



Informal Roma Settlement Household Survey  
Belgrade 2023



Centar za  
integraciju mladih  
Center for  
Youth Integration

This project  
is funded by  
European  
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## About the Center for Youth Integration

The Center for Youth Integration (CYI) is a citizens' association based in Belgrade, Serbia, founded in 2004.

Our mission is to ensure the realization of the rights and secure equal opportunities for the development of each individual child and young person in our society.

Our work focuses on protecting severely socially excluded and discriminated-against Roma children in street situations and at-risk children living in extreme poverty, and unaccompanied and separated child refugees and migrants staying or transiting through Serbia.

We take a combination of direct action, which aims to meet children's basic needs and fulfil their rights, and strategic action, which aims to strengthen the legal framework, practices and coordination among stakeholders in order to protect their rights in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international and European law.

The survey was implemented by CYI, in November 2022 as part of the project "Protecting the Rights of Street-Involved Children in Serbia", funded by the European Union. Aim of the project is to enable evidence-based policy-making by duty-bearing institutions to better protect the rights of children in street situations.

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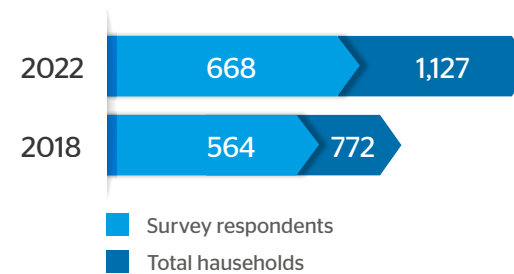
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## Introduction

This report presents the results of a survey of households living in informal Roma settlements in Belgrade, Serbia.

The survey was conducted in 30<sup>1</sup> informal settlements in Belgrade's eight inner-city municipalities<sup>2</sup>. A total of 1,127 households were identified, of which 668 participated in the survey. A similar survey was conducted in 2018, which identified 772 households in 28 informal settlements, of which 564 participated in that survey.

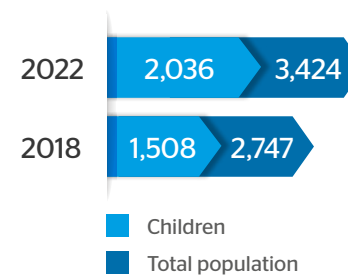
### Informal settlement households



**Figure 1:**  
Number of households identified in Informal Roma settlements in inner-city Belgrade in 2018 and 2022, and the number of households that participated in the household survey in both years.

In 2022 the survey recorded 3,424 people (including 2,036 children) living in 668 households, compared to the 2,747 people (including 1,508 children) in 564 households in 2018.

### Informal settlement population



**Figure 2:**  
Comparison of the total number of people and number of children counted in 30 Informal settlements in Belgrade's eight inner-city municipalities in 2018 and 2022.

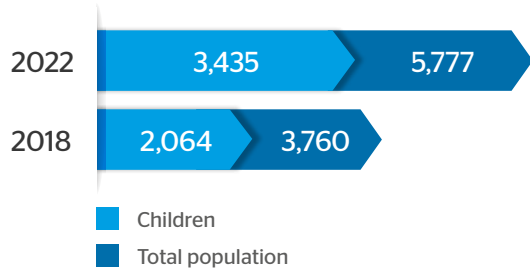
<sup>1</sup> The survey was implemented in the following informal Roma settlements: Marije Bursać, last stop of bus number 18, FDU, Agostina Neta, Makiš, Ada bridge, Čukarica wood, Čukarica school, Vidikovac, Bele vode, Žarkovo overpass, Kijevo, Ledine, last stop of bus 75, Tošin bunar, Bežanijska kosa, Mlleve Marić Ajnštajn, last stop of bus 89, Ivana Ribara, Mali Leskovac, Ustanička and Bulevar Kralja Aleksandra corner, Vuka Vrčevića, Banjica next to 5 solitaires, Kanarevo brdo, Braće Jerković, Jabučki rit, Orlovsko naselje, Reva, Staro sajmište, Voždovac

<sup>2</sup> The survey was implemented in the following municipalities: Palilula, Zvezdara, Voždovac, Zemun, Novi Beograd, Čukarica, Rakovica, Savski venac



Assuming that the households that participated in the survey are representative, it is estimated that over five and a half thousand people, including about three and a half thousand children, live in the 30 informal settlements covered by the survey. In 2018 the estimated total population was less than four thousand, of which about two thousand were children. Since 2018, estimated total population has increased by 54%, while the number of children has increased by 66%.

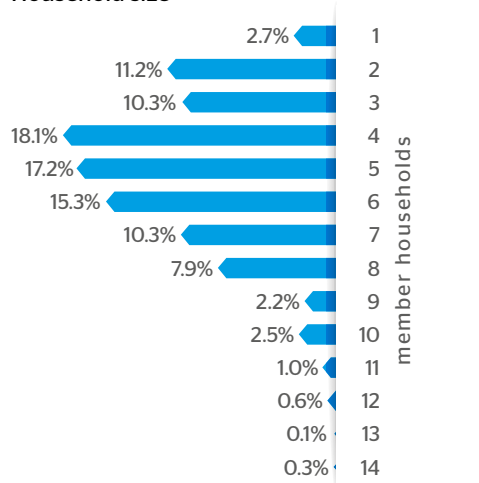
**Estimated total population**



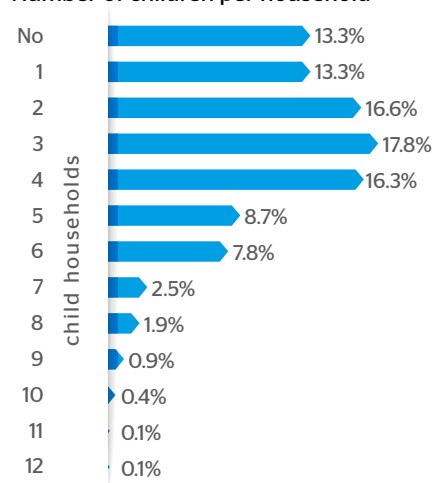
**Figure 3:**  
 Estimated total number of people and number of children living in the 30 informal Roma settlements in Belgrade's 8 inner-city municipalities. The estimate is calculated based on proportion of household that participated in the survey compared to the total number of households

## Household size and composition

**Household size**

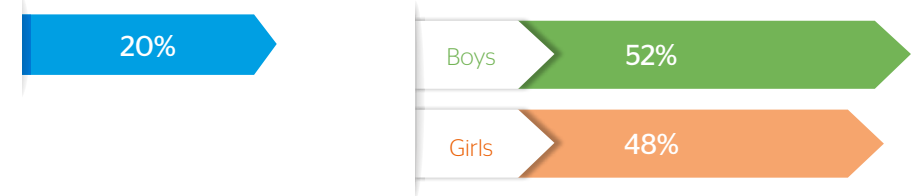


**Number of children per household**

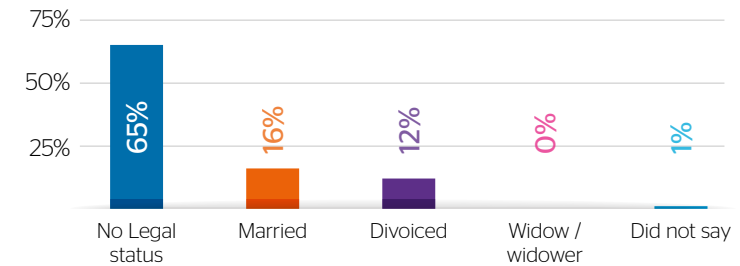


**Figure 4-a:**  
 (left) Households size disaggregated by number of household members and (right) the number of children per household;

**Single parent households**



**Marital status**



**Figure 4-b:**  
 (Top left) Proportion of single parent households; (top right) share of boys and girls among children; and (lower) marital status of couples in households with two parents.

A typical household living in an informal Roma settlement in Belgrade has four to six members (such households account for 50% of all households). Almost all households (90%) range in size from two to eight members. A small proportion of households have more than eight members (7%), while just under 3% of households have a single member.

A typical household has two to four children (accounting for 65% of all households). Most households (85%) range from one to six children. A small proportion of households have more than six children (6%), while in just over one-tenth (13%) of households there are no children. Girls make up 48% of children and boys 52%.

One in five (20%) households with children are single parent families.

In two-thirds of households (with two parents), couples are unmarried (legally). A minority are legally married (16%), divorced (12%) or widows/widowers (7%).

## Household income

A majority (59%) of households live on less than 24,000 RSD per month, while a fifth (21%) live on less than 12,000 RSD per month. A quarter (26%) of households have income of between 24,000 RSD and 48,000 RSD, while a small proportion (7%) of households have a monthly income above 48,000 RSD.

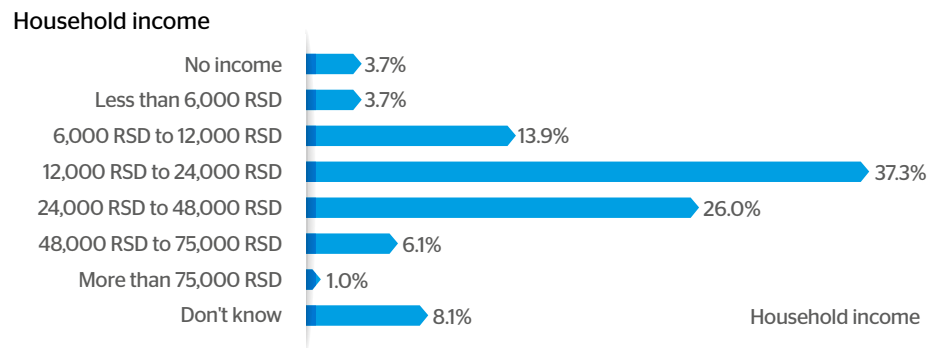


Figure 5:  
Household income disaggregated according to income brackets.

The most common type of income-generating work among adults is street work.

More than a third (41%) of mothers and nearly two-thirds (59%) of fathers generate income through some form of street work, while for just over a third of both mothers (39%) and fathers (36%) street work is their only income-generating work.

Street work is the only common type of income-generating work among mothers, with only a small proportion being permanently (1%) or occasionally (2%) legally employed, or informally employed “on the black” (3%). Over half of mothers (52%) do not work, which closely correlates with the proportion of women that are registered as unemployed with the National Employment Agency (50%).

It is common among fathers (45%) to be involved in more than one type of income-generating work. Three-quarters (72%) of fathers are involved in some form of informal work (street work and/or informal employment “on the black”). Only a fifth (21%) of fathers are formally employed, either permanently (9%) or occasionally (12%). One in ten fathers (12%) do not work.

A very small proportion of women and men (2% of both) are pensioners.

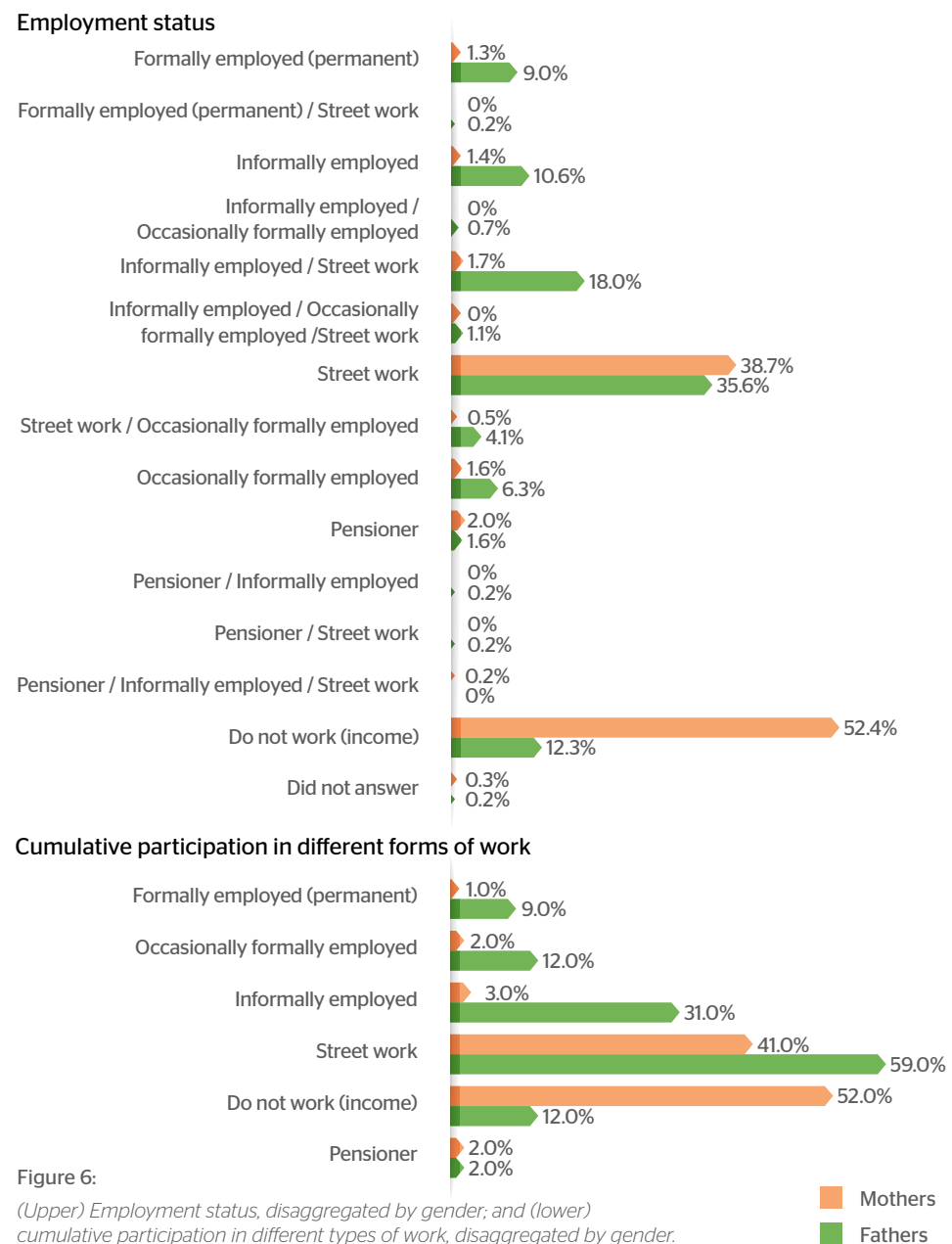


Figure 6:  
(Upper) Employment status, disaggregated by gender; and (lower) cumulative participation in different types of work, disaggregated by gender.

At least four-fifths (81%) of households generate income through some kind of street work, and a majority (65%) are involved in multiple types of street work.

Three-quarters of households generate income by collecting and reselling recyclable materials regularly (70%) or occasionally (7%). Two-thirds of households generate income from reselling goods on the street or at a market regularly (54%) or occasionally (12%). A small proportion of households generate income by cleaning car windows (3%). One-in-twenty households report that they generate income through begging regularly (3%) or occasionally (3%).

**Street work - households**

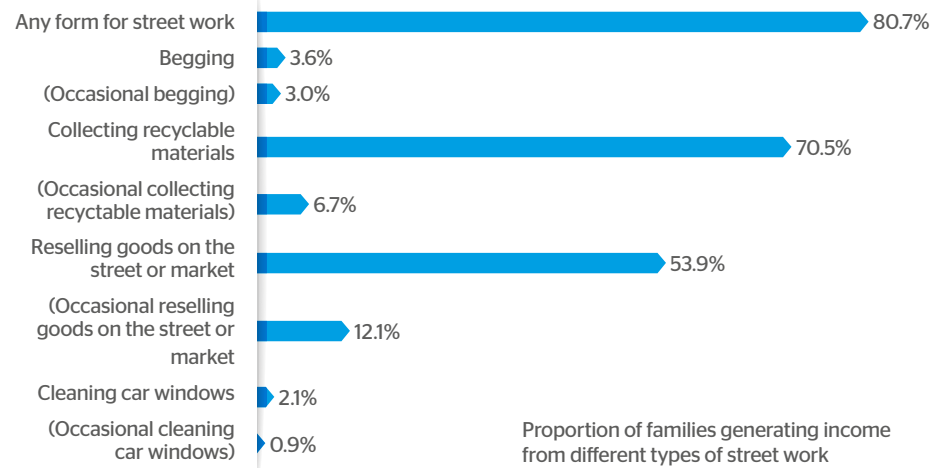


Figure 7: Proportion of households that generate income through street work, disaggregated by types of work.

In over a third (36%) of households with children, children are involved in some form of street work. In almost all households in which children are involved in street work (97%), children are involved in both reselling goods on the street or at a market and collecting and reselling recyclable materials (35% of all households with children). In a fifth (19%) of households in which children are involved in street work, children generate income through begging (7% of all households with children). In a small proportion (3%) of households with children, children generate income through washing car windows on the street.

**Street work - children**

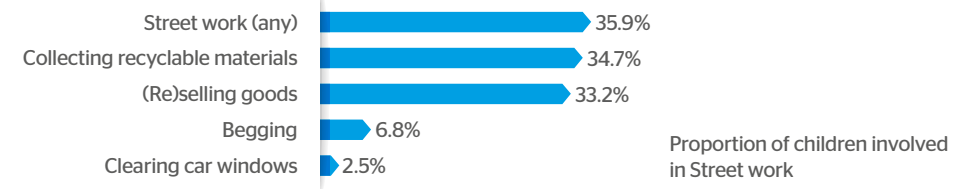


Figure 8: Proportion of children involved in Street work, disaggregated by type of work

**Social welfare**

Fewer than half of the households reported that they received social financial aid (44%) or a one-off social welfare payment (37%) in the six months before the survey was conducted. Just over half (52%) of households with children reported that they received child supplement over the same period. Slightly less than a third (28%) of households reported that they received free meals. 4% of households reported that a member received disability allowance. A third (36%) of households received support from a CSO.

**Social assistance in the previous six months**

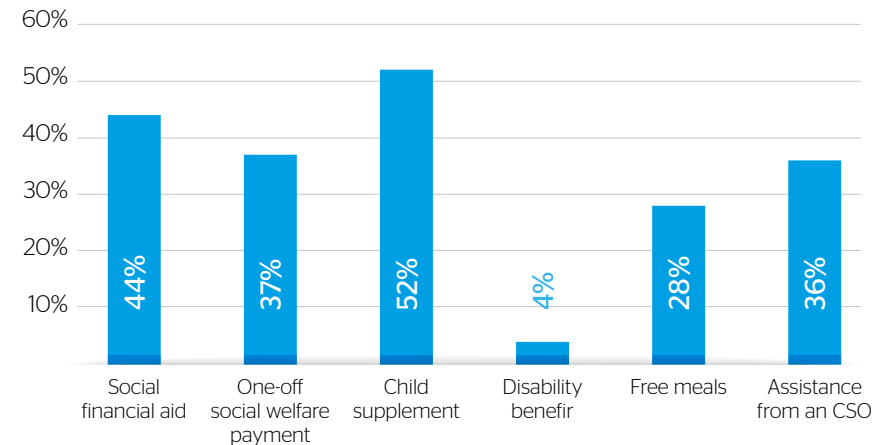


Figure 9: Proportion of households receiving social financial aid.

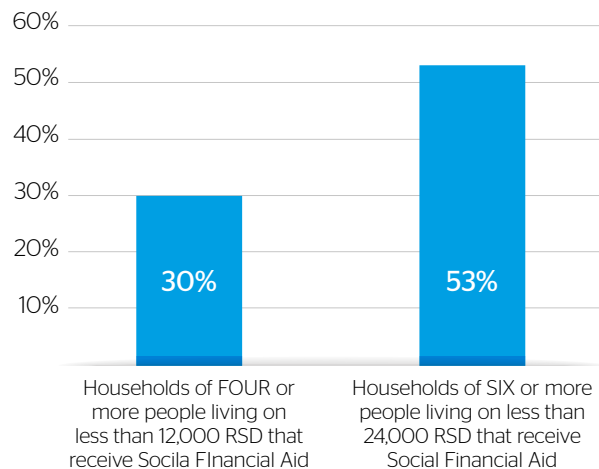


The proportion of households that receive regular social financial aid (44%) is substantially lower than the proportion of households living on less than 24,000 RSD per month (59%).

Given that households are typically large (with an average of five members, including three children), it is concerning that such a small proportion benefit from social financial aid. Only 30% of households with four or more people living on less than 12,000 RSD per month receive social financial aid. Such households must survive on less than 3,000 RSD per person per month. Further, only 53% of households with six or more members living on less than 24,000 RSD per month receive social financial aid - less than 4,000 RSD per month per person.

It is also concerning that only 52% of families with children receive child supplement.

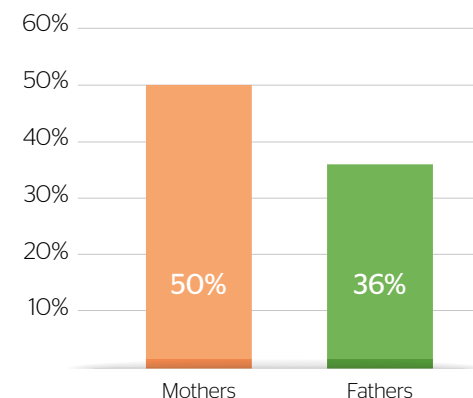
### Social Financial Aid



**Figure 10:**  
*Households with incomes of less than 4,000 RSD per person per month that do NOT receive social financial aid.*

Half of mothers (50%) and a third of fathers (36%) are registered with the National Employment Agency. Registration with the National Employment Agency is required in order to access social financial aid.

### Registration with the National Employment Agency



**Figure 11:**  
*Proportion of mothers and fathers registered with the National Employment Agency.*



## Living conditions and household needs

Poor housing conditions are widespread. Nearly half of households live in “Baraka” – a term that refers to improvised (shanty) housing. A majority of households report that they lack a legal connection to electricity, running water and sewerage. More than half (56%) do not have a bathroom of any kind. A majority of households reported leaking roofs (61%), damp (66%) and visible mold (63%), while just under half (47%) report that they have rotten floors and windows. Nearly two-thirds (61%) of households report living in cramped conditions, while half (51%) lack sufficient daylight. Most households (85%) heat their homes using wood. Three quarters of households report that there is a lot of uncollected waste (garbage) in the settlements where they live.

### Living conditions (problems)

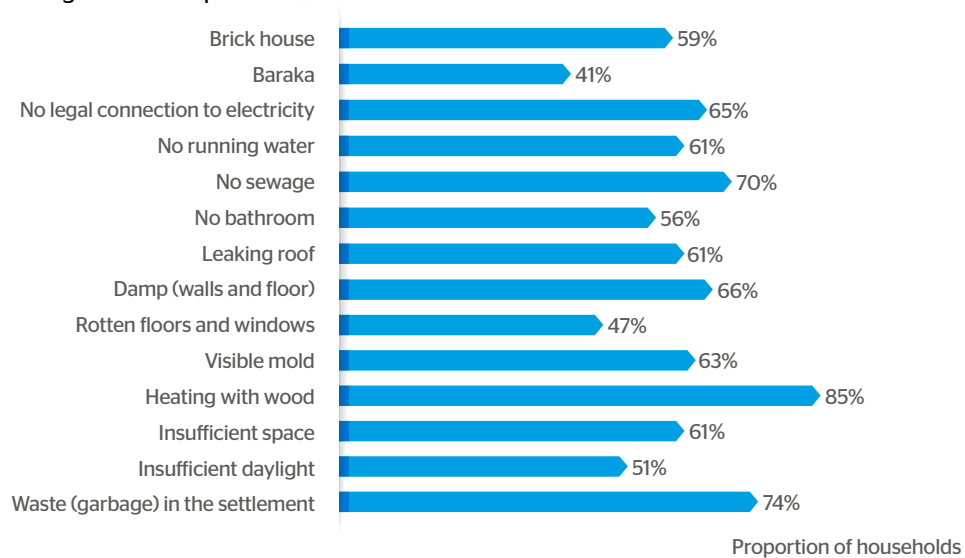


Figure 12: Living conditions (problems) of households in informal settlements in Belgrade.

Most households report the need for better clothing (95%) and nutrition (85%) and hygiene products (94%) as priorities. Half of households report the need for toilets (55%) and showers (52%). Three-quarters (75%) of households report that children’s games are needed, and half (53%) that school books are needed. Just under half of households (48%) report that a telephone and access to the internet are household needs.

### Household needs

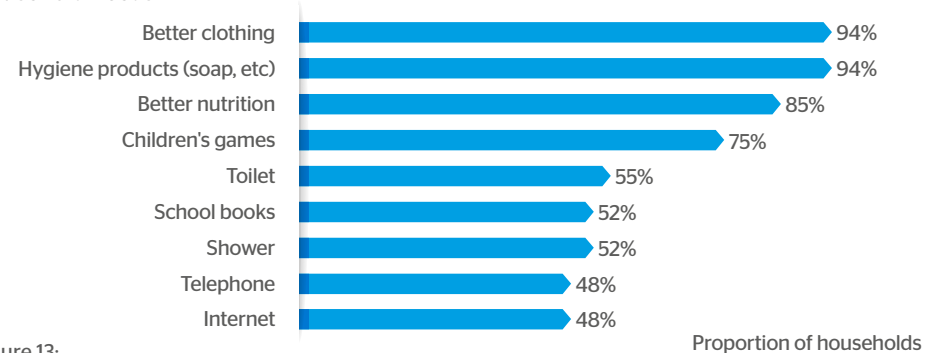


Figure 13: Household needs among families living in informal settlements in Belgrade.

## Health problems

Nearly half (42%) of households reported that one or more people in the household suffer from a chronic illness. The same proportion (42%) of households reported that one or more household members required medical treatment that they could not afford. A smaller proportion (7%) of households reported that one or more household members suffer from mental health problems.

### Health problems

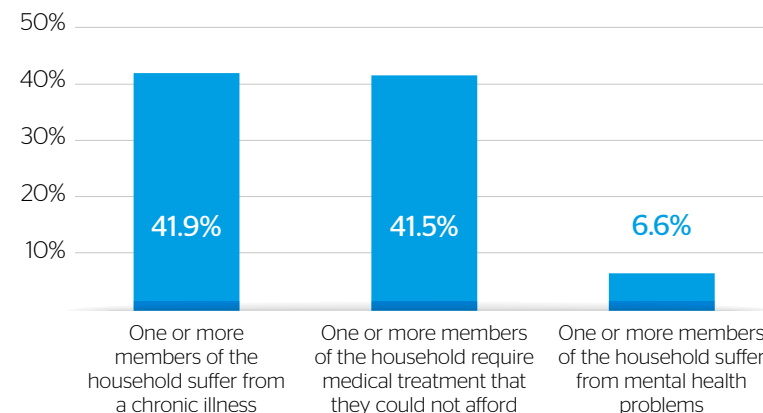


Figure 14: Households with one or more members with physical and mental health problems.

## First pregnancy

The overwhelming majority (77%) of mothers reported that their first pregnancy occurred between the age of 14 and 19 (inclusive).

Nearly a third (29%) of mothers reported they had their first pregnancy before they were 16 years old, and nearly two-thirds (59%) before they were 18 years old. Most mothers (80%) had their first pregnancy before they were 20 years old.

Age of mothers at first pregnancy

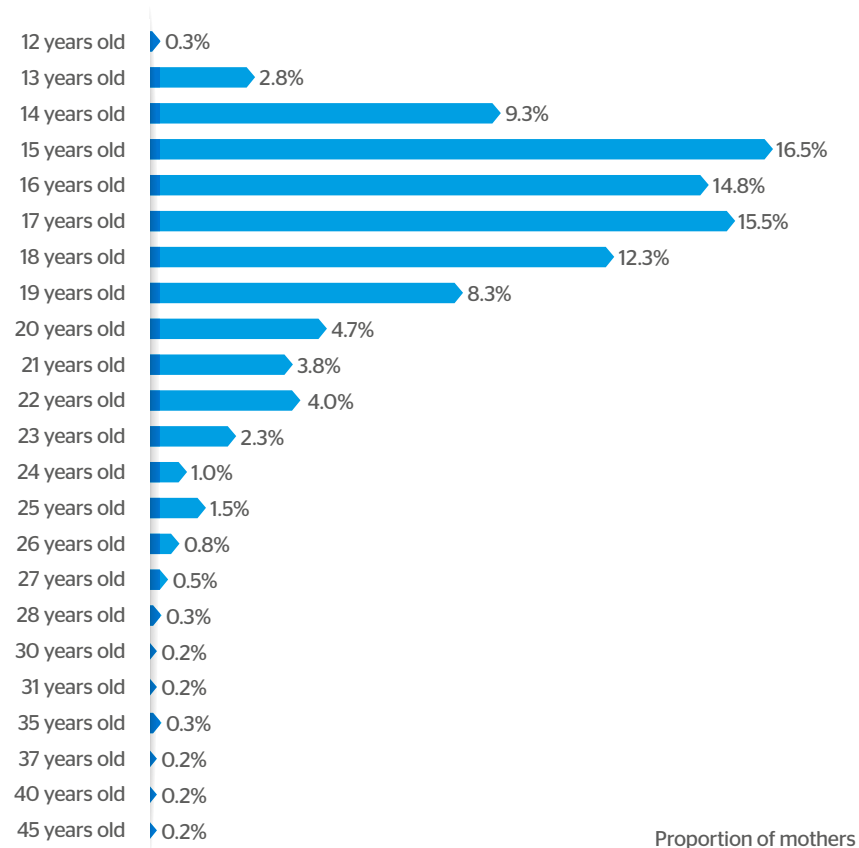


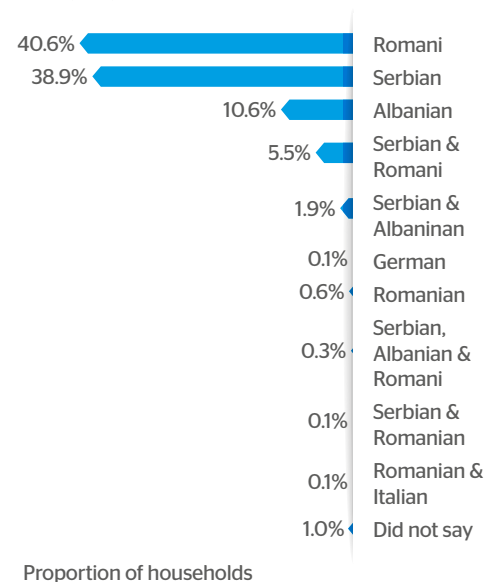
Figure 15:  
Age of mothers at first pregnancy

## Language and ethnicity

Most (76%) households report that they predominantly identify as Roma, while one in ten identify as Bosniak / Muslim (10%). One in twenty households predominantly identify as Serbian (5%) and a smaller proportion as Albanian (4%) and Ashkali (2%). A very small proportion of households identify with multiple ethnicities. One household identified as Egyptian.

The main languages spoken domestically are Romani (41%) and Serbian (39%). One in ten households (11%) speak Albanian in the home, while one in twenty (6%) report that they speak a mix of Romani and Serbian and a very small proportion (2%) speak a mix of Serbian and Albanian. The remaining 1.3% of households reported that they spoke German or Romanian, or a mix of Serbian, Albanian and Romania, Serbian and Romanian, or Romani and Italian. A small proportion of households did not say (1%).

Language(s) spoken in the household



Ethnicity(s) in the household

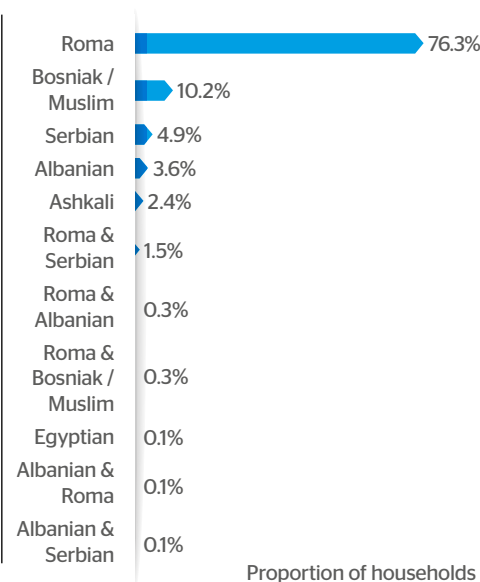


Figure 16:  
Predominant Ethnicity and language of households.

## Place of birth

The most common place of birth among adults is Belgrade (39% of mothers and 40% of fathers). Slightly more than a quarter of mothers (27%) and a third of fathers (32%) were born in Kosovo<sup>4</sup>, while about a quarter were born in other places in Serbia (28% of mothers and 23% of fathers). A smaller proportion of adults were born in other countries (6% of mothers and 5% of fathers).

### Place of birth

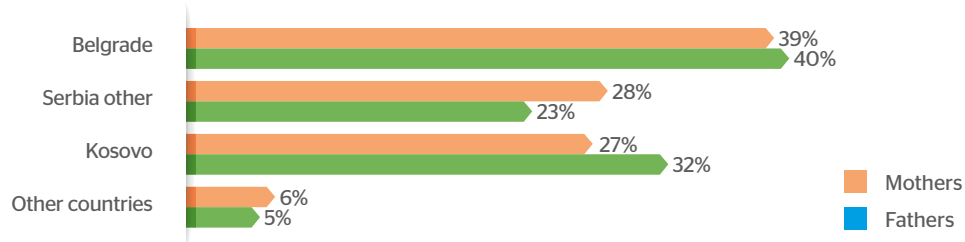
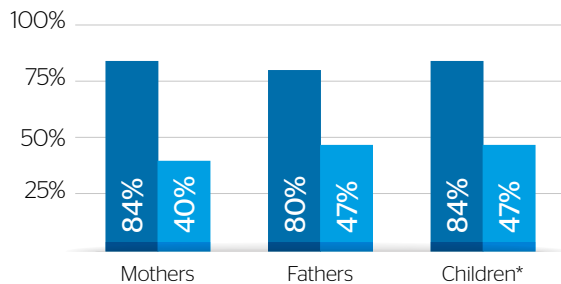


Figure 17:  
Place of birth among adults (women/mothers and men/fathers).

## Residency

Most households (84% of mothers, 80% of fathers, and 84% of children) are formally registered as residents in Belgrade, however fewer than half (40% of mothers, 47% of fathers, and 47% of children) live at the address at which they are registered. In a small proportion of households (2.5%), some children are formally resident in Belgrade and some are not. A quarter (27%) of families have previously lived abroad.

### Residency status



■ Formally registered as a resident in Belgrade  
■ Lives at address at which they are formally resident

### Lived abroad

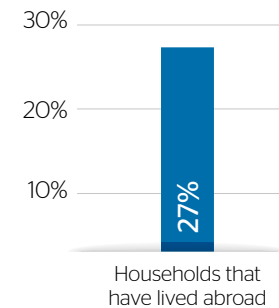


Figure 18:  
(Left) Formal residency registration; and (right) proportion of families that have lived abroad.

## Personal documentation

Most household members possess an ID card (both 92%), while most children (86%) possess a birth certificate. In 89% of households all members possess valid identity documents. In a small proportion of households (6%), some children possess valid health insurance cards and some do not.

### Personal documentation

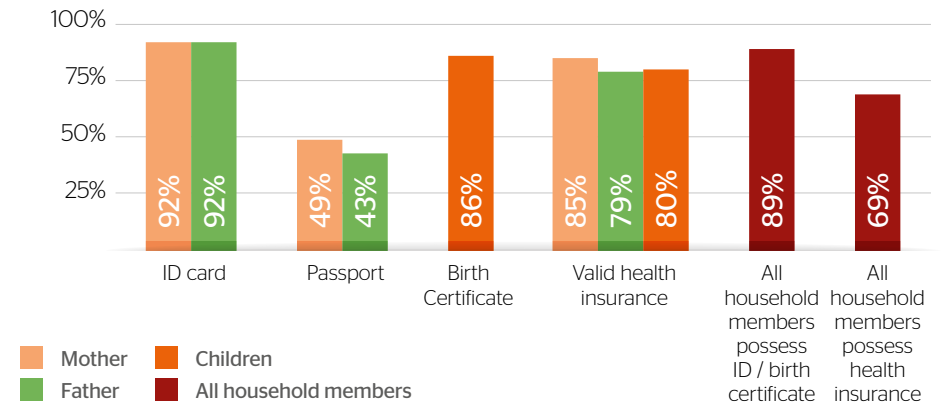


Figure 19:  
Proportion of households and household members that possess personal documentation and health insurance cards, disaggregated by gender.

A similarly high proportion of adults and children possess valid health insurance cards (85% of mothers, 79% of fathers and 80% of children). However, in only 69% of households do all members possess valid health insurance card. In a very small proportion of households (2%), some children possess birth certificates and some do not.

Less than half of adults possess a passport (49% of mothers and 43% of fathers).

<sup>4</sup> \*No determination on the status of Kosovo is intended.

## Education

More than two-thirds of mothers (70%) and more than half of fathers (59%) have not completed primary school.

A quarter of mothers (27%) and a third of fathers (33%) have completed primary school. Only 2% of mothers and 6% of fathers have completed three-year secondary school, and less than 1% of mothers and 2% of fathers have completed four-year secondary school.

No adults reported that they completed higher secondary school or university.

### Parents education

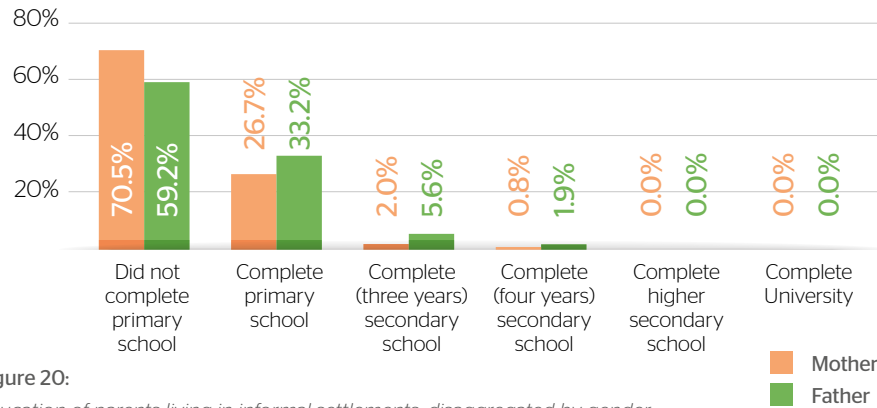


Figure 20: Education of parents living in informal settlements, disaggregated by gender.

Among households with children that are eligible (age-appropriate) for preschool / kindergarten, only a quarter (25%) report that their children attend, while a small proportion report that their children attend preschool / kindergarten irregularly (5%) or are enrolled in preschool / kindergarten but do NOT attend (3%). Two-thirds (67%) of households with children that are eligible for preschool / kindergarten report that their children are NOT enrolled (and do not attend).

### Preschool and kindergarten attendance among age-appropriate children

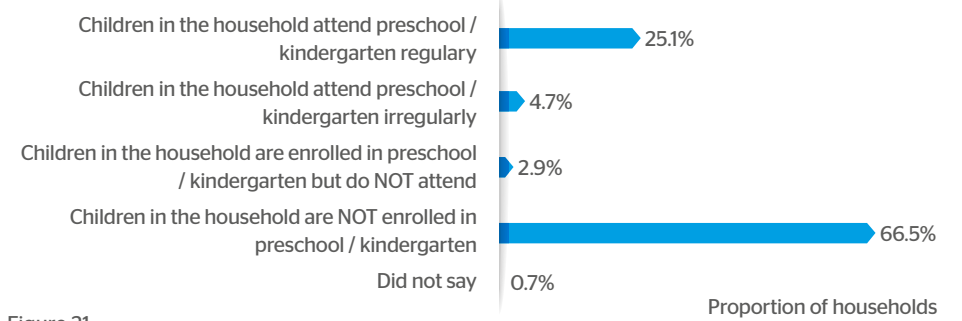
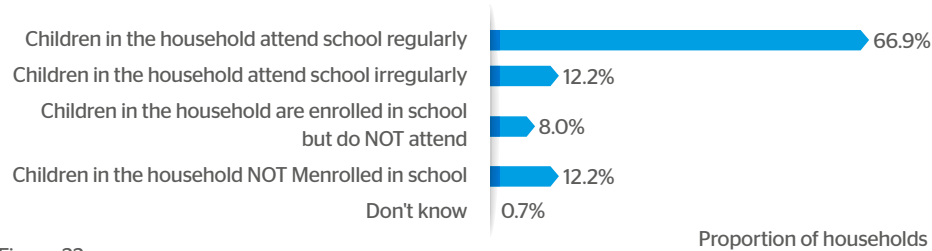


Figure 21: Preschool and kindergarten attendance among age-appropriate children living in informal settlements.



Among households with children that are eligible (age-appropriate) for primary school, two-thirds (67%) report that their children attend regularly; while a further 12% report that their children attend irregularly. One in five households report that their children are either enrolled in school but do NOT attend (8%) or are NOT enrolled in school (12%).

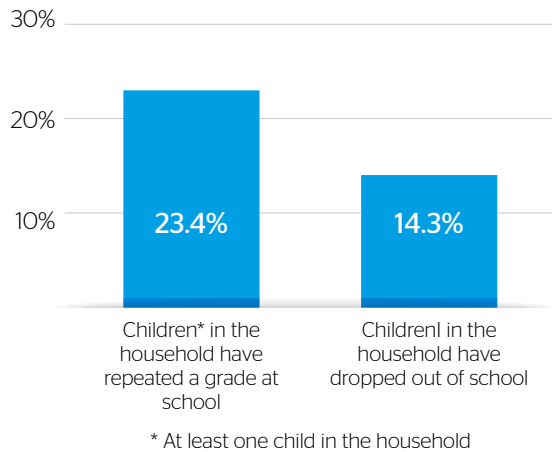
**Primary school attendance among age-appropriate children**



**Figure 22:**  
*Primary school attendance among children living in informal settlements*

In a quarter (23%) of households at least one child has repeated a grade at school, while in one in seven households (14%) at least one child has dropped out of school completely.

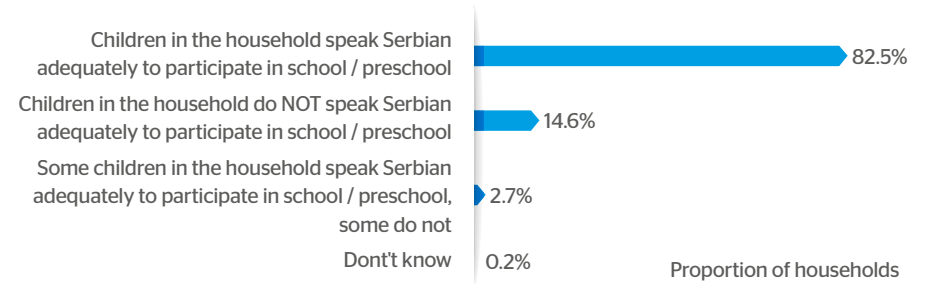
**School drop out and repeating grades**



**Figure 23:**  
*Proportion of children that have repeated a grade at school and children that have dropped out from school completely.*

Most households report that their children's Serbian language ability is adequate to participate in school/preschool, but a sizable minority report that either all children in the household (15%) or some children in the household (3%) cannot do so.

**Children's Serbian language ability**



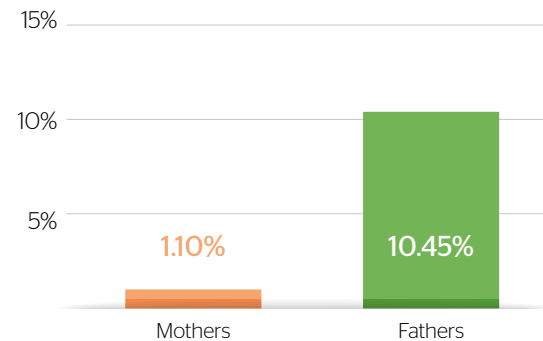
**Figure 24:**  
*Proportion of children that speak Serbian adequately to participate in school.*

**Imprisonment**

One in ten (10%) fathers living in informal settlements in Belgrade have been imprisoned during in their life. This is a staggeringly high proportion and is very concerning.

1% of mothers have been imprisoned previously in their life.

**Imprisonment**



**Figure 25:**  
*Proportion of adults that have been imprisoned in their lifetime, disaggregated by gender.*



We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all the families participating in this research, to our colleagues who spent one whole month in the field and to the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia without whose support this research would not have been possible.

Center for Youth Integration



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