law.

From these data, we can notice that the largest number of unemployed people are without education, followed by people with completed primary education, and people with incomplete primary education. We have similar data in Prilep and Bitola, as the largest number of unemployed people are without education. These numbers are devastating if we consider that primary education is mandatory and free, and yet we have a large number of people who are without education. Also, the high number of people who failed to complete primary education may indicate the lack of functional policies for increasing the number of educated Roma, their further integration into the labor market and breaking the cycle of poverty among this vulnerable group.

4.3. Field research – survey to display the situation on the ground related to education and employment of Roma

The survey was conducted on a representative sample of respondents in two major Roma settlements through a pre-prepared questionnaire. The subject population of the research was the Roma population located in the Municipalities of Prilep and Bitola. The research was conducted on a qualified sample of respondents. The sample was determined as 2% of the total Roma population of the respective municipality with proper gender representation, with the respondents being qualified with completed minimum secondary education, between the age of 17 and 37. This qualification was determined in accordance with the objectives and the hypothesis of the research, having in mind that relevant results and recommendations for improvement of conditions for completing tertiary education and consequent employment, could be drawn only from the community members who already have completed certain level of education (secondary education). The age qualification is set due to the need to provide time-relevant data on the conditions, that is, to avoid obtaining results that reflect long-ago conditions that will not have meaning for the current period.

According to the Census in 2021, the representation of the Roma population in Municipality of Prilep is 3966 (52% being male and 48% female) and in Municipality of Bitola is 2890 (51% being male and 49% female). Therefore, the sample for the survey was determined to be consisted of 80 respondents in Prilep (42 male and 38 female respondents) and 58 in Bitola (30 male and 28 female respondents), all of which have completed minimum secondary education and being between the age of 17 and 37. Figure 1 represents the age range of the respondents where we can see there is variety and proper representation, with the respondents aged 19-27 being the most included in the research.

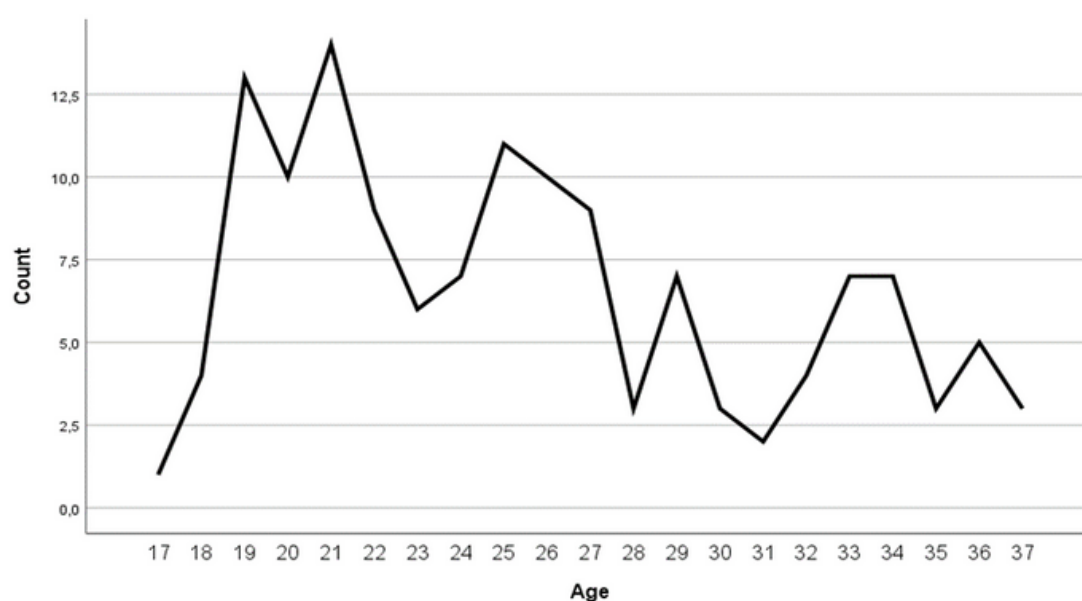


FIGURE 1: AGE REPRESENTATIO

Regarding the level of education of the respondents (Figure 2), majority of them i.e. 123 respondents (89,1%) have completed secondary education, 7 of them have completed tertiary education and 8 respondents have their tertiary education ongoing.

Level of education		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	secondary	123	89,1	89,1	89,1
	tertiary	7	5,1	5,1	94,2
	ongoing (tertiary)	8	5,8	5,8	100,0
	Total	138	100,0	100,0	

FIGURE 2: EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Regarding the first question Did you continue with your education to a tertiary degree (faculty/academy)? the results presented in Figure 3 showed vast majority of the respondents - 117 of them (84,8%) not continuing their education to a tertiary degree and only 21 of them (15,2%) that continued their education to e tertiary degree.

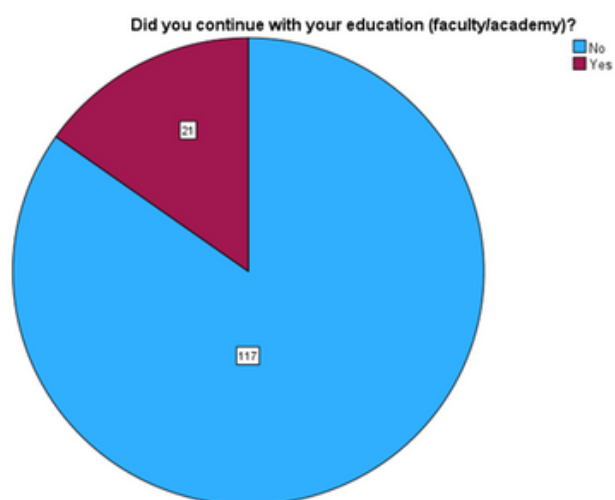


FIGURE 3: CONTINUING EDUCATION TO A TERTIARY DEGREE

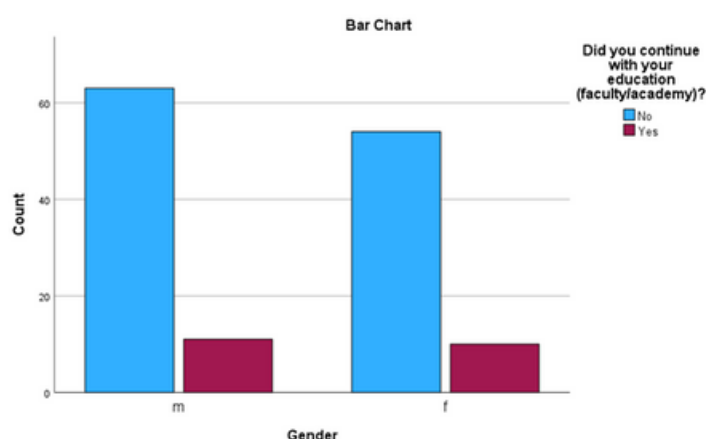


FIGURE 4: RELATION OF GENDER AND CONTINUING OF EDUCATION

Since this is a question where we consider gender aspect to be of high importance, we did a cross tabulation to analyze the relationship between gender and continuing of education to e tertiary degree. The results presented in Figure 4, showed almost equal representation in both gender categories, with 54 female respondents not continuing their education and 63 male respondents who answered the same way, against 10 females who continued to a tertiary degree and 11 males who did so. This results show us the issue of low levels of continuing education to e tertiary degree among Roma is not gender related.

We further related the question of continuing of education with the place of residence, where we can see (Figure 5) that majority of the respondents who continued their education are from Bitola as opposed to the majority of them who did not continue their education, that come from Prilep.

To dive deeper into circumstances and factors that influence young Roma to continue/not continue their education to a tertiary degree, we asked an open question about the reasons behind their decision.

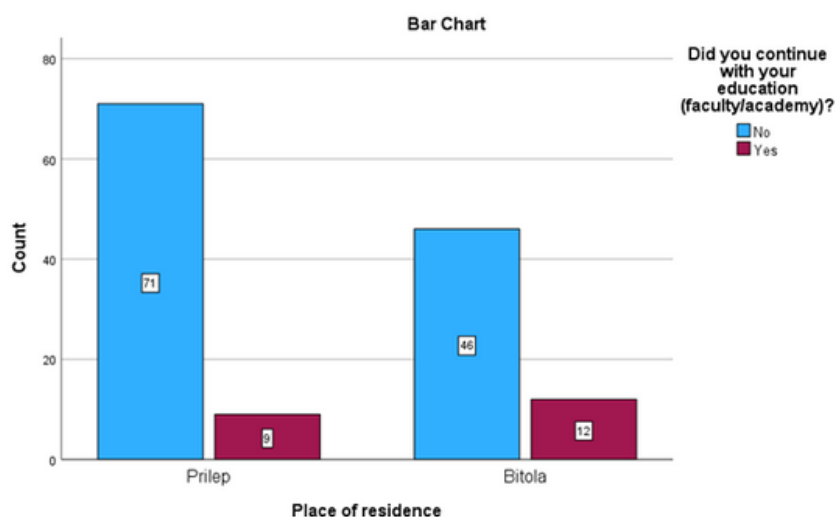


FIGURE 5: PLACE OF RESIDENCE IN RELATION TO CONTINUING OF EDUCATION

When it comes to not continuing the education, two of the most common responses refer to lack of finances and lack of interest in further education. Marriage and other family related conditions are also reasons for significant number of respondents to stop the education process at secondary degree, particularly present among female respondents. Few of the responses referred to lack of motivation due to political parties' interference in employment and also their poor performance and low grades in secondary school.

For those who decided to continue their education to a tertiary degree, main reasons are the wish for personal advancement and progress, better employment, motivation to contribute to community empowerment and progress and also prove to themselves and other that Roma can also be highly educated and successful people.

Regarding the third question *If you continued to tertiary education, have you completed it?* if we neglect the 117 respondents who did not continue their education, we will get the results that out of 21 who continued their education, 3 respondents quitted (14,3%) and 18 of them either completed it or are still studying (85,7%). Thus, the results presented in Figure 6 show us that when they decide to continue their education to tertiary degree, most of the Roma will continue with it until completing.

When it comes to reasons for quitting already started tertiary education, it is either lack of finances or inability to follow up with obligations and exams, or both. The reasons for further continuing and completing tertiary education are similar to those who led to enrolling in the first place: personal and professional prosperity and advancement, as well as empowerment of the community.

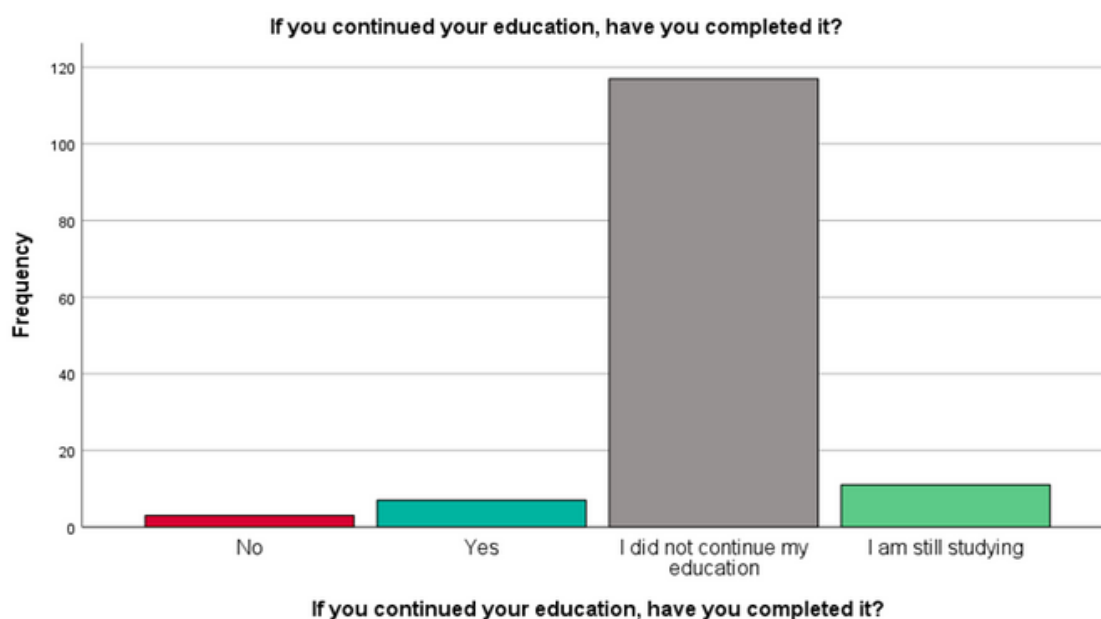


FIGURE 6: COMPLETING TERTIARY EDUCATION

Furthermore, we wanted to get information about the professions of our target groups. Figure 7 shows a wide variety of professional titles of the respondents, where medical technician and furniture and interiors technician are two professions with highest number of respondents. Also, auto mechanic - mechatronic, cosmetics, care and beauty technician, economic technician, food technician, physiotherapist and textile technician are professions with five or more responses.

What is your profession (professional title)?		
Profession	Number	%
/	14	10,1%
agriculture technician	1	0,7%
auto mechanic - mechatronic	5	3,6%
Bachelor of economy	1	0,7%
Bachelor of informatics and programming	1	0,7%
Bachelor of law	1	0,7%
baker	1	0,7%
bank technician	1	0,7%
business secretary	3	2,2%
carpenter	1	0,7%
cartonager book-binder	1	0,7%
chemical-laboratory technician	2	1,4%
clothing modeling technician	3	2,2%
cosmetics, care and beauty technician	5	3,6%
economic technician	5	3,6%
economic-banking technician	1	0,7%
economist	1	0,7%
engineer	1	0,7%
electro technician	1	0,7%

Engineer in informatics	1	0,7%
eye optics-technician	1	0,7%
fashion designer	1	0,7%
food technician	7	5,1%
furniture and interiors technician	18	13,0%
garment technician	2	1,4%
graphic technician	1	0,7%
hairstylist	3	2,2%
horticulture	1	0,7%
hotel and tourism technician	1	0,7%
lawyer - Master of law	1	0,7%
maintenance technician	1	0,7%
mechanical technician	4	2,9%
medical technician	13	9,4%
musician	3	2,2%
personal services	1	0,7%
pharmaceutical technician	1	0,7%
physiotherapist	7	5,1%
police officer	1	0,7%
religious officer	1	0,7%
road traffic technician	3	2,2%
solo singer	1	0,7%
sports gymnasium	1	0,7%
taxi driver	1	0,7%
textile technician	5	3,6%
theologian	2	1,4%
tobacco technician	1	0,7%
traffic technician	2	1,4%
upholsterer	1	0,7%
veterinary technician	1	0,7%
waiter	1	0,7%
woodworking technician	1	0,7%

FIGURE 7: PROFESSIONS

An obvious conclusion from this analysis is that Roma prefer vocational rather than general or gymnasium education. This led us to the next two questions on the employment status and the relation between employment and professional title.

Regarding the employment status, Figure 8 shows 66 of the respondents (47,8%) to be employed, 46 of them (33,3%) to be unemployed, 8 respondents active as freelancers (5,8%), 12 respondents engaged in an informal economic activity (8,7%) and 6 respondents with no Figure 8: Employment status economic activity (4,3%) that have no status of unemployed persons.

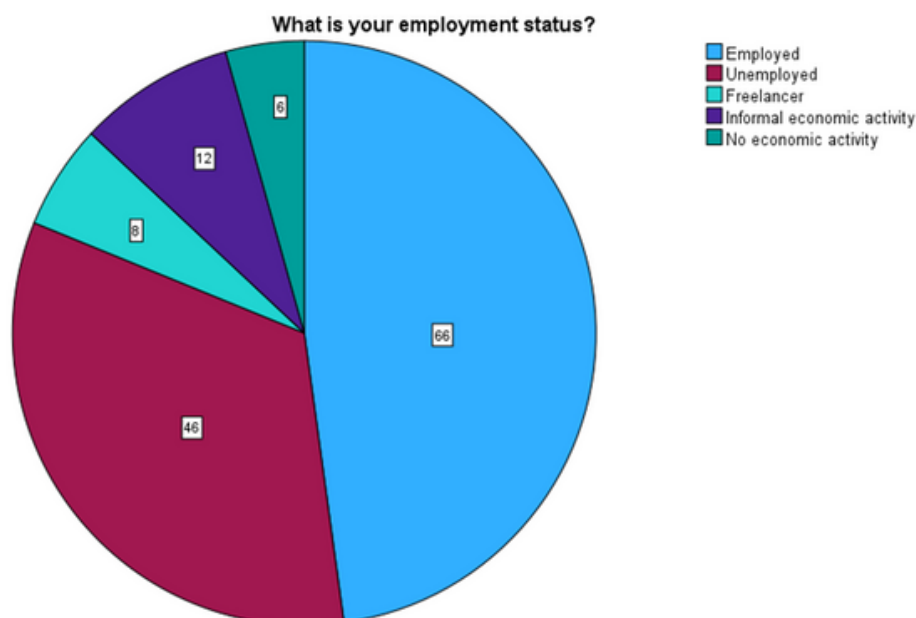


FIGURE 8: EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Regarding the employment status, Figure 8 shows 66 of the respondents (47,8%) to be employed, 46 of them (33,3%) to be unemployed, 8 respondents active as freelancers (5,8%), 12 respondents engaged in an informal economic activity (8,7%) and 6 respondents with no Figure 8: Employment status economic activity (4,3%) that have no status of unemployed persons.

What is your employment status? * Is your job in accordance with your professional title? Cross tabulation						
Count		Is your job in accordance with your professional title?				Total
		No	Yes	Partially	I do not have a job	
What is your employment status?	Employed	54	9	3	0	66
	Unemployed	0	0	0	46	46
	Freelancer	3	0	4	1	8
	Informal economic activity	7	1	1	3	12
	No economic activity	0	0	0	6	6
Total		64	10	8	56	138

FIGURE 9.1: EMPLOYMENT STATUS IN RELATION TO PROFESSION

The numeric data presented in Figure 9.1 as well as the graphic data presented in Figure 9.2 show that very small number of employed respondents, only 9 out of 66, have a job that is fully related to their profession. Furthermore, no freelancer has an activity completely related to their profession, with 4 of them having their paid activity partially related. Only 1 of the respondents has an informal economic activity completely related to their profession and another one partially related to their profession. If be now go back to the variety of professions among respondents, it can be noted that most of those professions remain unrealized and the effort and investment in professional education remains unused, which is a huge loss for young people as well as for the state and its economy.

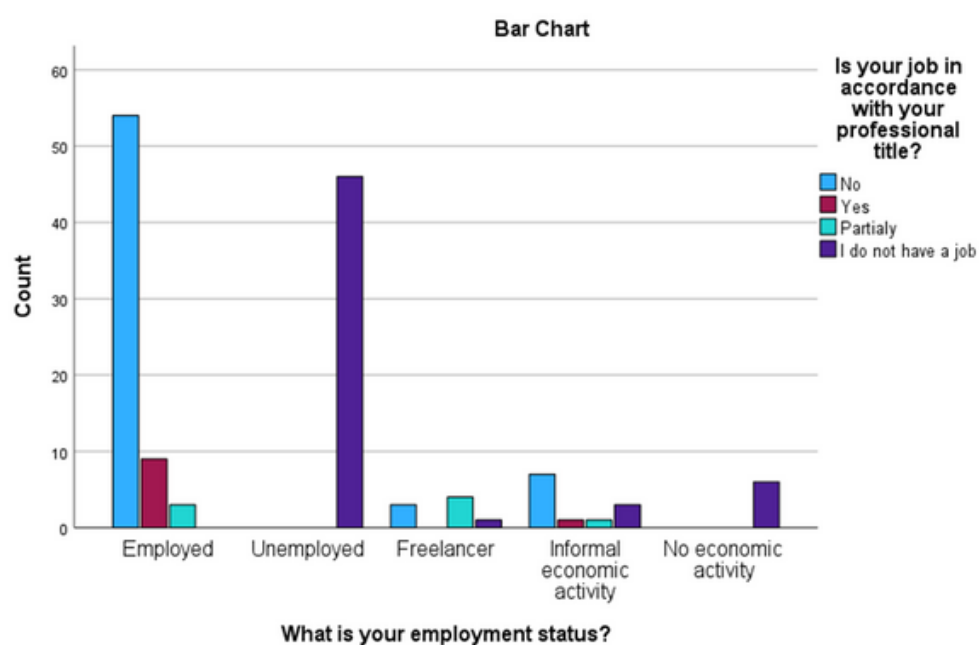


FIGURE 9.2: EMPLOYMENT STATUS IN RELATION TO PROFESSION

As a matter of research curiosity, we further analyzed the question of employment status through the variable of place of residence, to compare the two communities of Prilep and Bitola in relation to this issue. The data presented in this context cannot formally be related to some state policy or measure, but can be a mark for the opportunities provided to Roma and young people in general and possibly the level of implementation of existing measures in different places.

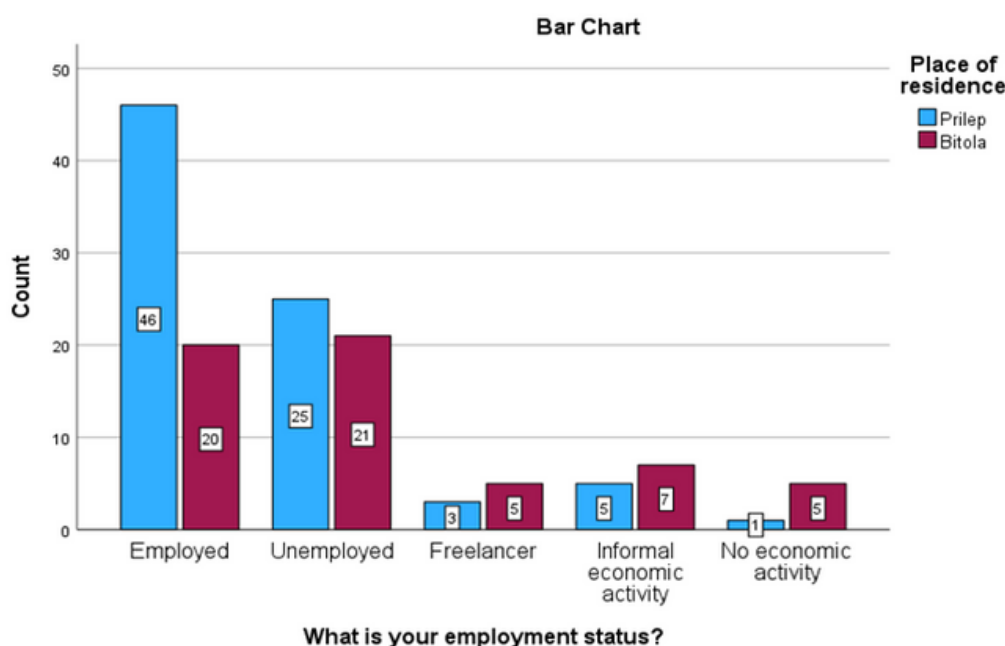


FIGURE 10: PLACE OF RESIDENCE IN RELATION TO EMPLOYMENT STATUS

As we can see in Figure 10, the majority of employed respondents come from Prilep, the unemployed respondents are almost equal (having in mind the total number of respondents coming from Prilep is higher), while the other three groups (freelancers, people with informal economic activity and people with no economic activity) are slightly more present in Bitola.

This comes as opposed to the data presented in Figure 5 (place of residence in relation with continuing of education), where we saw that respondents from Prilep are more likely to not continue their education to a tertiary degree than the ones coming from Bitola.

Next, we wanted to correlate the employment status with the level of education variable to provide more profound understanding of the different factors that influence these two categories and the conditions they have an effect on. Therefore, Figure 11 shows that respondents with completed secondary education are present in all of the five categories of employment status, with the employed status reaching the highest percentage - 47,1%. Only one of the respondents with completed tertiary degree has a status of unemployed person, while three respondents that have their tertiary education ongoing are unemployed or have no economic activity. Important data of these analysis is that all of the respondents who declared to be engaged in informal economic activity have completed secondary education, meaning no respondent who has tertiary education completed or ongoing is engaged in such activity. This could be interpreted as a mark that the higher education people have, the less likely they are to engage in informal economic activities that although bring paid income, are leaving young people without pension insurance, no opportunity for regulated and protected labor, and are also harming the economy and tax system of the state.

Level of education * What is your employment status? Cross tabulation							
Count		What is your employment status?					Total
		Employed	Unemploy ed	Freelanc er	Informal economic activity	No economic activity	
Level of education	secondary	58	43	5	12	5	123
	tertiary	4	1	2	0	0	7
	ongoing (tertiary)	4	2	1	0	1	8
Total		66	46	8	12	6	138

FIGURE 11: LEVEL OF EDUCATION IN RELATION TO EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Furthermore, as we already cross-checked the relation of continuing of education with the gender variable, we repeated it with the employment and gender relation. The data presented in Figure 12 showed significant inequalities of men and women when it comes to employment status. While 42 out of 74 male respondents are employed (57%), only 24 out of 64 female respondents are employed (38%). The share of unemployed respondents is 19 out of 74 (26%) and in female respondents it is 27 (42%). Unlike the continuing of education which is not shown to be gender related matter, we can note here Roma women are less likely to be employed than men.

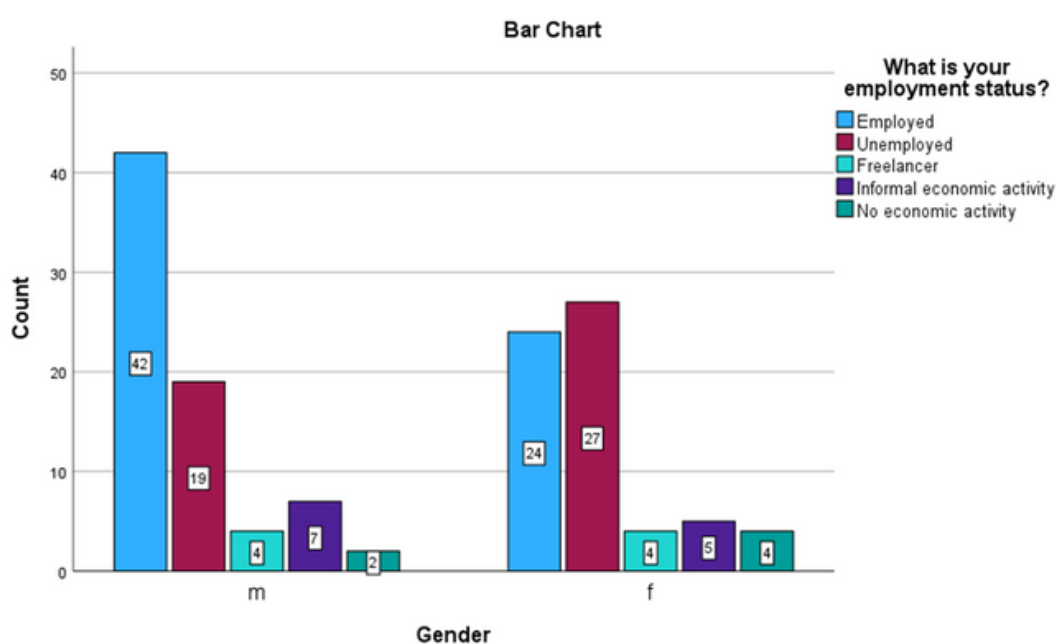


FIGURE 12: EMPLOYMENT STATUS IN RELATION TO GENDER

Regarding the next question *If you are given an opportunity, would you accept formal employment?*, if we only consider respondents who do not have formal employment (unemployed, freelancers, people with informal economic activity, or with no economic activity), the results presented in Figure 13 show that out of 78 respondents that do not have formal employment, majority (55,1%) would accept formal employment, 15,4% would accept formal employment only if it is in accordance with their profession, while the other 24 respondents (29,5%) would either reject formal employment or are not sure.

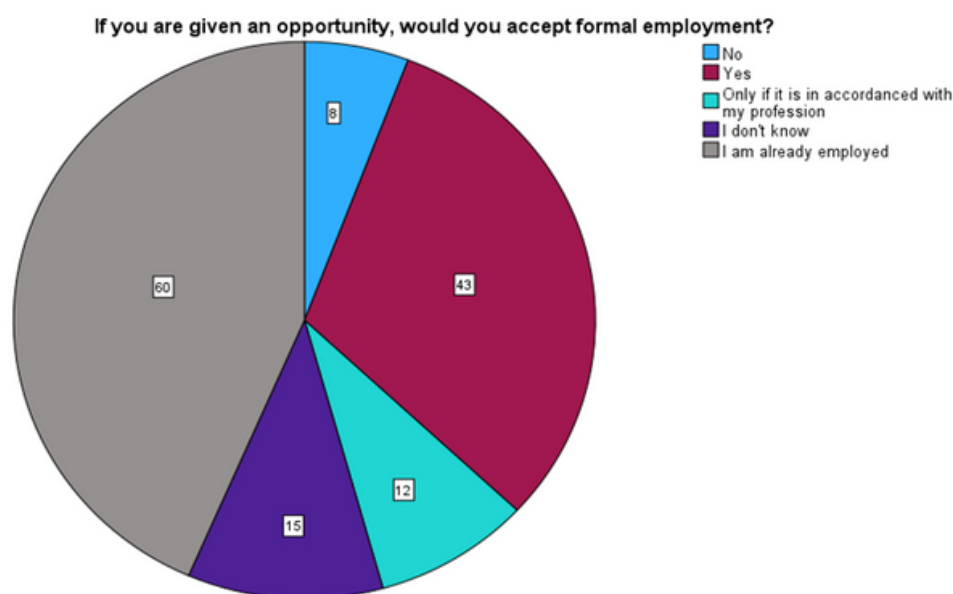


FIGURE 13: ACCEPTANCE OF FORMAL EMPLOYMENT

When it comes to reasons for accepting formal employment, most of the respondents referred to opportunity to provide for their families, to have pension insurance, have better social status and quality of life. The most common reasons for respondents to not accept formal employment are because they are users of social transfers from the state, because they have informal economic activity that brings them enough money, they plan to go live abroad or they have little children (this response is only given by some of the female respondents).

Regarding the question *Do you find current measures and policies for encouragement and increasing of education/employment of Roma to be effective and sufficient?* results presented in Figure 14 show equal division of opinion between respondents who find measures enough and effective and the ones who consider them neither enough nor effective. A significant number of respondents, that also represent a slight majority comparing to other two groups, don't know or have no opinion on this question, which can be a sign that many of them are not fully aware or have knowledge on the current measures. Most of the respondents who answered negatively to the current measures and policies, explained they are referring to the policies and measures related to employment, that are either not implemented properly or not enough and lead to no improvements in the employment status of the Roma, particularly in the employment in public sector. Some of them mentioned that in the area of employment, discrimination is still a practice and Roma are not given equal opportunities. Most of the respondents who gave negative answers, actually explained that they find the measures and policies in the area of education to be positive and effective.

Do you consider current education and employment measures and policies for Roma to be enough and effective?

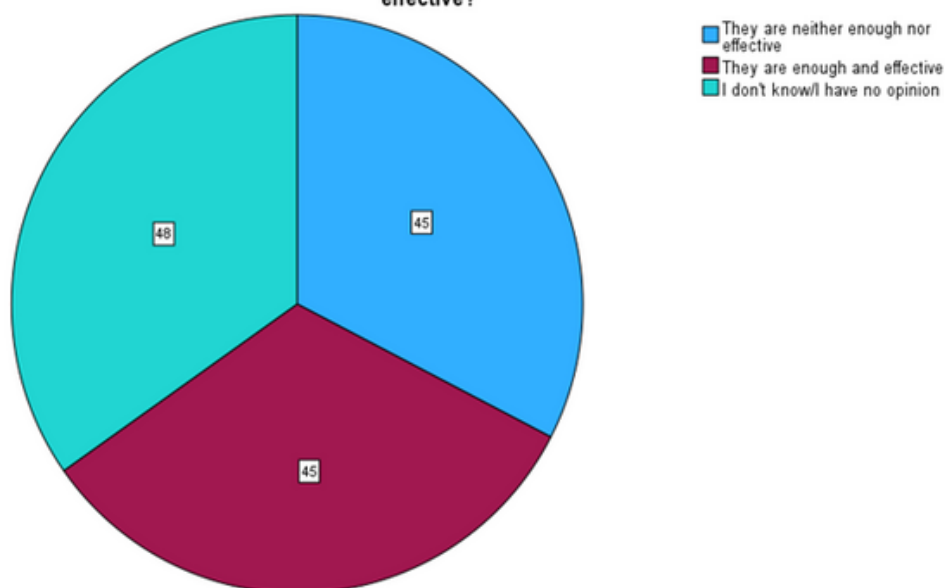


FIGURE 14: EFFECTIVENESS OF CURRENT MEASURES

Respondents who find current measures to be effective and enough, consider that there is significant progress among Roma in both education and employment. Some of them think that when it comes to education, Roma themselves should put more effort and be consistent in the process of completing education.

At the end of the questionnaire, the respondents were given an opportunity to openly share other opinions regarding the researched matter that they did not share through the interview. Although very few of them provided answers to this question, the most common issue discussed here was the politicization and partisanship in employment, discrimination against Roma in public life and employment, as well as the low awareness on the importance of education among Roma.

CONCLUSIONS

Roma represent total of 46,433 residents in North Macedonia (or 2.53% of the population). Education and employment are two of the most important areas that directly affect the quality of life, level of inclusion and opportunity for prosperity and advancement of the Roma community.

The Republic of North Macedonia has accepted numerous international regulations for the protection of human rights, and the position of the Roma and the issue of their inclusion is part of them and there is solid domestic legislation in the field of education.

On a national level there are certain affirmative measures aimed at increasing the number of Roma students in public schools/universities with higher criteria. For example, as an affirmative measure for Roma scholarships are provided to increase the number of Roma who enroll in secondary school. An additional affirmative measure in the area of education is the university enrollment quota. Although the usage of this affirmative measures is solid the numbers of enrollment from one education level to another is unsatisfactory.

Roma mediators have a key role, positively influencing the opinion of parents and their greater awareness of the benefits of education and opportunities for greater competitiveness in the labor market. The high number of Roma children covered by the Project for scholarship, mentoring and tutoring of Roma high school students indicates the need for these measures, enabling increased accessibility and success of Roma students in high schools in the Republic of North Macedonia.

Despite the exiting affirmative measures for increasing enrollment in secondary and tertiary education of Roma, according to the data obtained by Employment agency of the Republic of North Macedonia, the largest number of Roma people who are unemployed and registered job seekers are without primary education or with incomplete primary education.

CONCLUSIONS

The measures implemented by Employment agency in their scope are mainly aimed at vulnerable groups, including the Roma, however, the lack of familiarity with them and the failure to meet certain criteria does not positively affect the increase in employment among this group. However, the growing trend of outflow of working population is opening and releasing vacancies for low-skilled staff in factories.

When it comes to continuing education to a tertiary degree, almost 85% of the Roma population aged 17-37 have not continued their education to a tertiary degree. The issue of low levels of continuing education to a tertiary degree among Roma is not gender related, meaning that rates among male and female are almost equal among those who continued their education and those who did not. Most common reasons for not continuing education to a tertiary degree are the lack of finances and lack of interest in further education. Marriage and other family related conditions are also reasons for significant number of respondents to stop the education process at secondary degree, particularly present among female population. For those who continued their education to a tertiary degree, main reasons are the wish for personal advancement and progress, better employment, motivation to contribute to community empowerment and progress and also prove to themselves and other that Roma can also be highly educated and successful people.

When they decide to continue their education to tertiary degree, most of the Roma (85,7%) will continue with it until completing. When it comes to reasons for quitting already started tertiary education, it is either lack of finances or inability to follow up with obligations and exams, or both. The reasons for further continuing and completing tertiary education are similar to those who led to enrolling in the first place: personal and professional prosperity and advancement, as well as empowerment of the community.

CONCLUSIONS

When it comes to professions, there is a wide variety of professional titles among the Roma, where medical technician and furniture and interiors technician are the most common. Also, auto mechanic - mechatronic, cosmetics, care and beauty technician, economic technician, food technician, physiotherapist and textile technician are professions with significant representation.

Almost 48% of the researched Roma population are employed persons and the other 52% are unemployed, freelancers, people with informal economic or no economic activity, with a very small number of employed people (only 9 out of 66) that have a job fully related to their profession. Although Roma prefer vocational rather than general or gymnasium education, most of those professions remain unrealized and the effort and investment in professional education remains unused, which is a huge loss for young people as well as for the state and its economy.

If we compare Roma communities in Prilep and Bitola, we can conclude that employment rates are higher in Prilep as opposed to education rates, where we concluded that Roma from Bitola are more likely to continue their education to a tertiary degree.

47,1% of the Roma with completed secondary education are formally employed. 1 out of 7 Roma with completed tertiary degree has a status of unemployed person, while 3 out of 8 Roma that have their tertiary education ongoing are unemployed or have no economic activity. Important data of these analysis is that all of the Roma who declared to be engaged in informal economic activity have completed secondary education, meaning no person with tertiary education (completed or ongoing) is engaged in such activity. This could be interpreted as a mark that the higher education people have, the less likely they are to engage in informal economic activities that although bring paid income, are leaving young people without pension insurance, no opportunity for regulated and protected labor, and are also harming the economy and tax system of the state.

CONCLUSIONS

There are significant inequalities of men and women when it comes to employment status. While 57% of the male Roma are employed, only 38% female have the same status. The share of unemployed male Roma is 26% and in female it is 42%. Unlike the continuing of education which is not shown to be gender related matter, we can conclude that unemployment rates are higher among Roma women.

55% of the Roma who do not have formal employment would accept it, 15% would accept formal employment only if it is in accordance with their profession, while the other 30% would either reject formal employment or are not sure. When it comes to reasons for accepting formal employment, most referred are the opportunity to provide for their families, to have pension insurance, have better social status and quality of life. The most common reasons for not accepting formal employment are because some of the unemployed Roma are users of social transfers from the state, because they have informal economic activity that brings them enough money, they plan to go live abroad or they have little children (this response is only given by some of the female respondents).

There is an equal division of opinion between Roma who find measures related to education and employment of Roma to be enough and effective and the ones who consider them neither enough nor effective. A significant number of the researched population, that also represent a slight majority comparing to other two groups, don't know or have no opinion on this question, which can be a sign that many of them are not fully aware or have knowledge on the current measures. Most of the Roma who think negatively to the current measures and policies, explained they are referring to the policies and measures related to employment, that are either not implemented properly or not enough and lead to no improvements in the employment status of the Roma, particularly in the employment in public sector. Some of them mentioned that in the area of employment, discrimination is still a practice and Roma are not given equal opportunities.

CONCLUSIONS

Most of the respondents who gave negative answer, actually explained that they find the measures and policies in the area of education to be positive and effective.

The research completely confirmed the specific hypothesis 1 that the rate of Roma who enroll in tertiary education system after completion of secondary education in North Macedonia is very low. The research partially confirmed specific hypothesis 2 that there is a very high rate of unemployed Roma with completed both secondary as well as tertiary education in North Macedonia. All of the abovementioned leads to conclusion confirming the general hypothesis of the research that the current conditions/measures regarding the state of education and employment of young Roma do not give satisfactory results and do not lead to higher rates of educated and employed Roma.

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