



Qendra Kosovare për Studime Gjinore
Kosovar Center for Gender Studies



Rregulli Organizatorik të Grave Romë, Ashkali dhe Egjiptase të Kosovës
The Network of Roma, Ashkali & Egyptian Women Organizations of Kosovo
Dokumenti Romë, Ashkali dhe Egjiptase të Kosovës Organizatave të Grave

Position of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Women in Kosovo

Publisher: Kosovo Center for Gender Studies

Research manager: Luljeta Vuniqui

Researcher: Luljeta Demolli

Technical Editing & Cover Design: Drin Kryeziu

Printing: Grafoprint - Prishtina

© Kosovo Center for Gender Studies

All rights reserved

www.kgscenter.net

This research project has been financially supported by UNIFEM

1. The general context	
2. Implementation of the survey.....	
3. Interpretation of results	
4. Conclusions	
5. Recommendations	

1. The general context

The situation of the RAE community in various parts of Europe has become a benchmark of the development in the field of fundamental rights and social justice. As this report demonstrates, the situation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian Women in Kosovo is poor and emphasizes how much needs to be done. Advances in social protection, health, housing availability, educational attainment and similar indicators of development will remain tarnished if they are not to the benefit of all members of society. The right of all individuals to equality before the law and to the protection from discrimination is a bedrock of

democratic societies. Inequality, discrimination, exclusion on the basis of a person's racial or ethnic origin or social status is wrong not only in legal terms, but also in moral and social terms, including the implications of the economic development.

Discrimination in the case of RAE women is a multiple phenomenon, often being based on both ethnic origin and gender. A minority with a culture and living habits very different from the majority of the population in the Balkans, the RAE population is subject to negative perceptions and prejudice on the part of the non-RAE population. RAE women must, in addition, cope with the usual difficulties for social inclusion borne by the female population; difficulties which are aggravated by the specific Roma culture, based on "traditional" strictly separated gender roles within their communities which may hamper the personal development of Roma girls and women. This is particularly true in some of the Roma communities, which have, due to their historic and cultural background, maintained strict adherence to traditional habits.

Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) communities in Kosovo, and RAE women especially, have faced numerous obstacles socially, politically, and economically, such as ethnic discrimination, low levels of education within their communities, and a lack of access to political decision-making.

There are approximately 35,000 to 40,000 members of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities living in Kosovo. Since the birth, they are faced with extreme poverty, as there are very few RAE families in Kosovo with a daily income bigger than a dollar per head. The data regarding the level of education of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians in Kosovo is the following: Illiterate 16%; Children attending education in primary school 75%; Children attending education in secondary school 25%; RAE members who have completed high school 1.4.%.

The RAE are not a homogeneous population: throughout Kosovo the RAE community is composed of several sub-communities differentiated by settlement model, culture and religion, legal status, language and period of migration. These differences impact strongly on the status of women, their opportunities, and quality of life.

Throughout Kosovo, the RAE communities are the groups most risking marginalization, and are confronted with a range of common socio-economic problems: widespread social inequality and discrimination, poor living standards with numerous families living in poverty, little or no employment prospective, poor health and housing conditions, and reduced access to public services.

The life of RAE community is on the margins of social life, without real contacts with the broader community. Families function according to the rules of strict patriarchy in which the absolute power belongs to the oldest male, so-called "the head of housing." Gender roles are very clear. Since the earliest childhood, daughters are raised with the knowledge that men make all decisions and their word is law. Marriages are mostly informal and are based on a mutual agreement of two families. Parents marry them at the age of 15 or 16, so the data that two-thirds of RAE women from Kosovo gave birth to the first child before their adulthood, does not surprise.

2. Implementation of the survey

The study was implemented by a Kosovo Center for Gender Studies team, assisted by several volunteers. KCGS also involved RROGRAEK coordinators as interviewers, who were initially subjected to several trainings and were under regular supervision on the ground. Fieldwork lasted for 15 days, from October 10 to October 25, 2008. The survey was carried out in the entire territory of Kosovo, with special focus in Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian majority settlements (*Gjakovë, Pejë, Graçanicë, Fushë Kosovë*).

Survey's instruments

Sampling

Only Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women over the age of 16 were interviewed for the survey. A total of 270 women were included in the survey.

Questionnaire

The survey was implemented on the basis of the questionnaire, developed by the Kosovo Center for Gender Studies (KCGS).

Areas covered

- Media and information
- Economic situation
- Language and education
- Ethnic distance
- Issues of concern for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities
- Women's health
- Early marriages
- Education
- Employment
- Positions on the role of women in families and society
- Discrimination
- Political differences of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women
- Domestic violence
- Religious affiliation, and religion

Research on the ground

The survey was carried out on random selection method, initially identifying the approximate population in every municipality, and then determining the number of interviews to be completed in respective municipalities.

The number of interviews in rural and urban areas of the municipality was determined so that it reflected the proportion of the municipal population. Finally, accurate starting points (locations) were defined, as to where the interviews would be held.

The number of interviews in municipalities, from the planned sample of 270 interviews, is in proportion with the approximate percentage of the residents in every municipality within the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community population, as defined by UNMIK.

Random selection method

Interviews were done in a group of 5 interviews per single address (called *starting point*). This has enabled the identification of different locations within one settlement or municipality. For example, if the starting point was the “Dubrovnik Street” in Prishtina, the interviewer was instructed to do five interviews in every other house on one side of the street. If there was more than one woman in the house, the interviewer was told to do the interview with the woman whose birthday was closer to the date of the interview. This method has been proven to produce high statistical accuracy regarding unbiasedness.

This method was selected for our survey due to the lack a general professional survey on the position of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women in Kosovo. This survey with random selection was considered as necessary for an initial collection of information from the ground, which could serve for further research in the future.

Survey was supported by the UNIFEM Office in Kosovo.

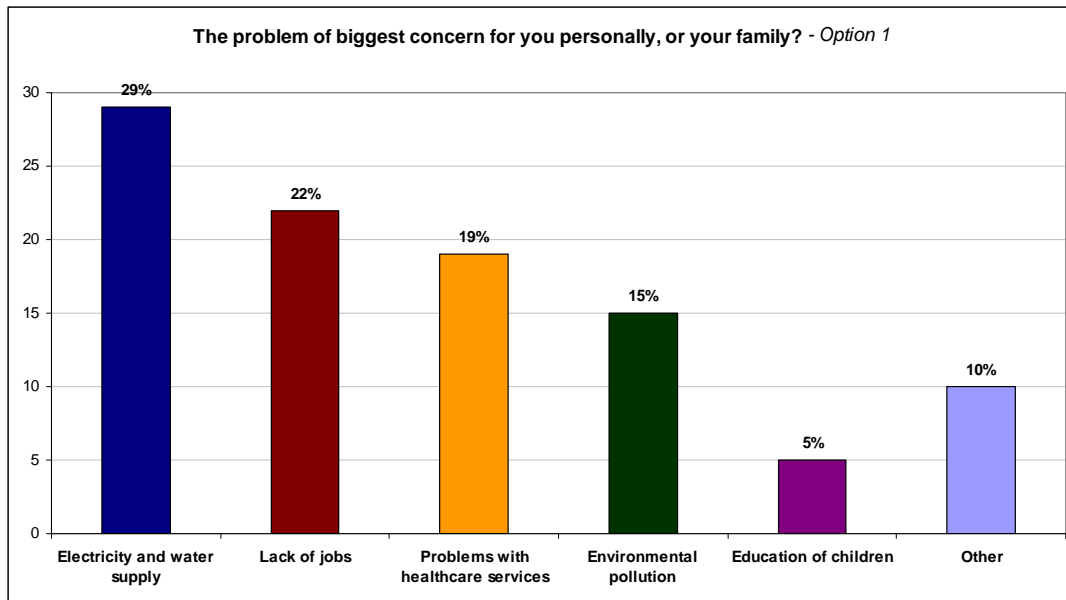
3. INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

- **Priorities (problems) of RAE women**

RAE community is the poorest community in Kosovo; therefore they are the biggest debtors with unpaid utility bills such as electricity, water, and shelter. In this way, RAE families are burdened with debts from unpaid bills, thus by exceeding their monthly expenses for about 12 times. The interviewed women have mentioned health, unemployment, nutrition, housing conditions and children's school attendance, as the most important aspects of vulnerability of this community. RAE communities in general, and RAE women in particular, have difficulties accessing medical services, including family medicine, and often cannot afford to buy the prescribed medicines. School attendance by children of RAE communities, especially girls' attendance, is low at all levels of education. Better access to quality education is considered a prerequisite for integration and employment opportunity. A large number of RAE communities live in informal settlements with inadequate housing conditions; the defilement of the environment is emphasized particularly.

The living conditions in many RAE settlements in Kosovo are extremely inadequate, lacking the provision of even the most rudimentary infrastructure. Many RAE lack legal security of

tenure and their homes lack basic services and amenities such as heating and insulation, sewage system, running water. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that these communities are often far removed from public services and employment and educational opportunities. Frequently, housing conditions are so substandard as to cause a public health risk. RAE women, who spend more time in the home than RAE men, are most susceptible to health risks arising from substandard living conditions.



This situation is reflected in the research results, because the RAE communities women were asked about the issues which are of a special importance for them and their families. On top of the list of the problems concerning them the most, they have identified the supply with "electricity and water," with 29 percent. While 22 percent of them pointed out the problem of "unemployment" as the second largest problem which they face with. 19 percent of the respondents confirm that they have problems with the appropriate access to "health services". The "environmental pollution" was mentioned by 15 percent of the respondents as well as "the education of children" with 5 percent.

- **Education**

The functionality of the education system, the work of the institutions, linking education with the economic development and efficiency of this system in meeting the needs of communities, can serve as a mirror that reflects the overall development of the communities in Kosovo.

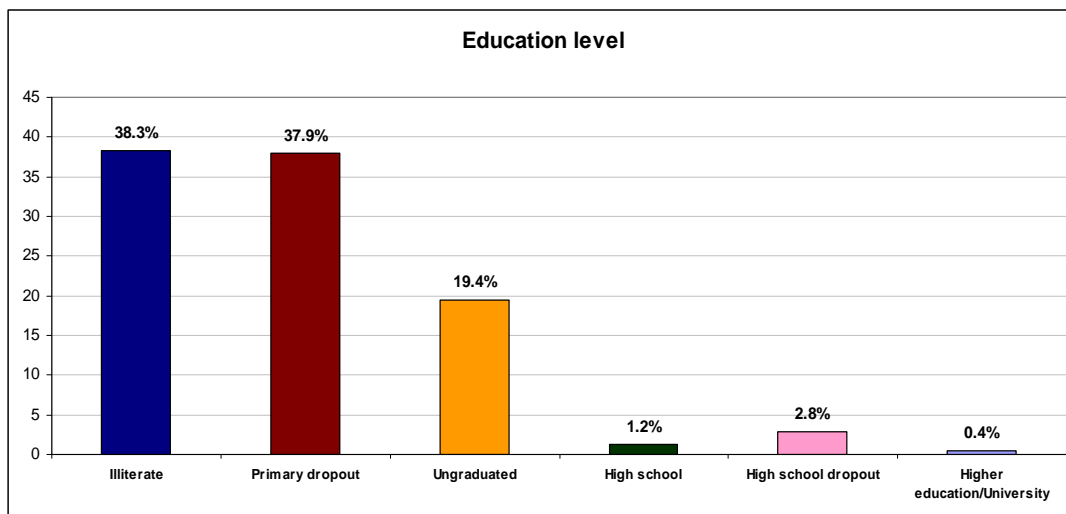
The education of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo is one of the major issues in reviews and projections of the future development of this community. There have been frequent discussions on the current difficult situation in the field of education and its role in the development and integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in Kosovo in general, and the low level of school attendance, high level of dropouts and

illiteracy among girls from these communities in Kosovo in particular. However, little has been done in this regard.

Among the causes of this difficult situation in the field of education there has been a highlight of the poor economic and social conditions, patriarchal mentality, early marriages, prejudices based on ethnicity, race and gender, and the school abandonment from the girls of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities. Also failure to register the newborn children, the physical distance of the schools from the community, lack of sufficient financial resources for education incentive by the institutions or other factors have affected the low level of education in this community.

RAE communities are characterized by low educational levels with a high rate of illiteracy and poor school attendance by the children, in particular as far as the girls and women are concerned. In contrast to the rest of the population, RAE girls show poorer educational attainment than RAE boys. They normally leave school earlier than the boys due to their family responsibilities and the RAE culture, which does not allow girls to be exposed to the outside culture and considers women as the custodians of traditional values: some communities consider education and the integration that school promotes as a threat to their traditional lifestyle and cultural heritage. A considerable variation in the level of education of RAE women is observed according to the location of the RAE community: where the community is placed in segregated areas, this consequently leads to stronger maintenance of the traditional role imposed by RAE society.

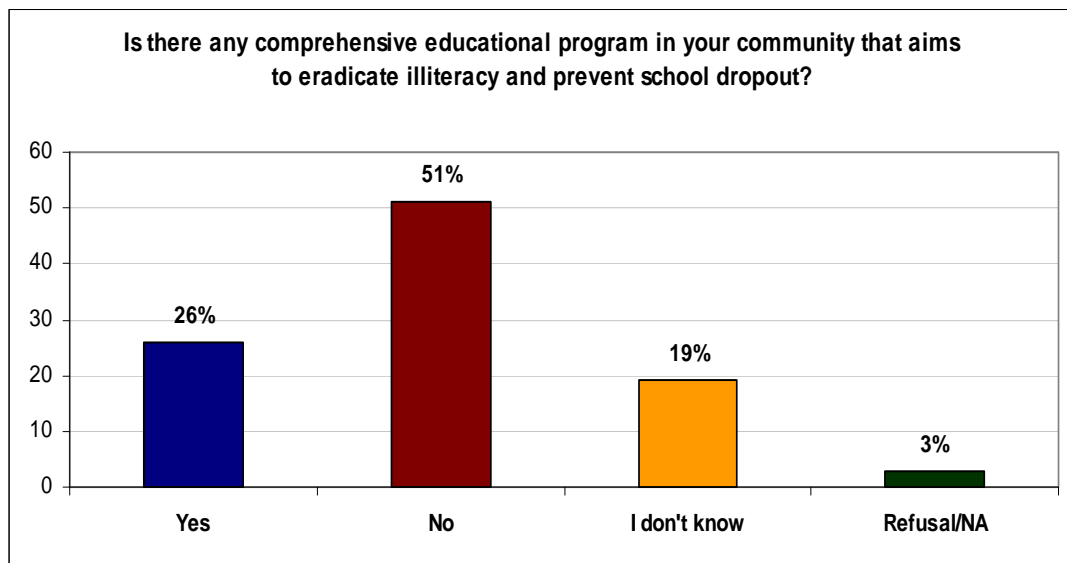
This situation in education is confirmed by the research results, where 38.3 percent of women and girls of this community state that they are illiterate. With 8 years of uncompleted school education 38 percent of women and girls; with uncompleted high school there are 3 percent; the high school was completed by less than 1 percent of women and girls; and college/faculties less than 1 percent.



When asked about the reasons which affect the low level of education of women and girls from RAE community, respondents have stressed the lack of teachers, textbooks and necessary materials that would enable them to learn in their own mother tongue. They have also listed as the reasons school violence, prejudices against this community by the majority community, lack of clothing, taking care of other younger children in the family, little employment opportunities, etc.

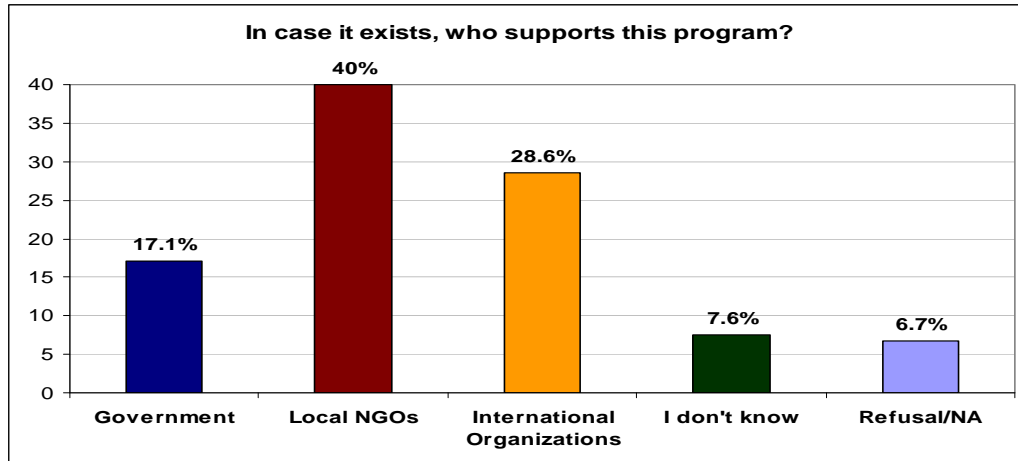
Another aspect that was often mentioned by the respondents regarding the lack of attendance to school or dropping out at the early age by the young girls of this community is also due to the strong pressure exerted on them as a result of the imposition of the system of values and patriarchal mentality that characterizes the RAE community in general.

As shown in the chart above, RAE communities are characterized by the extraordinary school dropping out of RAE girls. This is best illustrated by the fact that 37.9 percent of them do not complete primary education and only 1.2 percent claim to have completed high school.



When asked how aware they are of the existence of programs aimed at reducing the level of illiteracy and preventing the abandonment of education, 51 percent of the respondents consider that there are no such programs, while 26 percent say they have knowledge of these programs, whilst 19 percent say they do not know.

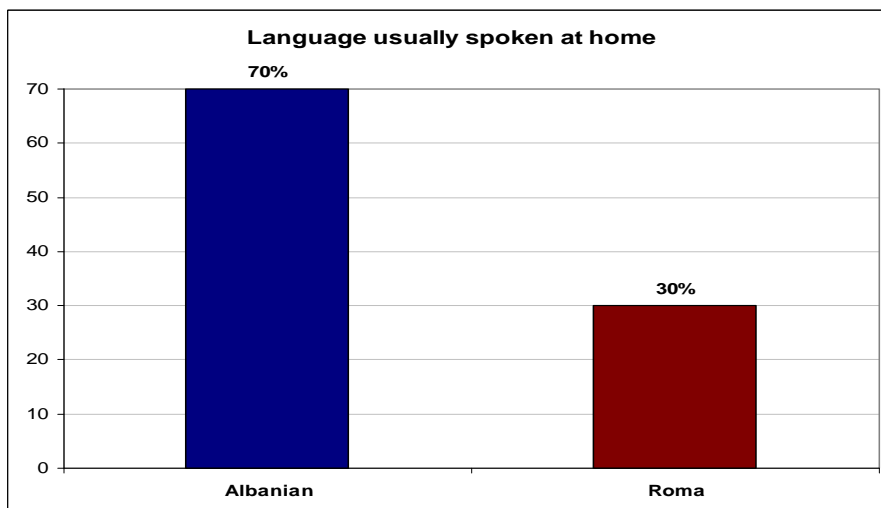
Exclusion and lack of information regarding the existing programs which are provided by the educational institutions and civil society, aimed at reducing the illiteracy and school dropout prevention, damages and further hinders women's and girls' of this community to a quality education.

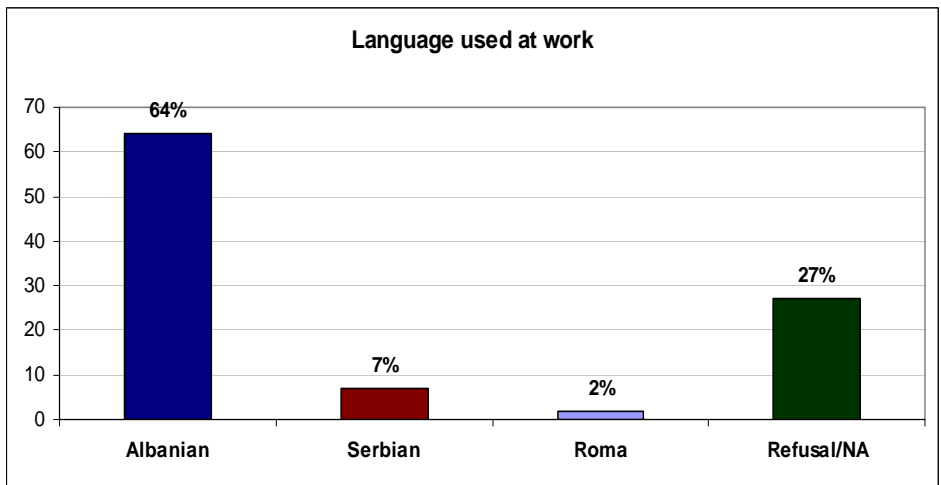
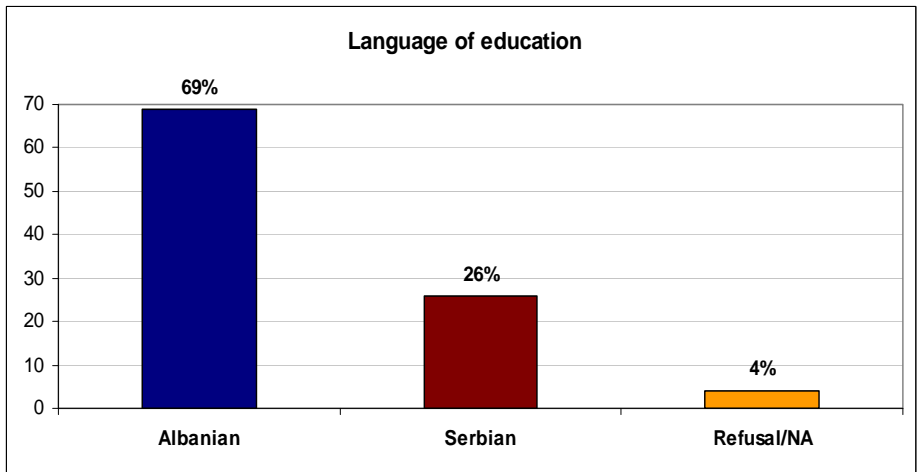


- **Language**

When dealing with the cultural context, there is a general belief that the Roma language is the most important element of the cultural identity of RAE community. However, members of the Ashkali and Egyptian community in Kosovo are not identified by members of the Roma community, so with their language and culture they consider themselves a different ethnic group from the Roma, and are usually identified with language and customs of the majority Albanian population. Members of the Roma community speak Roma, Serbian and Albanian language, depending on the region they live in Kosovo.

When asked about which language they use at home, 70 percent of the respondents answered that they use Albanian language, while 30 percent said Roma language. Albanian language is also used at work, with 64 percent, while 7 percent use Serbian language and 2 percent use Roma language. 27 percent of the respondents refused to answer.



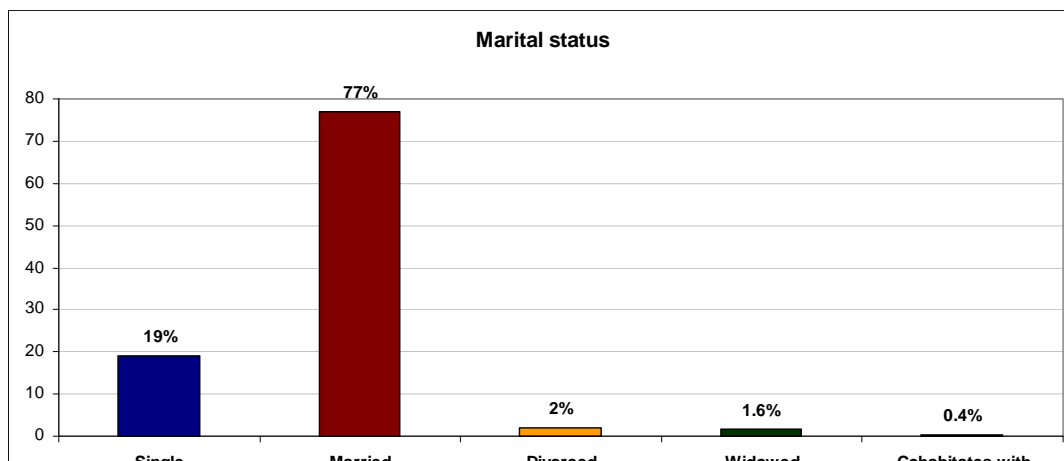


- **Early marriages**

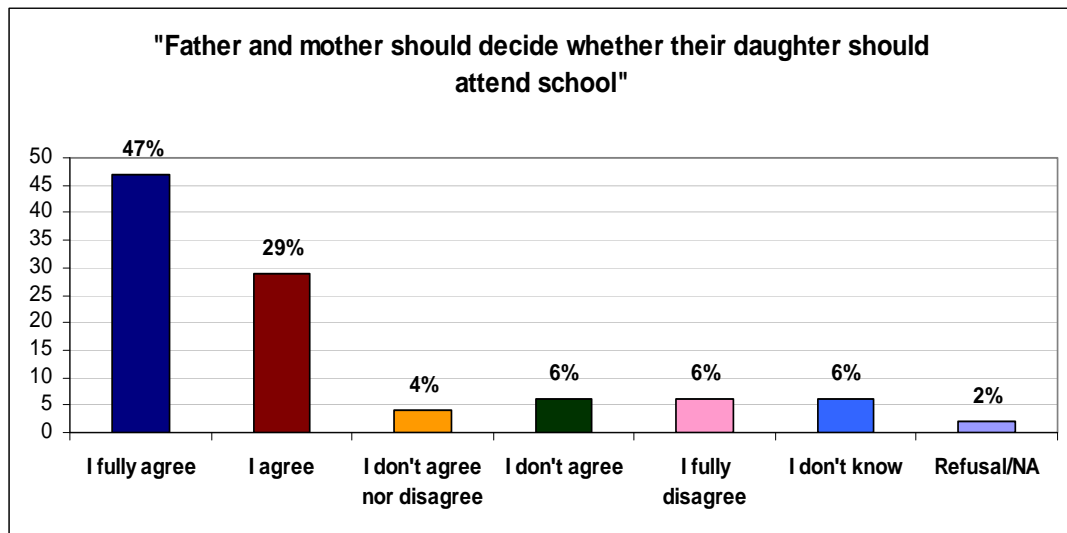
Early and arranged marriages among RAE communities are very common and are usually justified by the fact that they are deeply rooted in their tradition. Although prohibited by the laws of Kosovo, these marriages are not reported, prevented and are not punished by the Kosovo authorities. This tradition is silently "accepted" by the authorities and the community itself, and thus this practice continues to be an "internal: matter of this community. There is no need for much thinking to understand who the injured party is; it is the young girls from this community who are the victims of the continuity of this "tradition". Marriage at a young age for the girls of this community carries a range of consequences such as disruption of schooling, unemployment as a consequence of insufficient education, endangering health with frequent birth deliveries etc.

All the social phases in life occur much earlier for Roma women than for the majority population and other ethnic minorities. The average age at marriage is usually around 15–16 years for the girls (or lower in some communities), while it is around 18 years for boys, with the birth of their first child shortly after and the other children (many, usually) following a little later. RAE girls are expected to grow up quickly and to take on adult caring roles from the age of about 11.

According to the survey data, it is indicated that the majority of our respondents, 77 percent are married, 19 percent are single and only 2 percent divorced.



With the statement: "Father and mother should decide whether their daughter should attend school", 76 percent of the respondents agreed with, but 12 percent did not agree with this statement, and 4 percent neither agreed nor disagreed.



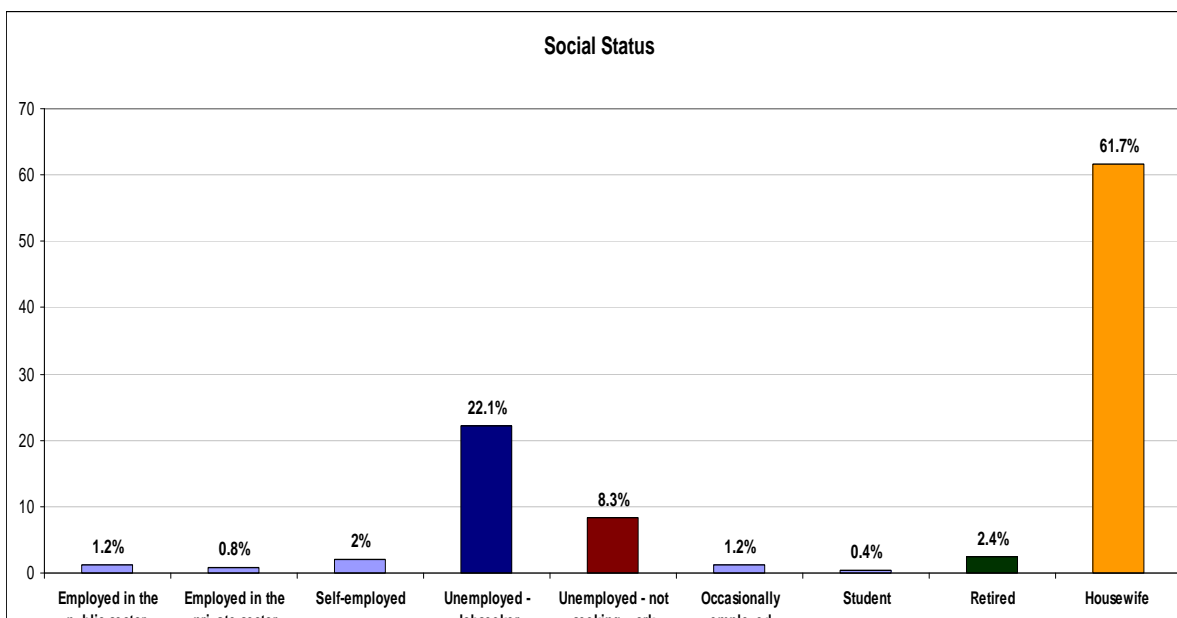
This result reflects that apart from socio-economic barriers faced by this community, the dominance of the patriarchal worldview that is an important factor that directly affects the low level of emancipation of women and young girls.

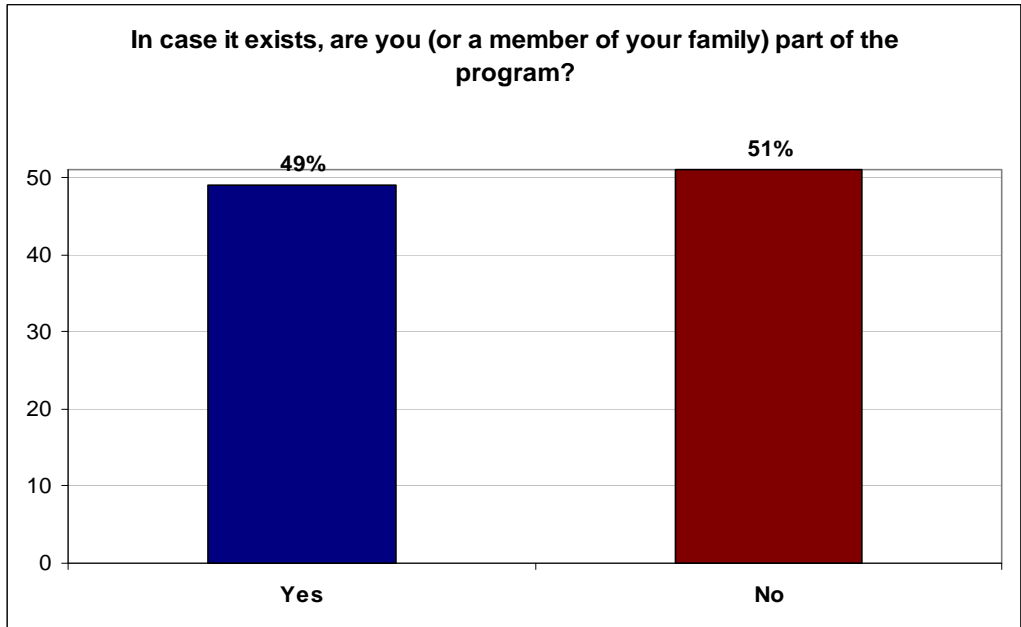
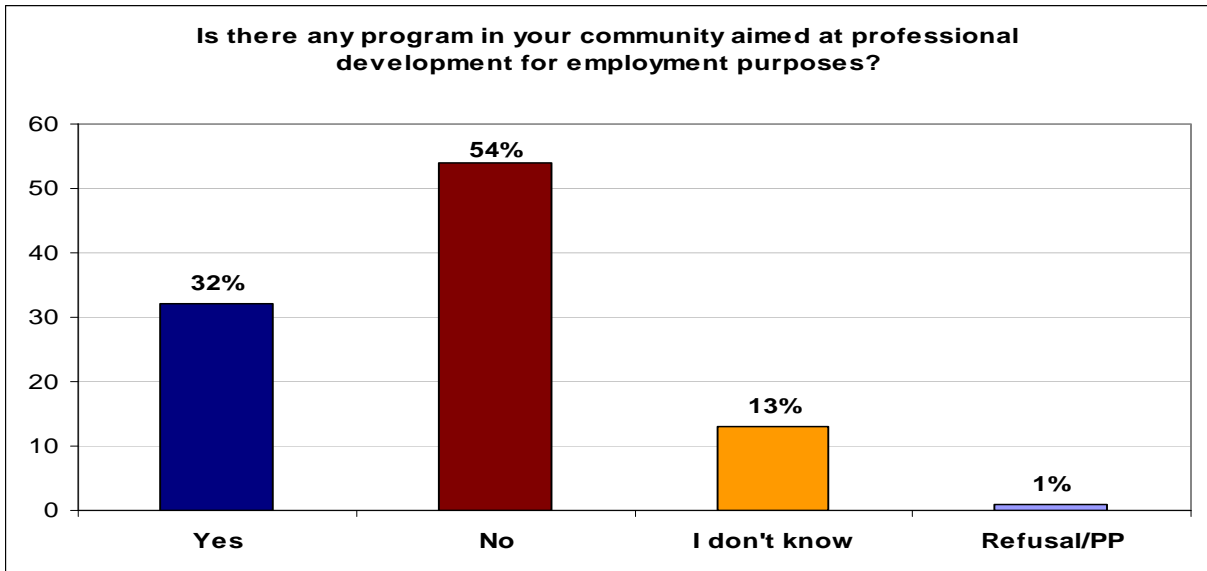
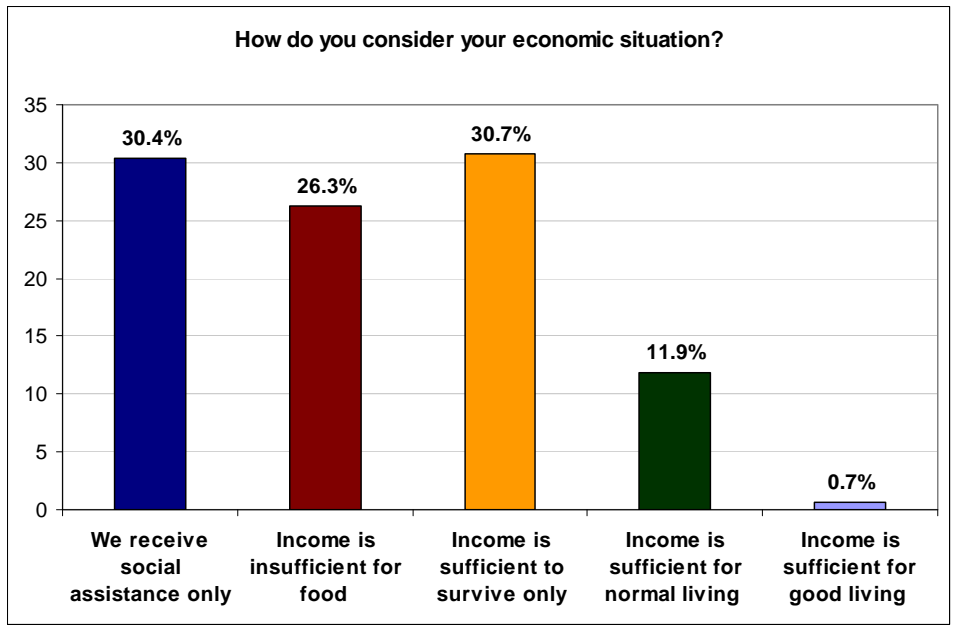
- **Employment - Economic State**

Illiteracy, lack of professional skills or training, and obvious gender and ethnic discrimination have significantly influenced to grow even further barriers to the integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women, resulting in the higher levels of unemployment and lower standard compared with the majority population and other minorities in Kosovo. Due to circumstances related to unemployment of RAE women, they are often forced to seek work and remain in the informal economy sector.

As it can be seen from the graph, respondents in 61.7 percent of cases are declared as housewives, while 22.1 percent of them are unemployed and seek employment. Only 1.2 percent are employed in the public sector and 2 percent are self-employed. These figures show openly the difficult economic situation of this community and especially women. When asked how they assess their economic situation, 30.7 percent stated that they get enough income just to stay alive and 30.4 percent say they live on social assistance, only 26.3 percent of respondents say that the income they get is not enough even for food, 11.9 percent of them have enough income for living whilst only 0.7 percent say that income is sufficient for a very good life.

It has been a dominating opinion that RAE women do not work because their families are better off if they live on various forms of welfare: childcare benefits, unemployment benefits, etc. However, it might be suggested that RAE women’s employment could bring significantly more income to the family budget than any combination of welfare payments. Welfare benefits are insufficient to provide even for subsistence living: they are merely one element in the portfolio of families to make ends meet.





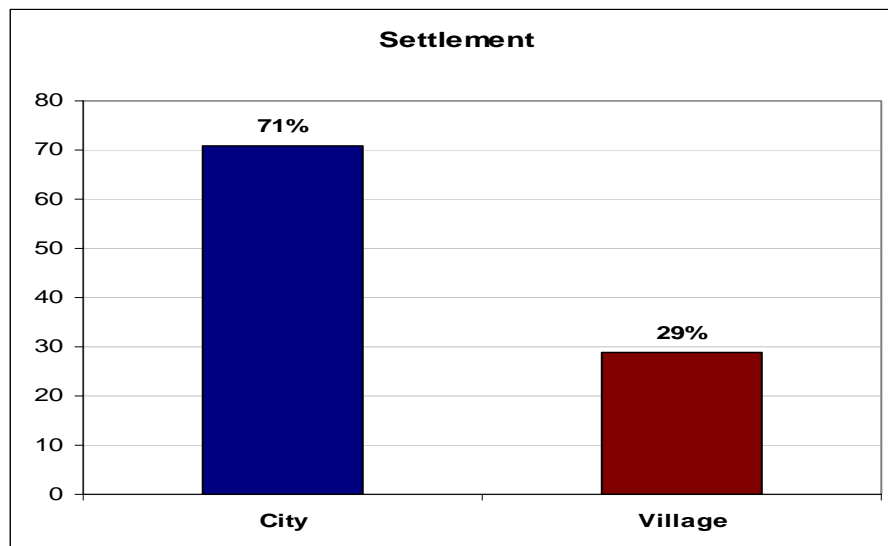
- **Housing State**

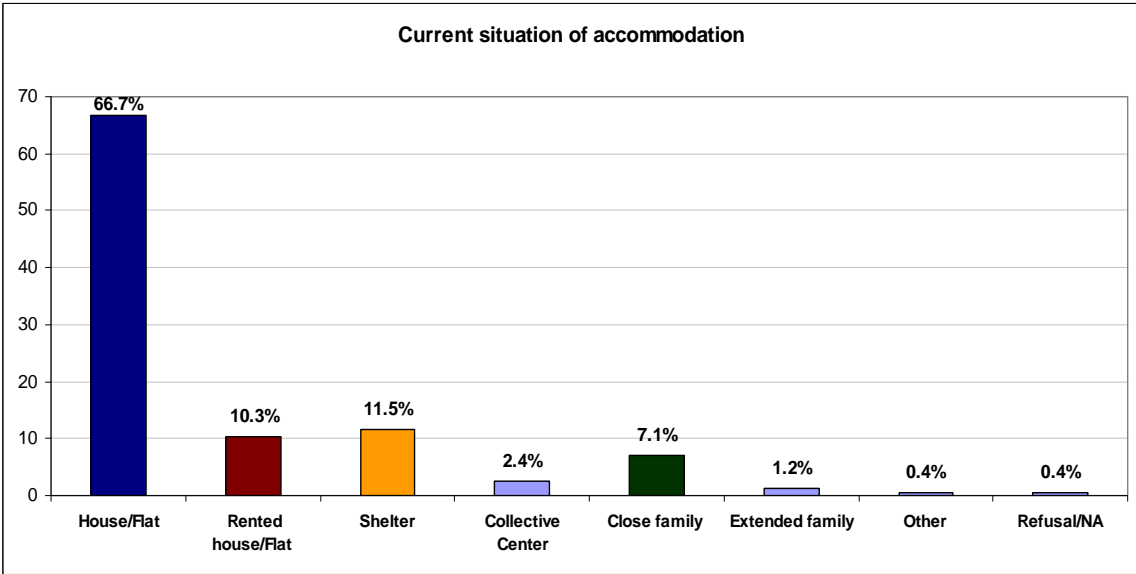
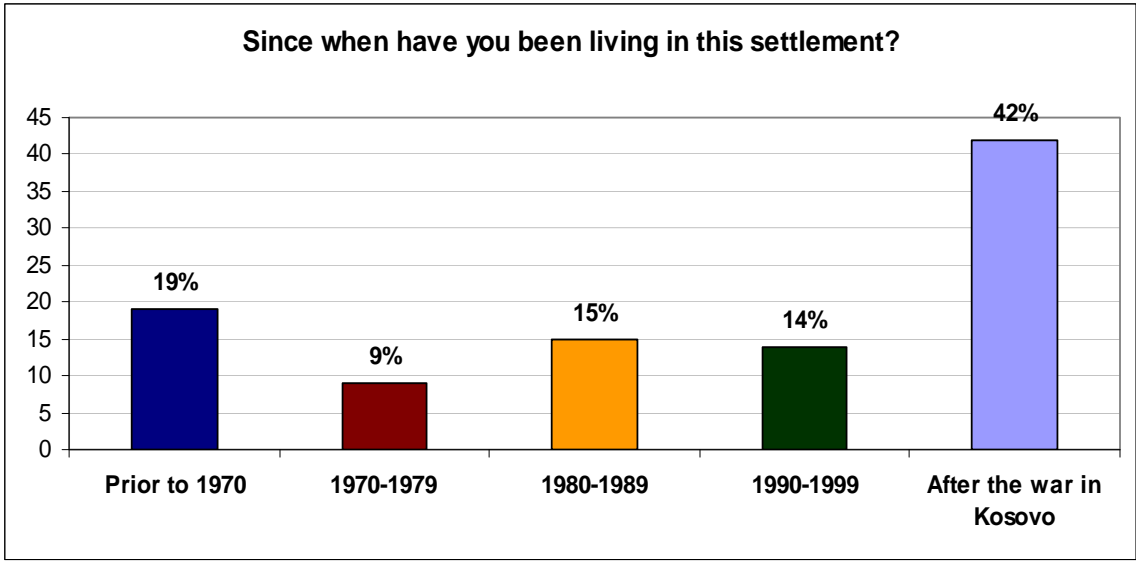
RAE communities mainly live in cities by 71 percent, compared to the villages where they are concentrated with 29 percent.

Since the war in Kosovo, the RAE communities have experienced migrations inside the territory of Kosovo. Therefore, 42 percent of the RAE population lives in current settlements since after the war, while 19 percent said that they live in the same residence since 1970. Change of the residence took place in the '80s and '90s with 14 and 15 percent.

66.7 percent of respondents stated that they currently live in a house or a flat, 11.5 are sheltered, 10.3 percent live in a rented place, 7.1 percent live at a close family while 2.4 percent live in collective centers.

As noted above, the women asked about priorities or the problems they face, among other things have identified the housing conditions and the pollution of the environment they live in. This is because of the fact that many of the settlements where RAE community lives are usually non-urbanized areas, overcrowded on the outskirts of cities and under residing standards whereby there is a constant lack of drinking water inside the houses (usually there is a tap somewhere in the yard) or regular electricity supply. Also places where RAE community members live are usually in locations where environmental conditions are the worst (e.g. near waste dumps), which directly threaten the health of residents.



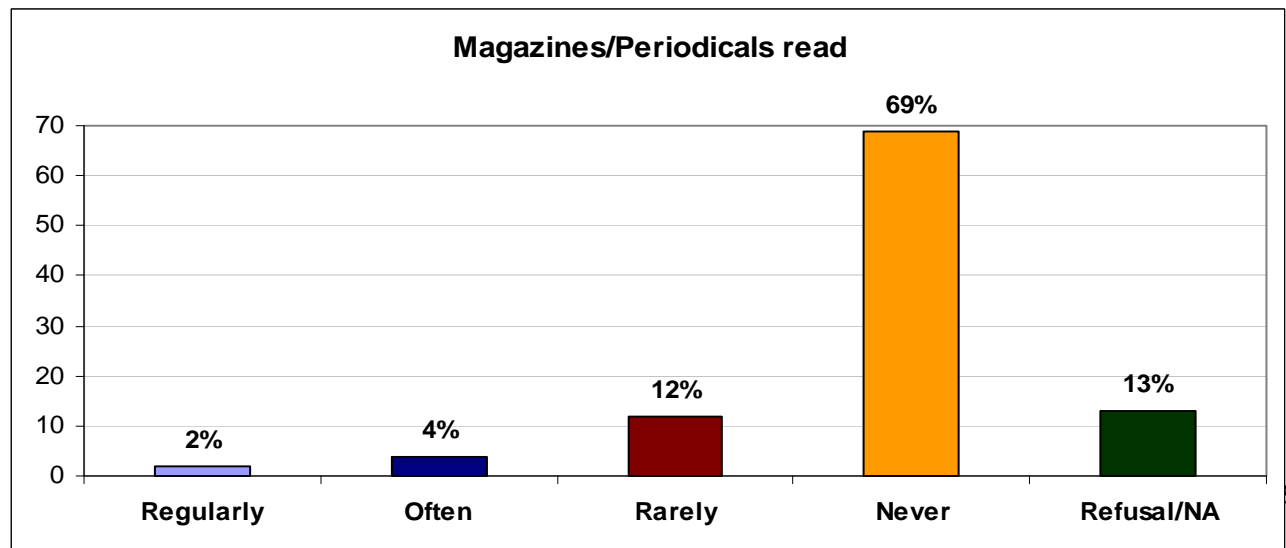
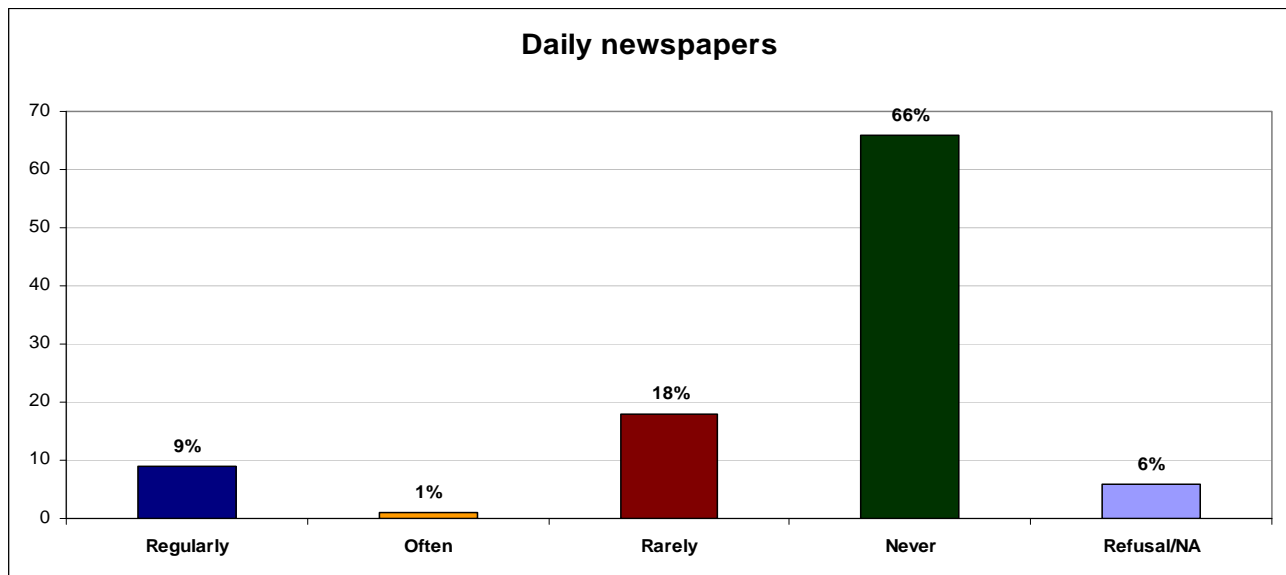


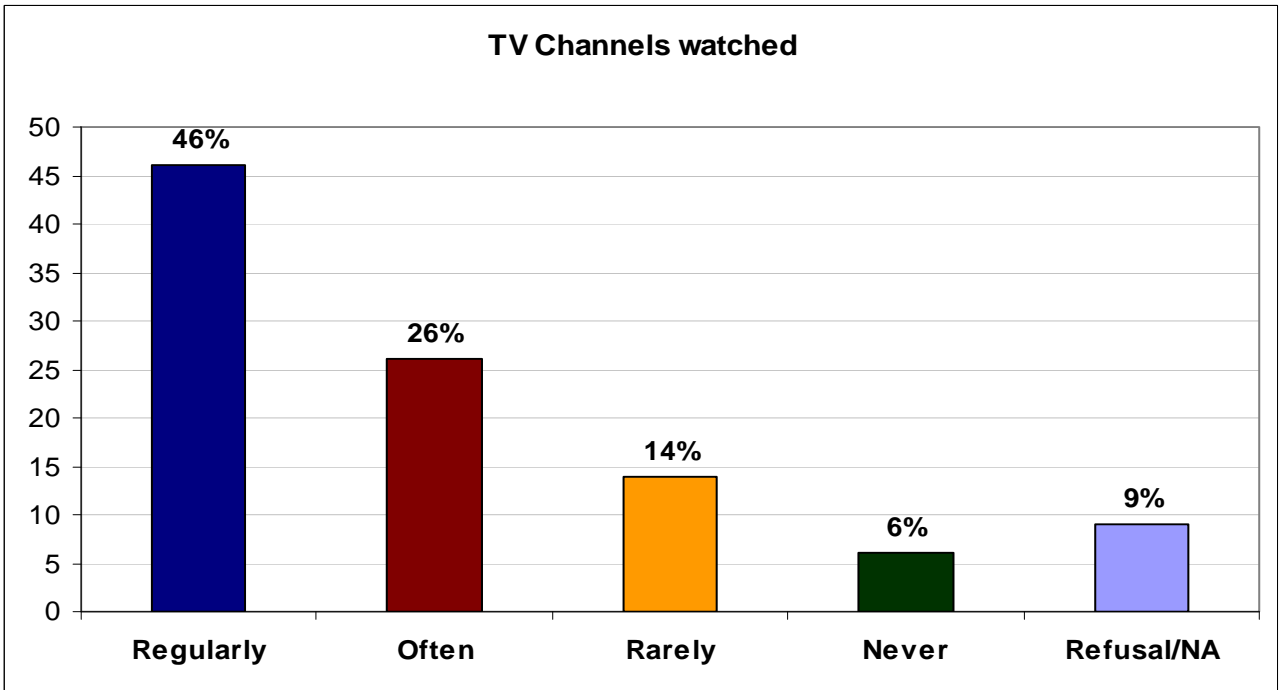
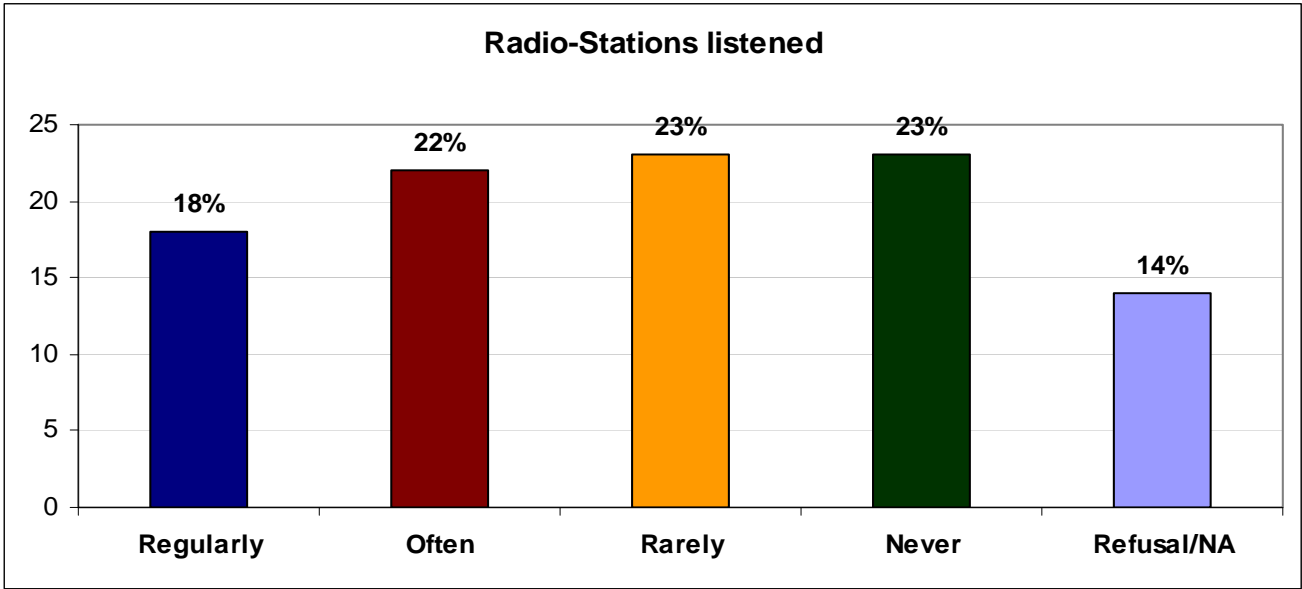
- **Media and information**

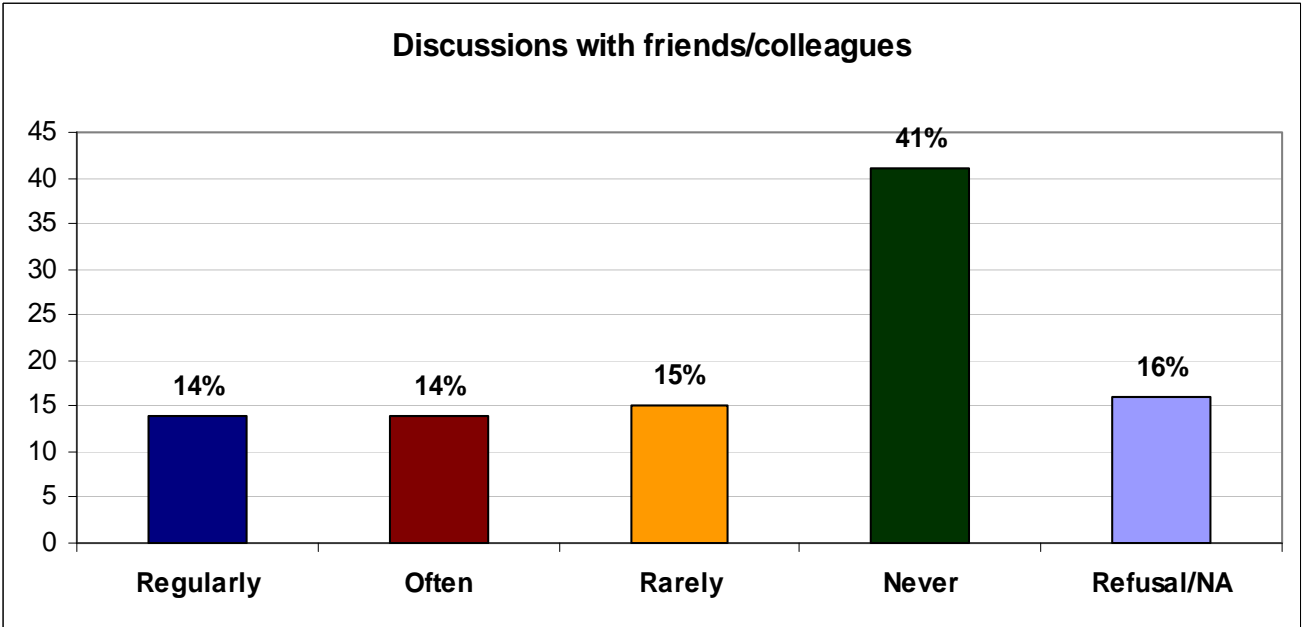
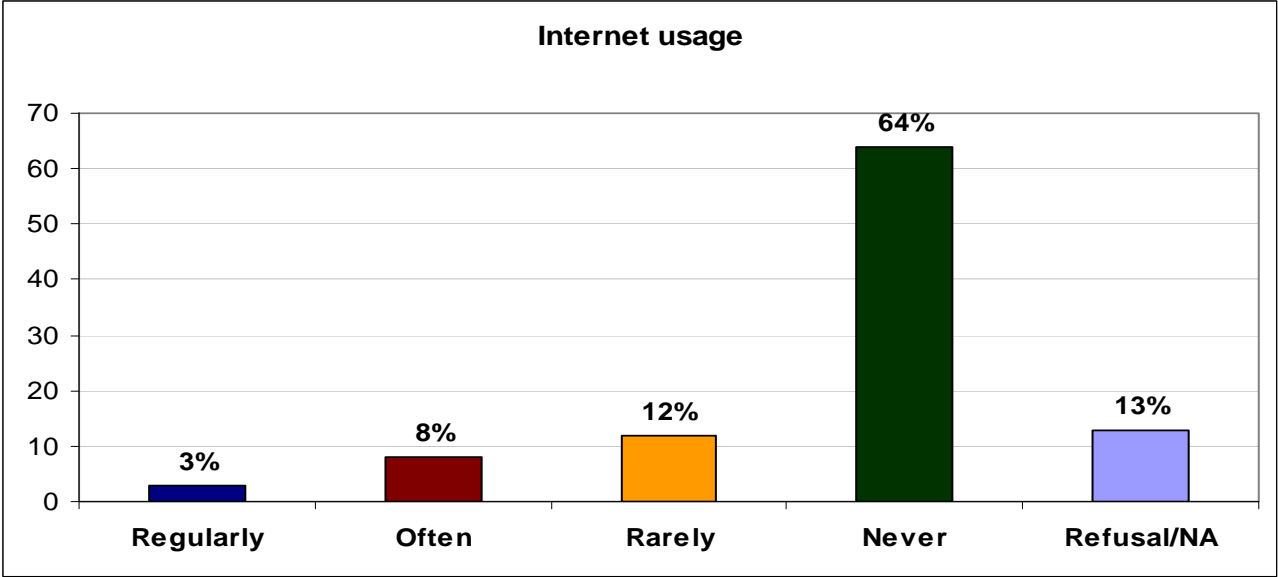
The high level of illiteracy and low levels of education of RAE women generally but also the lack of adequate media coverage of the life of this community in Kosovo affects for the media not to play their informative and integrating role.

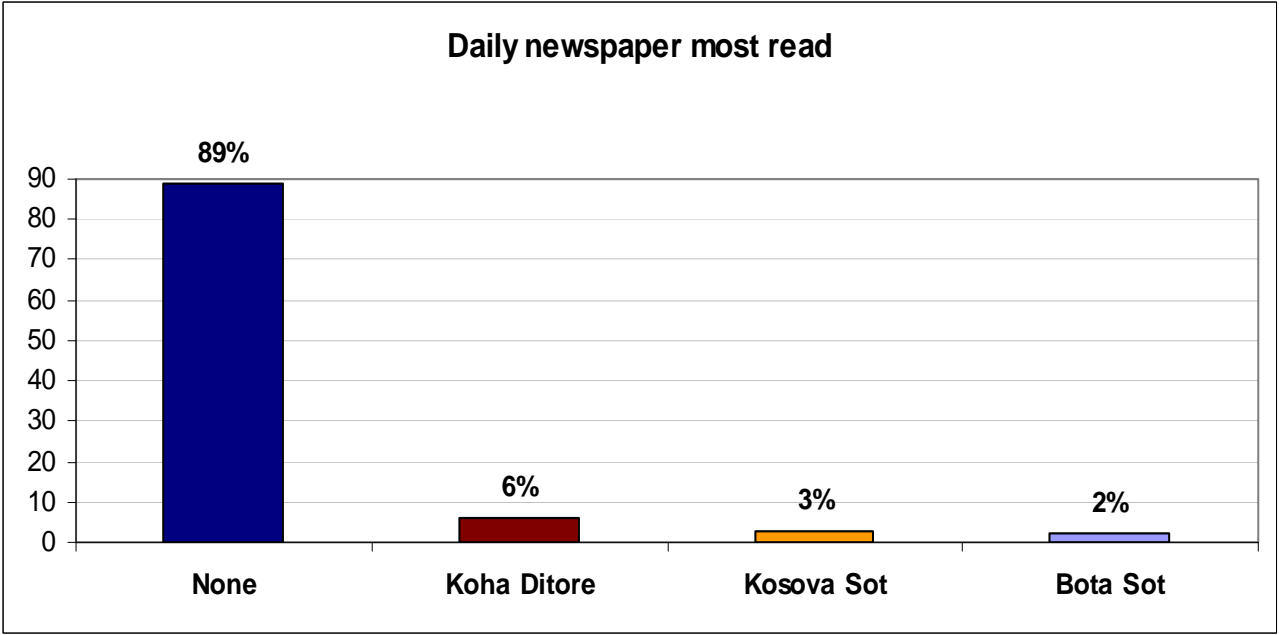
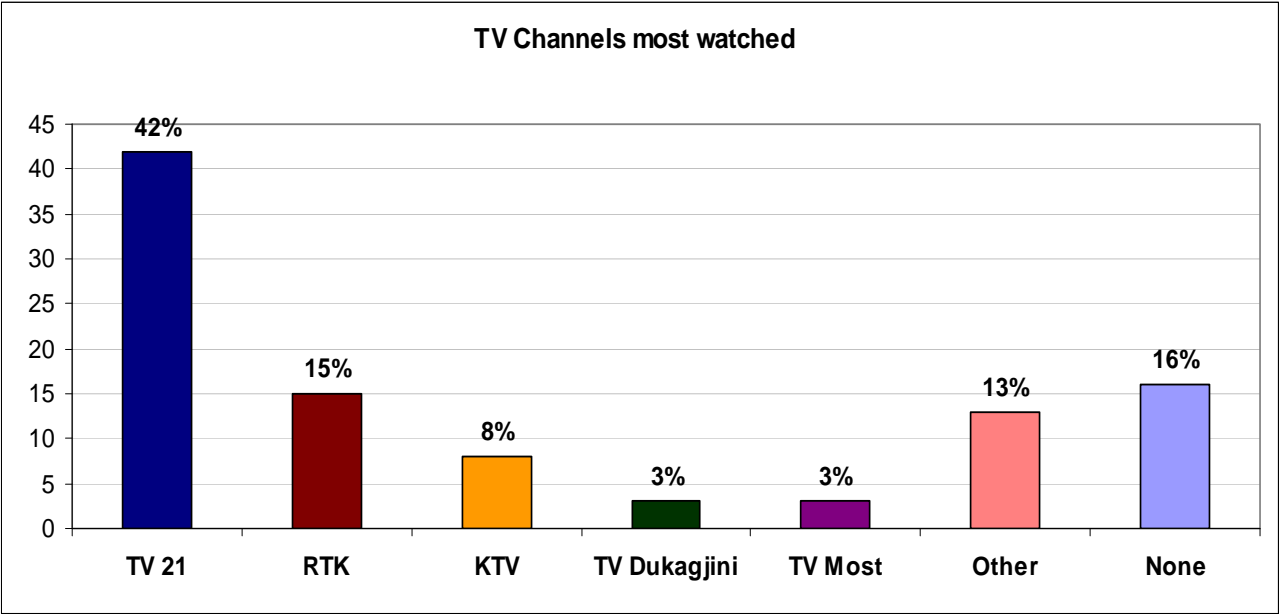
In Kosovo only three radio stations out of one hundred are broadcasting programs in Roma language (altogether one hour!). Kosovo Public Radio since 2003 has started with a fifteen minutes daily program whilst the Kosovo Public Television has a weekly program of 20 minutes “Yekhipe”, which is broadcasted on Thursday and re-broadcasted on Sunday or Monday.

RAE community women interviewed are mostly informed by the television because 46 percent of them have stated that they regularly watch television. Radio stations are the second source of information for this community with 18 percent. 66 percent of them say that they never read daily newspapers and only 9 percent reads them regularly. The Internet is the last source of information for RAE women. Only 3 percent use Internet regularly, 8 percent often, 12 percent rarely, 64 percent claim they have never used it, while 13 percent have refused to answer.









- **Women’s health**

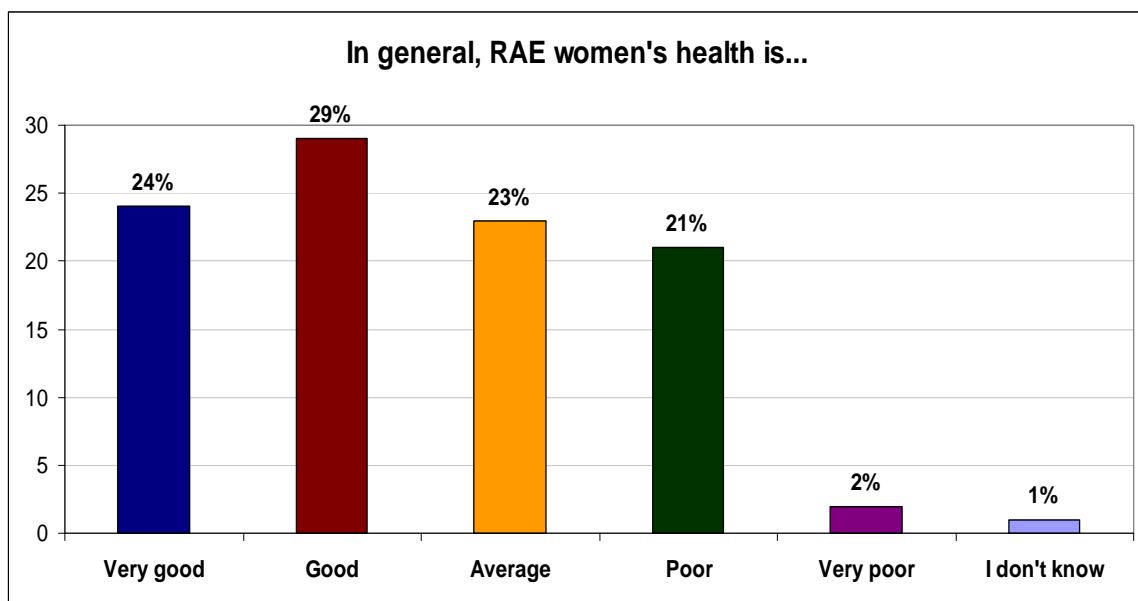
Surveyed women complained of the poor health in general. Many of them complained on poor health services and limited access to reproductive health care and family planning.

Their reproductive health is endangered mainly from frequent births, especially young ones, lack of nutrition, and according to many surveys conducted in the region, knowledge of RAE women on the use of modern contraceptives is very low while the number of abortions high.

According to a study conducted by UNICEF, it is said that more than 60 percent of RAE women in Kosovo have never visited a gynecological clinic during pregnancy¹.

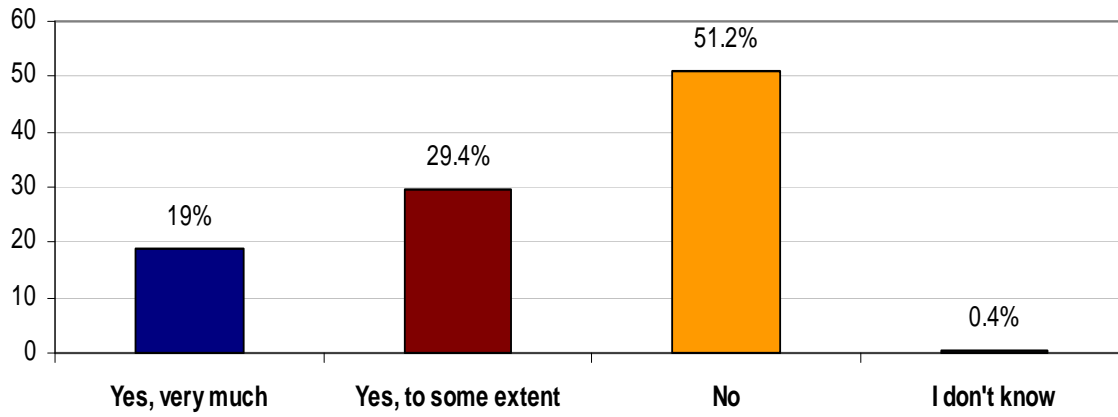
RAE women experience greater health risks than non-RAE women because of early and multiple pregnancies and abortions, the heavy workload at home, poor housing, malnutrition, etc. The rate of infant and child illness and disabilities is much higher than that of the majority population, due also to the widespread phenomenon of marriage among relatives; again, this increases the caring workload of RAE women and girls. RAE women, and indeed RAE men, have usually no access to correct information on nutrition. This is why most RAE women are unaware of the need to change nutrition habits during pregnancies.

Asked about their perception of RAE women’s health, the respondents have stated the following:



¹ UNICEF Micro Nutrient Status Survey (MNSS) conducted in Kosovo.

In your daily activities have you been hindered, in any way, by a longer illness or physical disability?



- **Domestic violence**

Gender-based violence refers to a series of harmful habits and behavior against girls and women who include intimate partner violence, domestic violence, physical injury (punch) against women, child sexual abuse and rape. Generally this happens because of cultural and social norms that give men power and force over women.²

Measuring the level of violence on gender basis, differs a lot as a result of different definitions of violence, methods of data collection, the duration of different study. It is estimated that between 8 and 70 percent of women in the world have been subjected to psychological and physical violence by male partners at least once in their lifetime³. In the U.S., every third to every fifth woman will be mistreated by a partner or ex-partner at least once in a lifetime⁴. Differences in assessing the level of violence may also be due to the low level of reporting violence because of stigma, shame, or because of other social and cultural factors that affect women not to speak out for cases of violence⁵.

Exclusion, discrimination, disrespect of civil and human rights, informality, living in overcrowded facilities and no basic conditions, poverty and hunger, create uncertainty and tensions that lead to domestic violence and violence against women in particular on RAE communities.

Although measuring the level of violence in the society poses a problem in itself often because of women's lack of readiness for them to report or to accept them, asked whether there is a domestic violence in their community 61 percent of the surveyed women have answered affirmatively, 36 percent consider that there is no violence exercised, whilst 2 percent does not know and 1 percent have refused to answer the question. These figures reflect a serious condition and a high level of perception of exercising violence in families in these communities.

When asked about the forms of violence, 58.2 percent of women stated that physical and psychological violence are exercised at the same time, 21.8 percent of them said that they don't know, 7.9 percent mentioned physical violence, 4.2 percent mentioned psychological violence while 7.9 percent refused to answer.

In terms of knowing about a direct service in support of women and girl victims of domestic violence, 38 percent responded with "I don't know", 36 percent knew of them, while 23 percent said they don't know about such services and 3 percent refused to answer.

Despite the fact that domestic violence is a criminal offence according to the law, it is still regarded as an internal family matter and traditional norms and customs still prevail. According to women activists of RAE community, it is very difficult to speak openly in the community about violence against women and children.

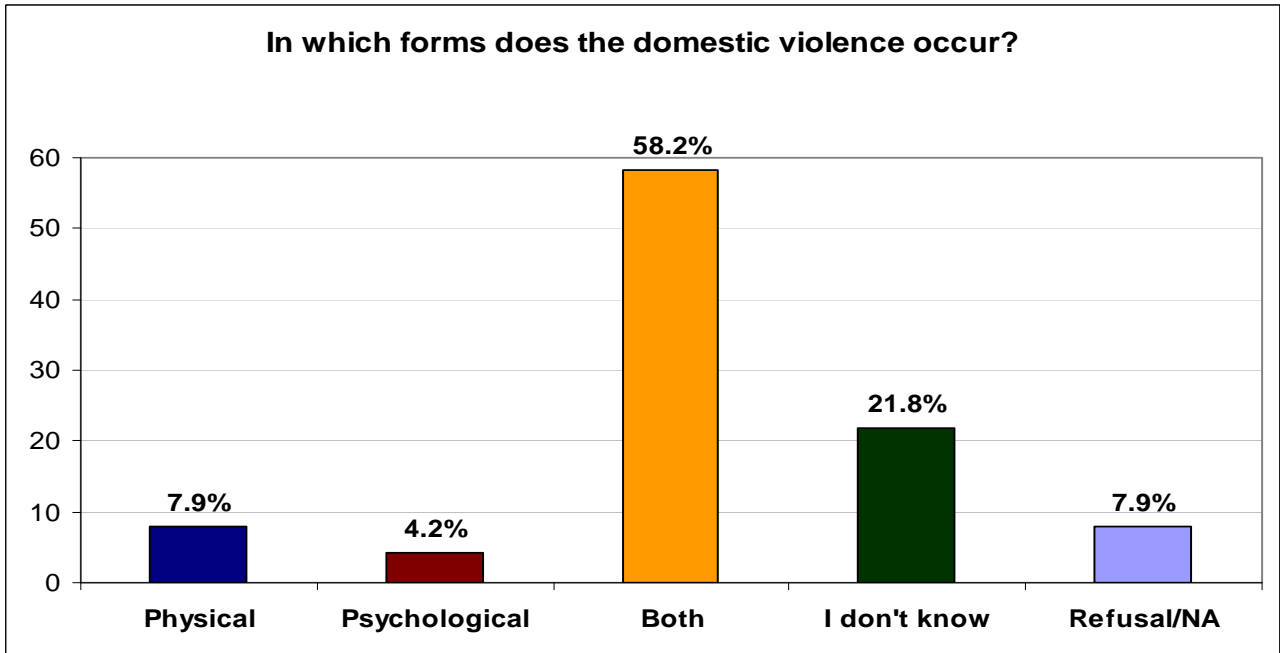
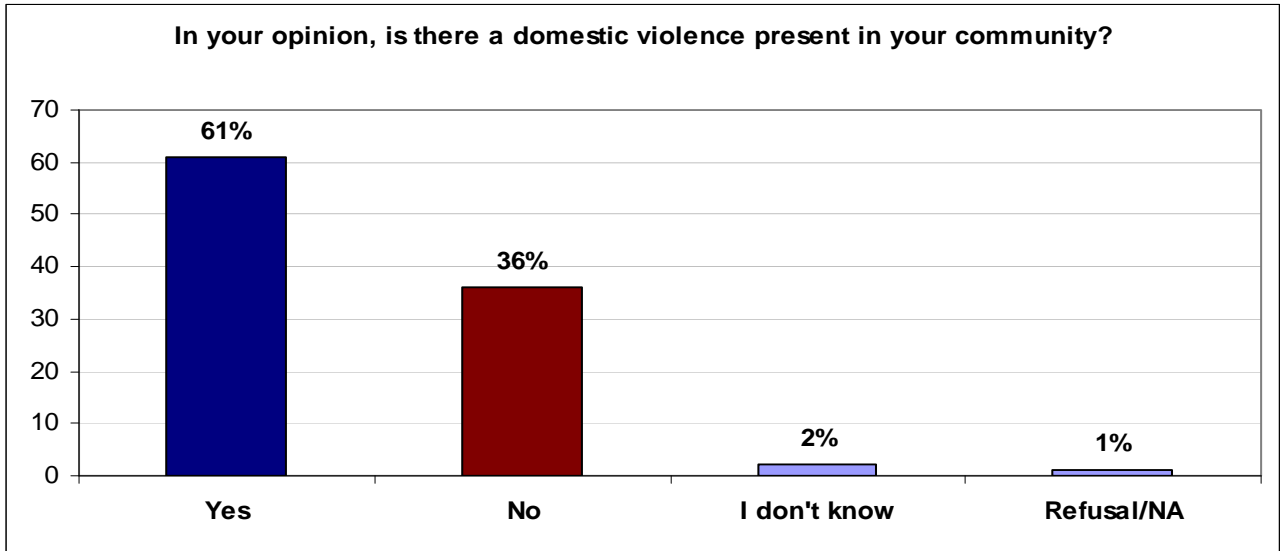
² Goldberg R. *Power in Sexual Relationships: An Opening Dialogue Among Reproductive Health Professionals*. New York: Population Council, 2001.

³ Heise L, Ellsberg M, Gottemoeller M. *Ending violence against women*. *Popul Rep L* 1999(11):1-43.

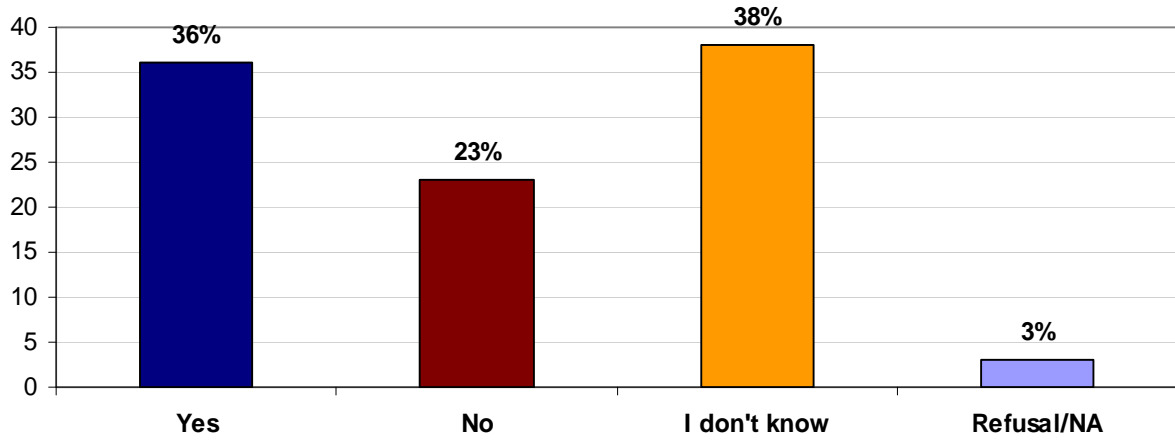
⁴ Council on Scientific Affairs, American Medical Association. *Violence against women. Relevance for medical practitioners*. *JAMA* 1992;267(23):3184-9.

⁵ Krug EG, et al. *The World Report on Violence and Health*. Geneva: World Health Organization, 2002;372.

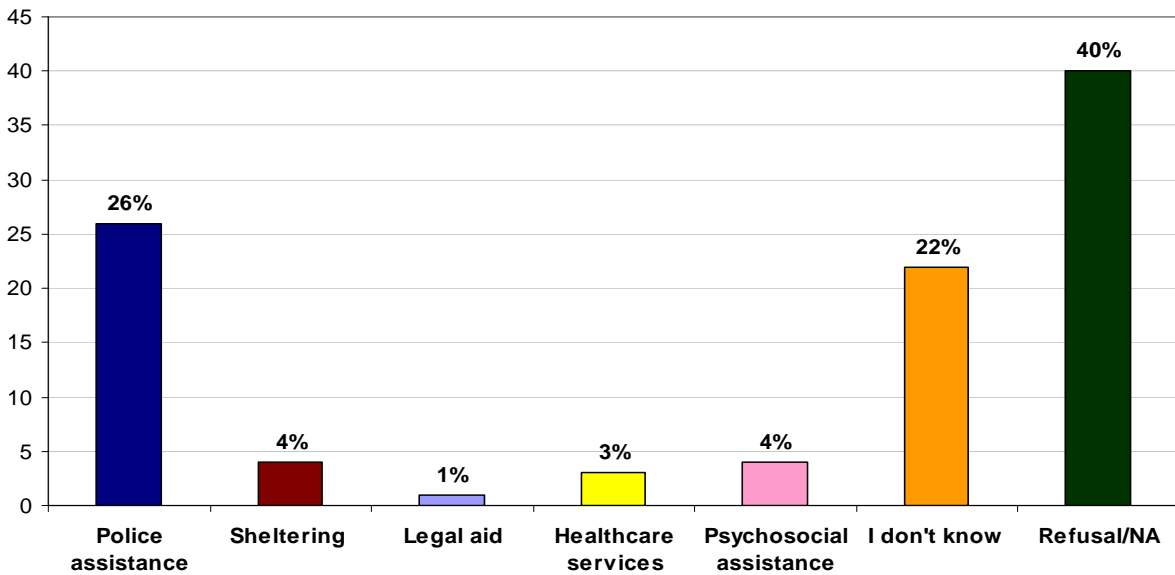
A woman reporting violence may be faced with a kind of exclusion from the community because she has exposed problems by reporting of domestic violence and in this way has damaged her husband.



Are there any direct support services for women and girls who are victims of domestic violence?



If there are direct support services for the victims, which are those?



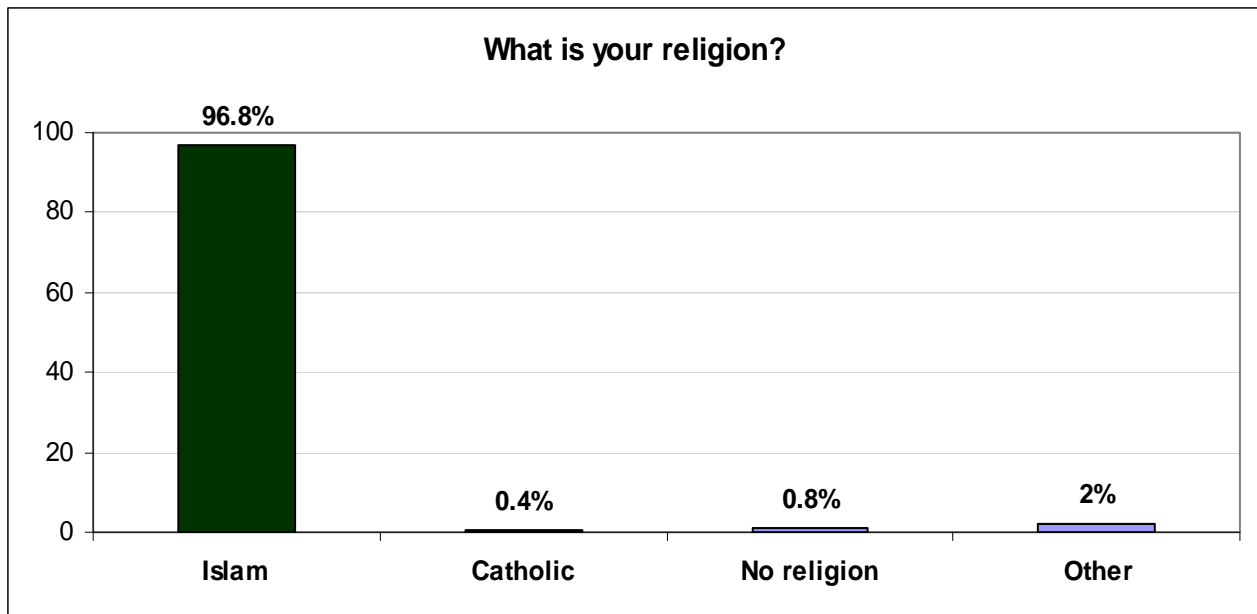
- **Stances of RAE women on the role of women in the family and the society**

Most of surveyed women (85 percent) agreed with the statement that "It is natural that the major part of housework is women's duty." Also, 64.3 percent agreed that "Family is more important than the career to women." This shows that the traditional element on the role of woman in the family also with women of this community is highly expressed. About the modality "Education is more important for a girl than for a boy" women agreed and disagreed with the approximately the same percentage - 39 percent agreed and 37 percent disagreed. Regarding the modality "Girl must marry earlier to give birth of a healthy child" women agreed with 33 percent and disagreed with 41 percent. It is worth mentioning that in this survey, respondents were women from the age of 16. Regarding the role of woman in the society, it appears from the research that Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian women's situation is particularly concerning. Besides the problems that they face in education, employment and health, RAE women often face discrimination inside and outside the community. 66.6 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement: "In general, women are discriminated in the public life". Awareness raising activities have not been delivered enough when it comes to informing the RAE women on anti-discrimination legislation in Kosovo and to their rights regarding education, health and reproduction. When presented with the modality "Gender Equality is impossible in Kosovo" women of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community agreed with this statement with 34 percent whereas 28.3 did not agree.

	Fully agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Do not agree	Don't know	Ref/PP
1) It is natural that major part of the house works are the duty of women	85 %	2.4 %	10.2 %	0.4 %	2 %
2) There is no harm for a couple living together without wanting to marry (M)	19 %	8 %	60 %	9 %	4 %
3) In general women get discriminated in public life	66.6 %	5.2 %	10.3 %	6.7 %	1.2 %
4) Education is more important for a girl than for a boy	39 %	16 %	37 %	6 %	2 %
5) Girl is to marry earlier so that she can give healthy birth	33 %	8 %	41 %	4 %	4 %
6) To women family is more important than the career.	64.3 %	6.7 %	18.6 %	6.3 %	4 %
7) Gender Equality is impossible in Kosovo.	34 %	6.8 %	28.3 %	23.5 %	7.2 %

- **Religious belonging and religiousness**

Religious belonging of RAE community according to the respondents is 96.8 percent to Islam, 2 percent have declared that they belong to other religions whilst 0.8 do not belong to any religion and 0.4 percent belong to Catholicism.



4. Conclusions

- Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian (RAE) communities in Kosovo, and RAE women especially, have faced numerous obstacles socially, politically, and economically

- Discrimination in the case of RAE women is a multiple phenomenon, often being based on both ethnic origin and gender. RAE population is subject to negative perceptions and prejudice on the part of the non-RAE population. RAE women must, in addition, cope with the usual difficulties for social inclusion borne by the female population.

- RAE families function according to the rules of strict patriarchy in which the absolute power belongs to the oldest male, so-called "the head of household." Gender roles are very clear. Marriages are mostly informal and are based on a mutual agreement of two families. Parents marry them at the age of 15 or 16, so the data that two-thirds of RAE women from Kosovo gave birth to the first child before their adulthood, does not surprise.

- The interviewed women have mentioned health, unemployment, nutrition, housing conditions and children's school attendance, as the most important aspects of vulnerability of this community.

- On top of the list of the problems concerning them the most, RAE women have identified "the electricity and water supply."

- RAE communities are characterized by low educational levels with a high rate of illiteracy and poor school attendance by the children. 38.3 percent of women and girls interviewed say that they are illiterate. As the main reasons for this they have stressed the lack of teachers, textbooks and necessary materials that would enable them to learn in their own mother tongue.

- When asked how aware they are of the existence of programs aimed at reducing the level of illiteracy and preventing the abandonment of education, 51 percent of the respondents consider that there are no such programs, while 26 percent say they have knowledge of these programs,

- When asked about which language they use at home, 70 percent of the respondents answered that they use Albanian language, while 30 percent said Roma language. Albanian language is also used at work, with 64 percent, while 7 percent use Serbian language and 2 percent use Roma language. 27 percent of the respondents refused to answer.

- Early and arranged marriages among RAE communities are very common and are usually justified by the fact that they are deeply rooted in their tradition. Although prohibited by the laws of Kosovo, these marriages are not reported, prevented and are not punished by the Kosovo authorities.

- 77 percent of the respondents were married, 19 percent single and only 2 percent divorced.

- 76 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement "Father and mother should decide whether their daughter should attend school", but 12 percent disagreed.

- In 61.7 percent of cases respondents declared themselves as housewives, while 22.1 percent said they were unemployed and sought employment. Only 1.2 percent were employed in the public sector and 2 percent were self-employed.

- RAE communities mainly live in cities by 71 percent, compared to the villages where they are concentrated with 29 percent. 42 percent of them live in current settlements since after the war, while 19 percent said that they live in the same residence since 1970. Change of the residence took place in the '80s and '90s with 14 and 15 percent respectively.

- 66.7 percent of respondents stated that they currently live in a house or a flat, 11.5 are sheltered, 10.3 percent live in a rented place, 7.1 percent live at a close family while 2.4 percent live in collective centers.

- RAE community women interviewed are mostly informed by the television because 46 percent of them have stated that they regularly watch television. Most watched TV channel is TV21. Radio stations are the second source of information for this community with 18 percent. 66 percent of them say that they never read daily newspapers and only 9 percent reads them regularly. The Internet is the last source of information for RAE women. Only 3 percent use Internet regularly, 8 percent often, 12 percent rarely, 64 percent claim they have never used it, while 13 percent have refused to answer.

- Surveyed women complained of the poor health in general. Many of them complained on poor health services and limited access to reproductive health care and family planning.

- When asked about the forms of violence, 58.2 percent of women stated that physical and psychological violence are exercised at the same time, 21.8 percent of them said that they don't know, 7.9 percent mentioned physical violence, 4.2 percent mentioned psychological violence while 7.9 percent refused to answer.

- In terms of knowing about a direct service in support of women and girl victims of domestic violence, 38 percent responded with "I don't know", 36 percent knew of them, while 23 percent said they don't know about such services and 3 percent refused to answer.

- According to women activists of RAE community, it is very difficult to speak openly in the community about violence against women and children. A woman reporting violence may be faced with a kind of exclusion from the community because she has exposed problems by reporting of domestic violence and in this way has damaged her husband.

- Most of surveyed women (85 percent) agreed with the statement that "It is natural that the major part of housework is women's duty." Also, 64.3 percent agreed that "Family is more important than the career to women." This shows that the traditional element on the role of woman in the family also with women of this community is highly expressed.

- About the modality "Education is more important for a girl than for a boy" women agreed and disagreed with the approximately the same percentage - 39 percent agreed and 37 percent disagreed.

Regarding the modality "Girl must marry earlier to give birth of a healthy child" women agreed with 33 percent and disagreed with 41 percent.

- When presented with the modality "Gender Equality is impossible in Kosovo" women of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian community agreed with this statement with 34 percent whereas 28.3 did not agree.

- Religious belonging of RAE community according to the respondents is 96.8 percent to Islam, 2 percent have declared that they belong to other religions whilst 0.8 do not belong to any religion and 0.4 percent belong to Catholicism.

5. Recommendations

- Undertake comprehensive research on the multiple forms of discrimination faced by RAE women in order to improve their socio-economic status and to ensure their access to education and health as preconditions for employment;
- Take concrete and effective steps to prevent multiple and/or intersectional discrimination faced by RAE women.
- To enforce the law against discrimination
- Ensure that all existing laws and policies - as well as future laws and policies – adequately account for gender equality and include provisions for preventing and addressing the multiple barriers female members of minority groups face in exercising their fundamental human rights;
- Victims of alleged discrimination should be encouraged to bring complaints, such as through awareness raising about recourses and the use of mechanisms provided by specialized bodies, with assurances that confidentiality will not be compromised on account of bringing a claim. Complaint mechanisms should employ the principle of “reversal of the burden of proof”, placing the primary responsibility for burden of proof on the alleged discriminator rather than victims to demonstrate whether the principle of equal treatment has been breached;
- Ensure the meaningful participation of RAE women in relevant RAE-related and women-related decision making processes;
- Actively employ RAE women in government administration;
- Create opportunities for self-employment through providing credits to start small business. The criteria for getting loans must take into account the situation of RAE women.
- Take all necessary steps, policy and financial, to improve the housing conditions of RAE families which have a detrimental impact on the health of RAE women and children;
- Take measures, such as trainings, to raise RAE women’s awareness of property rights and facilitate the registration of property in the ownership of RAE women.
- Promote RAE women and women's human rights in the media in RAE
- Organize campaigns in RAE communities to speak about equality between men and women in a form acceptable to the culture of the community and in RAE language where necessary;
- Engage RAE women in electoral and administrative bodies and election campaigns.
- Without delay, introduce and adequately financially support measures to end all discriminatory practices against RAE children and in particular RAE girls, in access to education and equalise the educational status of this vulnerable group with the rest of society. Such programmes should address all levels of education, but particular attention should be placed on access to pre- and elementary school levels on equal grounds as well as in primary school at which the drop-out rate of RAE girls is highest;
- Train teachers in methods to avoid discrimination on any basis including gender and ethnicity, in the classrooms.
- Establish co-operation between parents, teachers and pupils to put and end to school harassment and other forms of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity and/or gender (and any other grounds). Specific training and information for all pupils, parents and school workers/officials, on the basis of clear guidelines and disciplinary procedures should be provided, to eliminate such phenomenon.
- Cooperation among teachers, authorities and parents should be encouraged to promote girls continued education.

- Make scholarships available or provide subsidized fees, free transportation and required school materials for marginalized and poor families at all school levels, with special attention to the excluded and most vulnerable RAE families and ensure that at least half of scholarships target RAE girls and young women.
- Promote the RAE culture and tradition in the educational system as a significant contribution to general culture and promptly erase any negative stereotypes about RAE women from text books.
- Adopt vocational programs for RAE women, and particularly elderly and illiterate RAE women, as well as women in similar situations from other minority groups, to address their particular needs and in order to improve work opportunities for these vulnerable groups. Such programs should be free of charge;
- Incentives (such as tax exemptions) should be offered to promote the hiring of RAE women.
- Without delay introduce the necessary measures to provide RAE women with equal opportunities to enjoy access to health care on a non-discriminatory and culturally sensitive basis.
- Train health care workers and authorities on discrimination and equal treatment as well as the various types of discrimination to which RAE women may be subject, to ease investigation and supporting complaints as appropriate.
- Government strategies and policies to improve the health of RAE women should take a holistic approach that includes education, traditions, housing conditions, etc.
- Enact, monitor, and enforce prohibitions against discrimination on the part of health care personnel and institutions as part of the implementation of comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation and undertake local and national awareness-raising anti-discrimination campaigns;
- Concrete steps should be taken to address elements of RAE culture that may impede access to services.
- Without delay ensure that a network of adequately trained and culturally sensitive service providers is set up to protect RAE women victims of violence.
- Without delay safe houses for victims of domestic violence should review and amend as necessary admission criteria so as to ensure that it does not exclude disadvantaged groups.
- Design and effectively implement measures for the protection against domestic violence, specifically restriction orders for the family member causing violence, order for eviction from the family house or flat, regardless of ownership of the above.
- Organize training programs for civil servants on work with violence victims, especially RAE women.
- Train the police, investigators and court clerks to properly address the problem of domestic violence in RAE families.
- Establish a counseling service for youth within relevant institutions and NGO's, which should also educate RAE on relevant legal provisions as a way to prevent child marriages.
- Formulate of a special protocol on protection against early and forced marriages.