# **OPINION POLL:**

ACTIVATION FACTORS
AND BARRIERS FOR
WORK AND
EMPLOYMENT OF
SOCIAL FINANCIAL
ASSISTANCE
BENEFICIARIES

REPORT







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# INTRODUCTION

# RESEARCH GOALS AND METHODOLOGY



## RESEARCH GOALS

This research is a part of the project conducted by the Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs of the Republic of Serbia, together with the National Employment Service, Red Cross Belgrade, Novi Sad and Niš, Social Policy Center, research agency Ipsos Strategic Marketing and Slovenian Institute for Social Protection.

The main of the research is to enhance the position of vulnerable groups, their integration in the labor market and the society by using an integrative approach that includes combining of adequate individual activation measures and specific forms of individual support.

With the aim of monitoring, tracking and final assessment of program effects, several researches have been planned.

#### The main goals of this initial research are the following:

- Creating insights about the key barriers and potential activation factors for integration in the labor market, which would help define an integrative activation program for enhancement of target population employability and selection of program participants;
- Creating insights about the current level of target population employment potential, which would serve as one of the program efficiency assessment indicators



# METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION METHOD



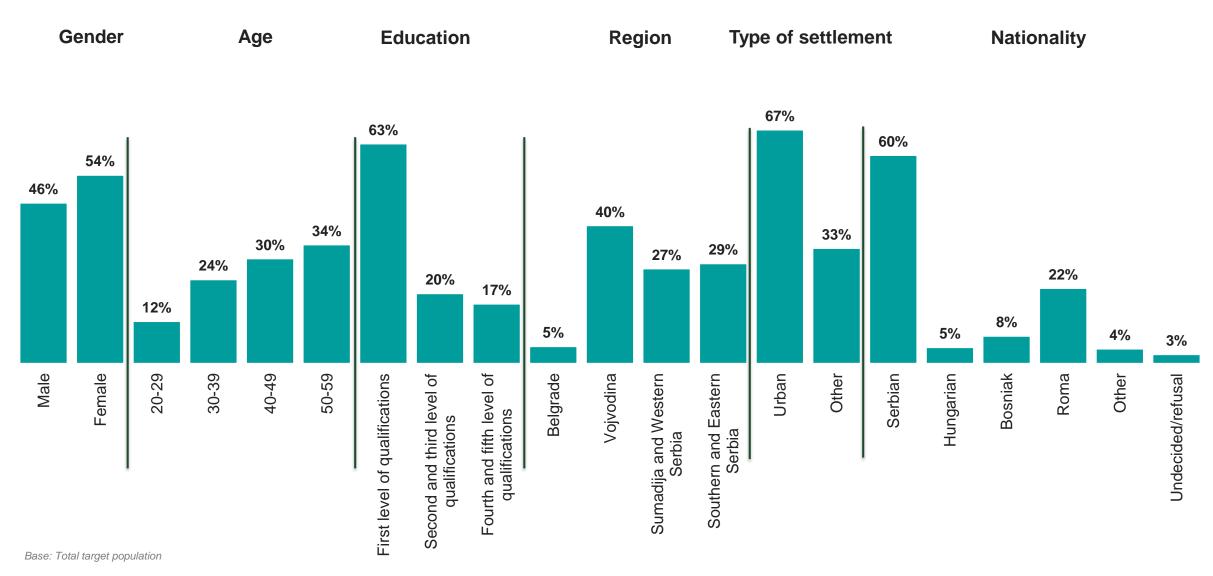
Fieldwork:	7.06 – 27.07.2022.
Data collection method:	Computer assisted personal interviews (CAPI) in respondents' households
Sample frame:	Unemployed citizens capable of working, aged between 20 and 59 years, in the records of the National Employment Service, whose households are financial social assistance beneficiaries (on January 31, 2022.)
Sample size:	813 respondents (208 Roma 605 of other nationalities)
Type of sample and selection method:	Stratified random representative sample Strata: 25 NES branch offices; Roma and other nationalities Selection: proportionate to strata size; random starting point and same selection interval
Post stratification of sample:	By gender, age, region, nationality – Roma and other nationalities*, and education
Sample error	±3.34% (marginal error)

<sup>\*</sup>The sample of Roma was boosted for more reliable analyses of this population, and post stratification was aligned with the share of Roma in target population according to NES data

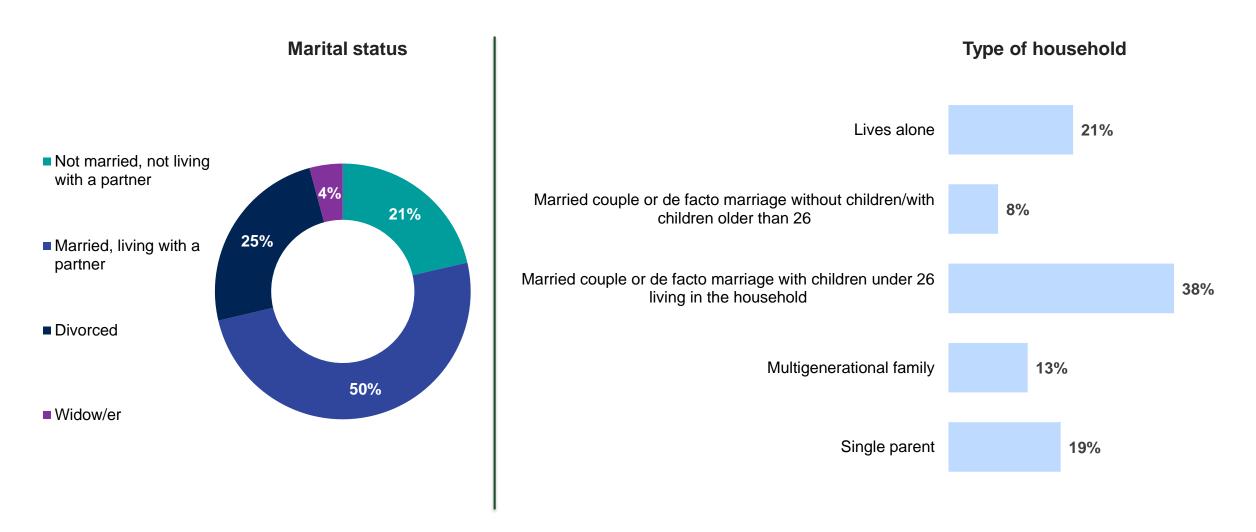
#### **NOTE:**

Given that information about the number of years of receiving financial social assistance wasn't available for post stratification, analyzed were data reported by respondents, without aligning them with the situation in total population

# SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE OF TARGET POPULATION



## SAMPLE STRUCTURE

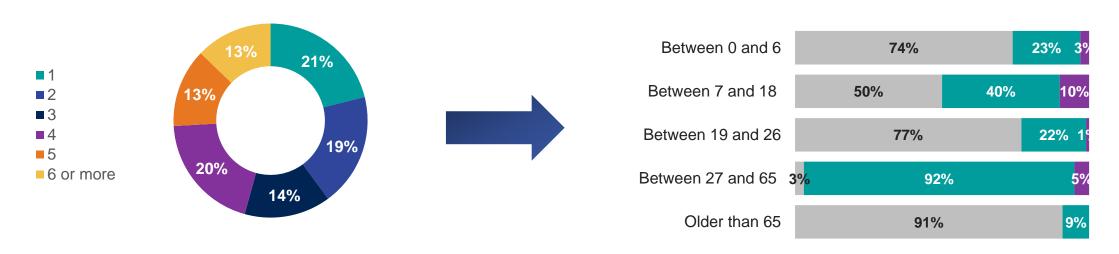


Base: Total target population

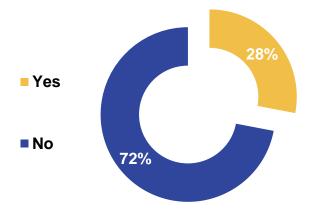
# SAMPLE STRUCTURE

#### Number of household members

# % of households by the number of members of specified age



# Multimember households with members who need special care



Base: Total target population

## EMPLOYMENT POTENTIAL ASSESSMENT

Assessment of the current level of employment potential, as a composite index of the level of employability, is based on self-assessment of target population members.

Employment potential indicators are defined by seven questions, asked at the end of the questionnaire as the interview summary, encompassing four topics:

✓ Evaluation of employment likelihood in the near future

All in all, how likely is it that you would find a job and get employed in the near future?

✓ Motivation to look for work

Considering all the current circumstances in your life, how motivated/willing are you to look for a job?

- ✓ Employment barriers confidence in competitiveness of one's own qualifications and personal qualities, and family situation
- How much do your current education, qualifications, knowledge and skills enable you to find an acceptable job?
- How much are your other skills, such as communication skills, resourcefulness, self-confidence and your other qualities a barrier for employment?
- How much is your family situation a barrier for employment?
- ✓ Loss of financial assistance and other types of assistance as a demotivating factor for looking for a job
- Finally, thinking about financial social assistance and other types of assistance that you receive, how much does the notion that you would lose all that if you found a job affect your wish/motivation to look for work and finally get a job?
- If you were employed and lost your job out of any reason, how easy or hard would it be for you to regain social assistance and all other types of assistance that you receive now?

## EMPLOYMENT POTENTIAL ASSESSMENT

Each of the seven items was evaluated on the scale from 1 to 4, where higher score implies greater employment potential (greater confidence about future employment, stronger motivation to look for work, fewer employment barriers, weaker discouraging effect of the loss of social assistance due to employment\*).

Employment potential is defined as a sum of responses to all seven questions, so the minimum possible score is 7, and maximum 28. For clarity reasons, the scores are recoded in such a way that the final employment potential scale goes from 0 (no positive employment potential indicators) to 21 (positive employment potential indicators on all 7 questions)\*\*.

There are four employment potential categories defined:

Low potential (0 to 5), mainly low (6 to 10), good (11 to 15), high potential (16 to 21).

<sup>\*</sup>The scale of responses in Q7 is recoded so that bigger score indicates weaker discouraging effect

<sup>\*\*</sup>Employment potential scale distribution is normal (arithmetic mean=10.6, median= 11.0, SD= 3.77, min=0, max=21)



# KEY FINDINGS



# SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

#### Sources of houshold income

- Half of target population households have been receiving social assistance for up to 5 years, about a third between 6 and 10 years, and 15% for longer than 10 years. One quarter of target population reported about the household they grew up in receiving financial social assistance as well.
- Majority of households, **72%**, supplements their income with some extra activities, usually seasonal work in agriculture (47%) and as home assistance in other households (35%)
- Majority of households, 77%, have received other types of assistance or income, besides financial, in the past 12 months, not influencing their right to financial social assistance, and it was mainly children's allowance (52%)

#### Work experience, looking for a job and barriers

- Somewhat more than half of target population members have never had formal employment (54%), and one third of those who have been formally employed (45%) have more than 10 years of work experience.
- Half of target population members claimed to be actively searching for a job at the moment.
- As the reasons for their current formal unemployment, majority mention lack of connections and contacts (66%), followed by poor health (49%) and great competition for jobs they can do (48%). However, most common single, most important reason is poor health (33%), followed by taking care of children (23% of target population, and 46% with children under 6 years of age).
- One fifth of target population members have had a job offer in the past 12 months, but only a quarter of them accepted it. Poor health was again the most relevant reasons.



# **KEY FINDINGS SUMMARY**

#### NES measures and SWC individual activation plan

- As respondents say, some of the NES measures were at least sometime used by 79% of target population members, while 4% currently have the SWC individual activation plan.
- The measure that members of target population have mainly been engaged in was talking to advisors (mainly aimed at employment capacity assessment, 76%). Contacts with advisors are also perceived as the most useful NES measure.

#### Work and employment activation factors – working conditions

- Salary amount that would boost motivation to find a job and stop receiving social assistance varies significantly among target population members: one third would be motivated to find a job with a salary of 35000 to 44000 RSD, one third with a salary of 45000 to 54000 RSD, and about a quarter with a salary amount above 54000 RSD.
- Majority of target population members say that accepting a job depends on the conditions regarding non-working weekends and holidays, working hours and workplace location, but they are most likely to find paid transit commuting expenses most important 87%.
- Majority of target population members would prefer a contract that would solve their unemployment issue
  permanently, or an indefinite term contract. However, only somewhat more than one third find their
  employment status important, or say that they would only accept a job whose status suited them most.



# **KEY FINDINGS SUMMARY**

#### Work and employment activation factors - The needs of target population members

- Target population members are most interested in individual support in finding work (63%) and healthcare services (56%), and less than a half in assistance with starting their own business (42%).
- Majority of households with children under 6 years of age are interested in childcare (61%), and as for households with adult members who require special care, 42% are interested in care for the elderly and the infirm.
- Less than half of them are interested in additional education, professional training and obtaining niche skills needed for work they want to do (43%), and 28% in continuation of formal education.

#### Employment potential in target population

- According to the defined indicators, somewhat more than half of target population members, 53%, have good employment potential. Relatively small share, 9%, has high potential, and 10% has extremely low potential.
- A lot bigger share of target population members claimed to be motivated to look for a job than the share of those who expected to be employed in the near future (50% and 17%, respectively).
- The main barrier to finding an adequate job is insufficient education, 69%, for majority of target population members. Family situation follows with 38%, while the most rarely mentioned are personal qualities such as communication skills, resourcefulness and self-confidence, 22%.
- The idea of losing financial and other types of social assistance as a discouraging factor was mentioned by 27% of target population members, but a lot bigger is the share of those who believe that it would be hard for them to regain this assistance, 62%.
- Education seems to be the key determinant of employment potential. The level of employment potential also varies
  depending on the type of household, and it is lower in multimember households with more children.

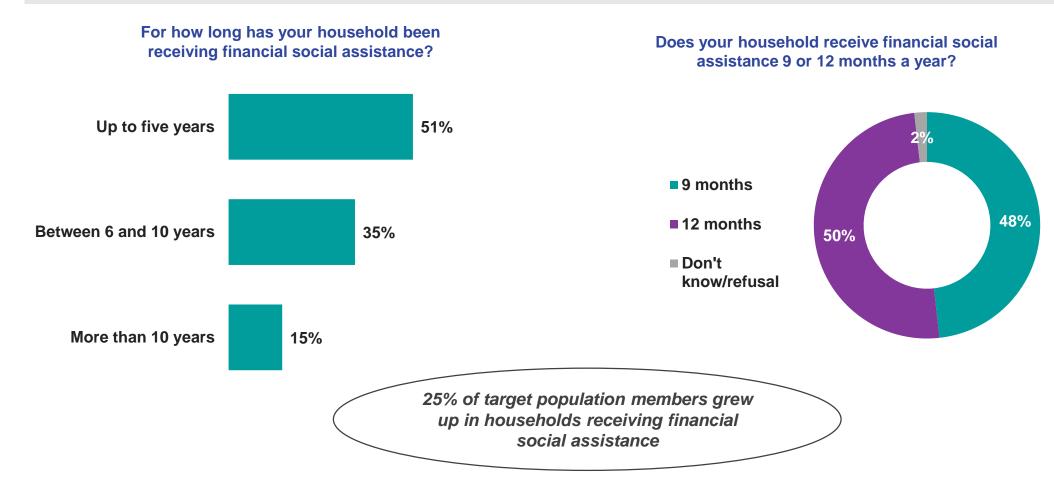


# SOURCES OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME



# THE HISTORY OF RECEIVING SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Half of target population households have been receiving social assistance for up to 5 years, and 15% for longer than 10 years. One quarter of target population reported about the household they grew up in receiving financial social assistance as well.

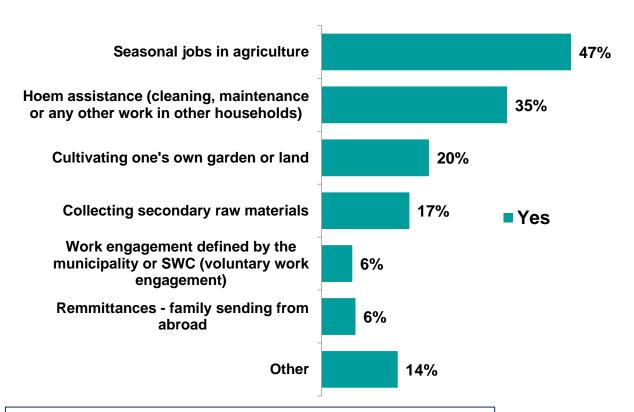




# HOUSEHOLD INCOME SUPPLEMENTING METHODS

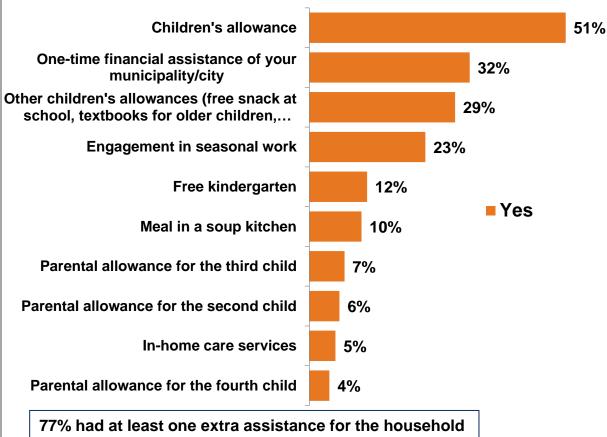
Majority of households, 72%, supplement their income with some extra activities, usually seasonal work in agriculture (47%) and as home assistance in other households, while 77% receive other types of assistance or income, besides financial, not influencing their right to financial social assistance, and it was mainly children's allowance

We know that social assistance can't meet all the needs of a household, so do you supplement your income in any of the following ways?



72% reported supplementing their income in at least one way

In the past 12 months, has your household received any other income or assistance, but social, that had no influence on your right to receive financial social assistance?



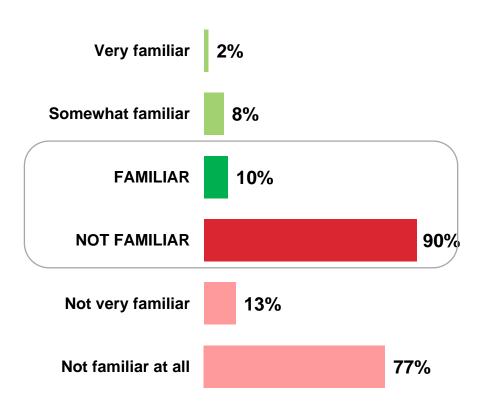




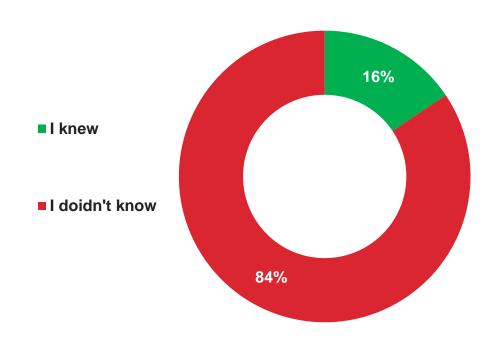
# AWARENESS OF THE NEW SEASONAL WORK SYSTEM

Only one in ten target population members was somewhat aware of the new seasonal work system, while just somewhat more, 16%, knew that accepting a seasonal job doesn't mean losing the right to social assistance or the status of an unemployed person

How familiar are you with the rights and benefits established by the new system on working conditions of seasonal workers, introduced in 2019?



Did you know that the system introduced in 2019. stipulated that accepting seasonal work didn't imply losing the right to financial social assistance and other social benefits, as well as the status of an unemployed person?

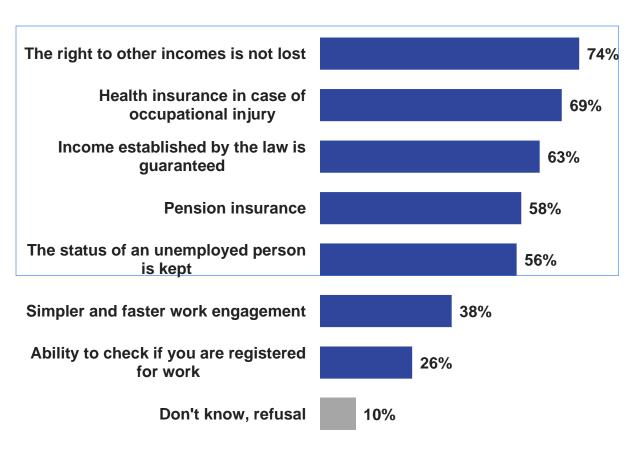




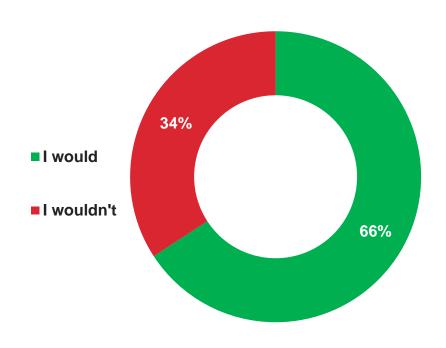
# STRENGTHS OF THE NEW SEASONAL WORK SYSTEM

On the other hand, most benefits enabled by this new system are perceived as stimulating for accepting seasonal work. As for those who haven't done any seasonal work, majority, 66%, would accept it under the conditions guaranteed by the new system

This system guarantees the following benefits. Which do you find most relevant/which would motivate you most to accept some seasonal work? *MULTIPLE* 



Would you accept some seasonal work under these conditions?



Base: those who weren't engaged in seasonal work in the past 12 months (77% of total target population)

Base: Total target population





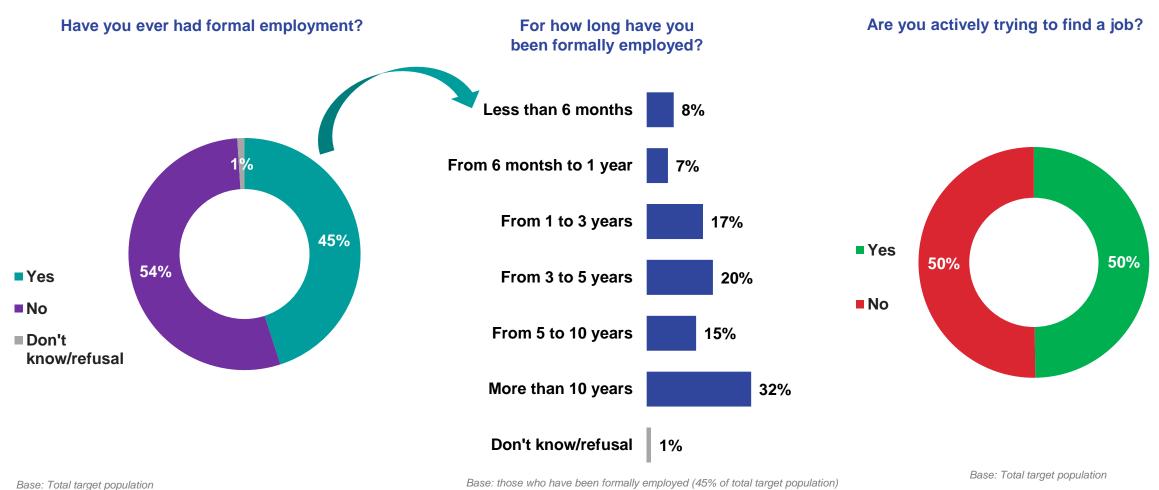
# WORK EXPERIENCE, ACTIVE LOOKING FOR WORK AND BARRIERS





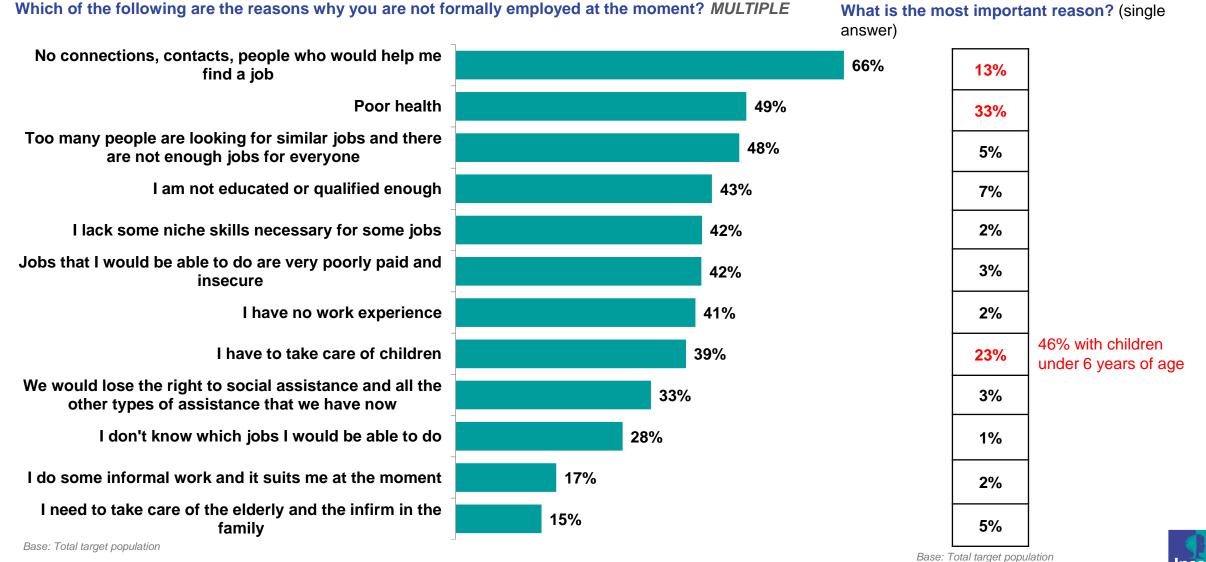
## FORMAL EMPLOYMENT

Less than half of target population members, 45%, have been formally employed, and about a third of them for more than 10 years. Half of target population members claimed to be actively searching for a job at the moment



# REASONS FOR UNEMPLOYMENT

As the reasons for their current formal unemployment, majority mentions lack of connections and contacts (66%), followed by poor health (49%) and great competition for jobs they can do (48%). However, most common single, most important reason is poor health (one third of the population), followed by taking care of children (almost one quarter), while lack of contacts is mentioned by only 13%



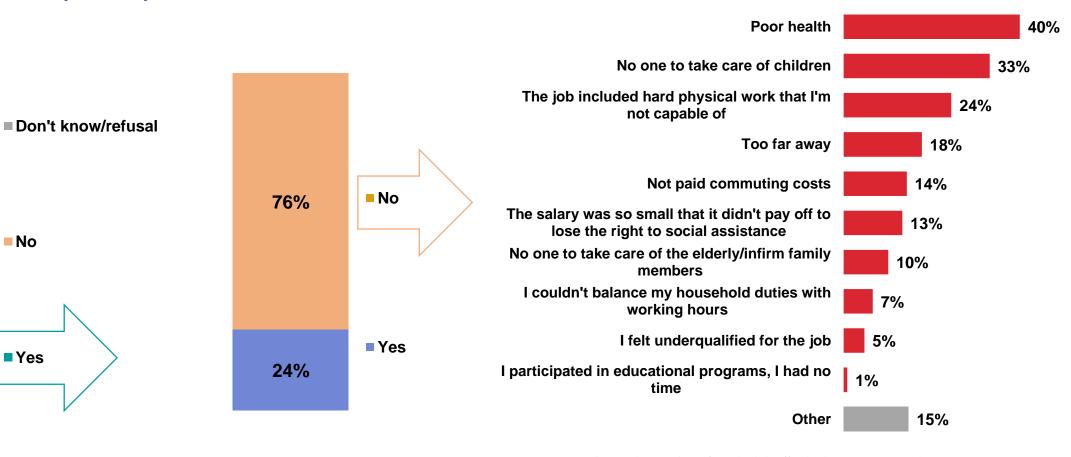
# WORK OFFERS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

On the other hand, about one fifth of target population had a job offer in the past 12 months, but only one in four accepted it; most common reasons for refusal were poor health and childcare

Have you been offered a job in the past 12 months by NES or in any other way?

Did you accept the offered job?





Base: those who had a job offer in the past 12 months (19% of total target population)

Base: those who refused a job offer in the past 12 months (14% of total target population)



19%

1%

80%

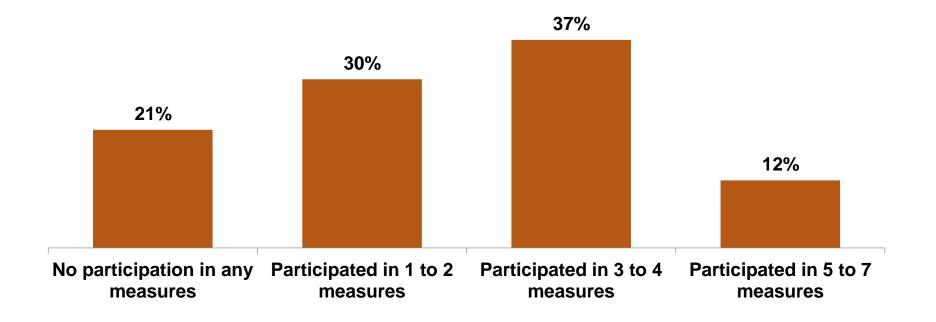


MEASURES OF THE NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICE AND INDIVIDUAL ACTIVATION PLAN OF THE SOCIAL WELFARE CENTER



# ENGAGEMENT IN NES MEASURES AND SWC INDIVIDUAL ACTIVATION PLAN

- > Social Welfare Center individual activation plan is used by 4% of target population
- ➤ NES measures have covered 79% of target population



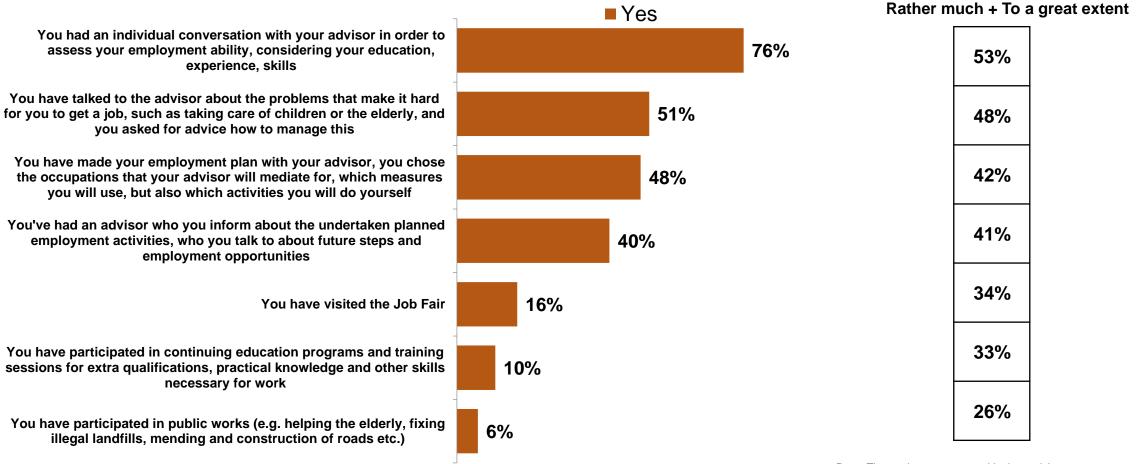


# ENGAGEMENT IN NES ACTIVITIES

Target population members usually consulted the advisors in order to assess their employment potential (70%), identify barriers that hinder their employment (51%), make an employment plan (48%) and report about planned and undertaken activities (40%). These measures were assessed as most beneficial by those who used them.

Have you ever been engaged in any of the measures or NES activities?

How useful was the activity that you were engaged in?



Ipsos



# WORK AND EMPLOYMENT ACTIVATION FACTORS – WORK CONDITIONS

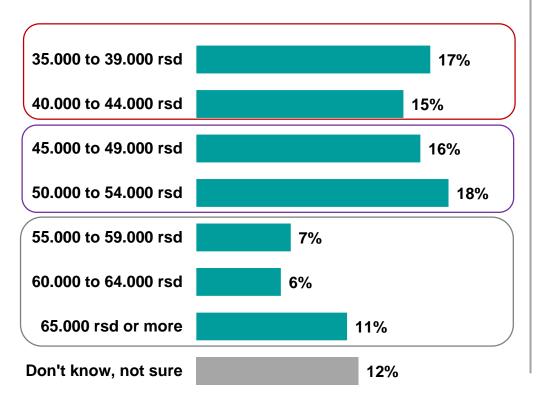


# **EXPECTATIONS REGARDING WORK CONDITIONS**

Salary amount that would boost motivation to find a job and stop receiving social assistance varies significantly among target population members: one third would be motivated to find a job with a salary of 35000 to 44000 RSD, one third with a salary of 45000 to 54000 RSD, and about a quarter with a salary amount above 54000 RSD.

Majority of target population members say that accepting a job depends on the conditions regarding non-working weekends and holidays, working hours and location, but they are most likely to find paid transit commuting expenses most important, 87%

What is the salary amount sufficient to motivate you to get a job and stop receiving social assistance?



How relevant are the following elements for accepting a job, given your life situation?





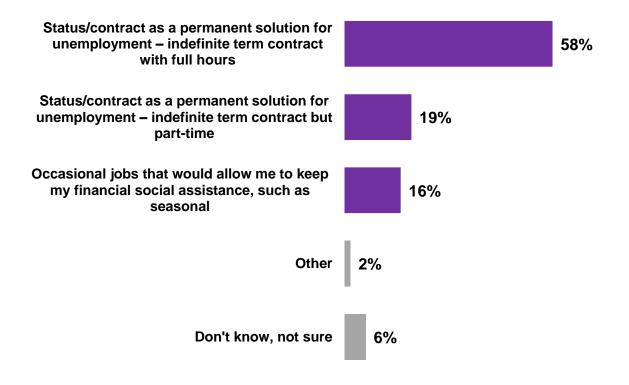


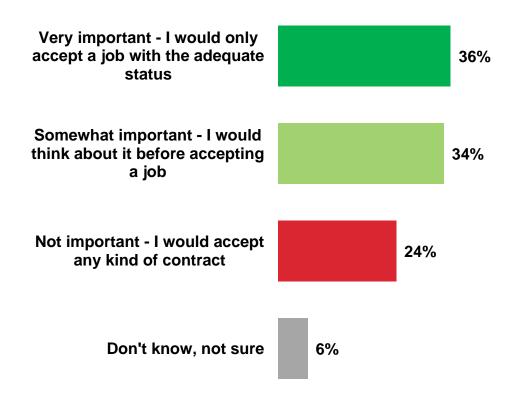
## PREFERRED TYPE OF CONTRACT

Majority of target population members would prefer a contract that would solve their unemployment permanently, or an indefinite term contract. However, only somewhat more than one third find their employment status important, or that they would only accept a job whose status suited them most

And as for the employment status (the type of employment contract), which status would suit you most?

How important is the employment status (the type of employment contract) for your decision about employment?









WORK AND EMPLOYMENT **ACTIVATION FACTORS** - THE NEEDS OF SOCIAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE BENEFICIARIES



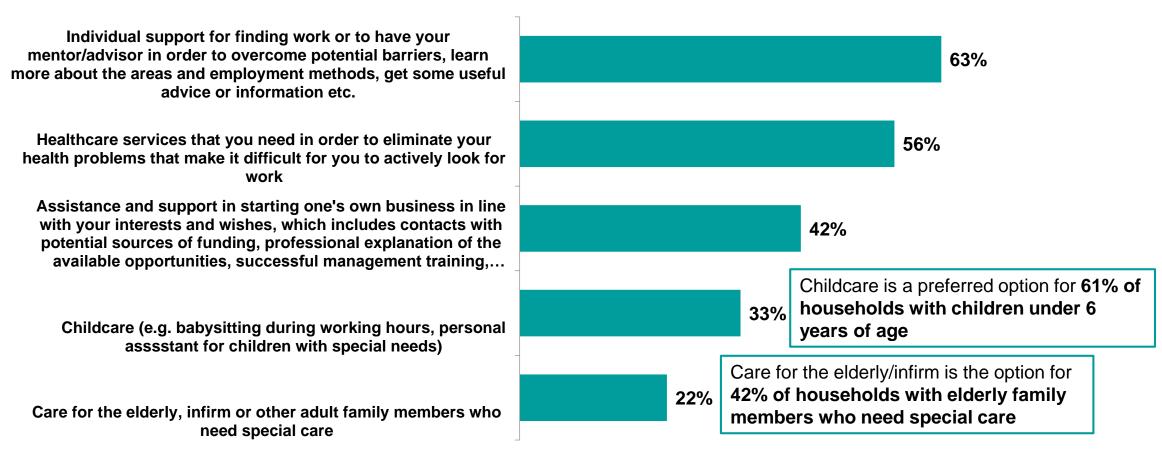


## INTEREST IN SUPPORT

Target population members are most interested in individual support in finding work and healthcare services, while majority of households with children under 6 years of age are interested in childcare

How interested are you in the following services as support to look for work more actively?

#### Somewhat/very interested





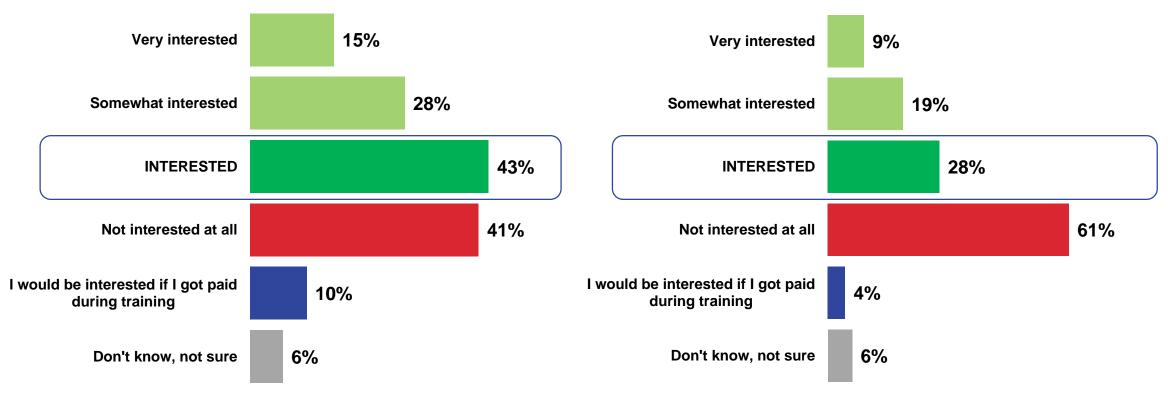
# INTEREST IN ADDITIONAL EDUCATION

About 4 out of 10 members of target population are at least somewhat interested in additional education, professional training and obtaining niche skills needed for work they want to do. On the other hand, interest in continuation of formal education is a lot weaker, 28%.

How interested are you in the following services as support to look for work more actively?

Training, such as additional education, professional courses, acquiring specific skills that you need or re-qualification

**Continued formal education** 







# EMPLOYMENT POTENTIAL, INTEGRATION IN THE LABOR MARKET – SELF-ASSESSMENT



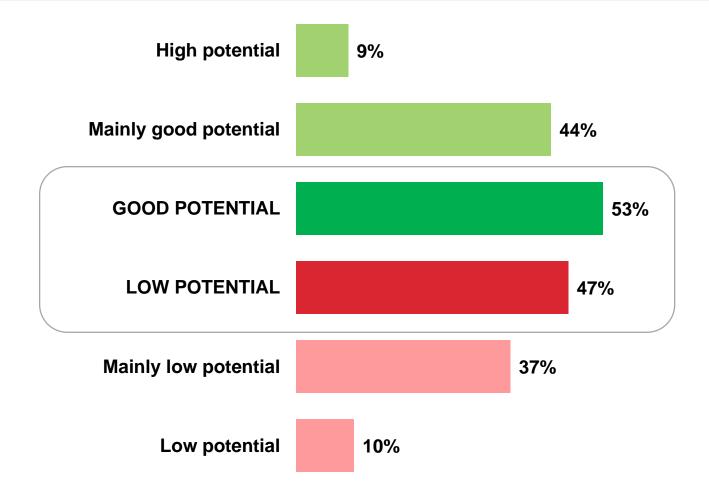
# DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT POTENTIAL AND ITS INDICATORS IN TARGET POPULATION





# DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT POTENTIAL INDICATORS IN TARGET POPULATION

Somewhat more than half of target population members, as they say, have good potential for integration in the labor market



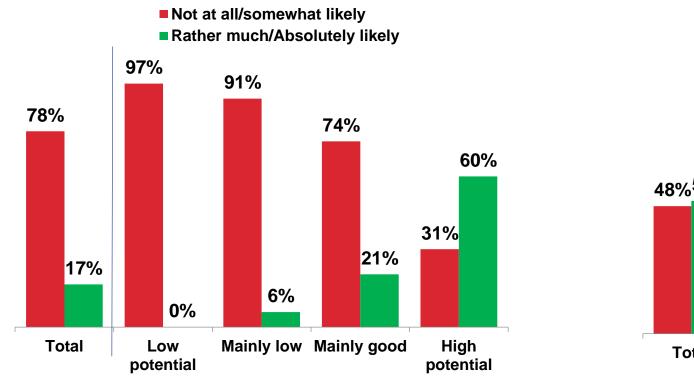


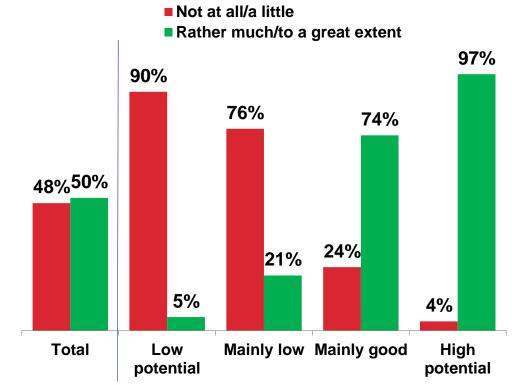
# EXPECTED LIKELIHOOD OF EMPLOYMENT AND MOTIVATION TO LOOK FOR WORK

Members of target population are a lot more likely to be motivated to look for work than to expect employment in the near future, and the portion of target population with higher potential, along with greater expectations to find a job, is also a lot more motivated to look for it.\*

All in all, how likely is it that you would find a job and get employed in the near future?

Considering all the current circumstances in your life, how motivated/willing are you to look for a job?





<sup>\*</sup>Correlation between motivation to look for work and expecting to find it in the near future is positive and statistically relevant, but moderate, r=0.48, and explains about 23% of variance in motivation to look for a job.



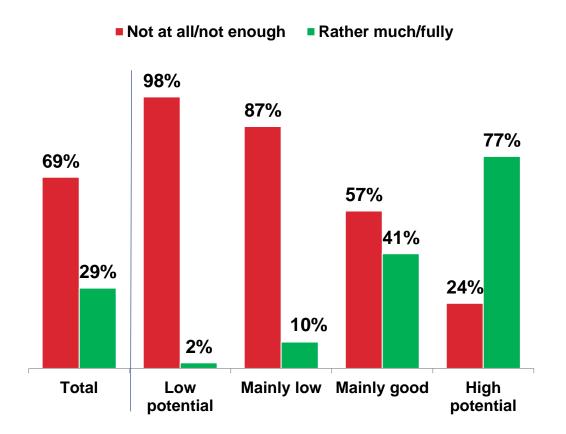
Base: Total target population

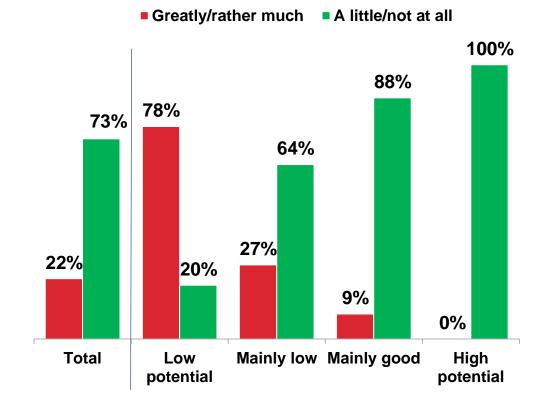
## CONFIDENCE ABOUT COMPETITIVENESS OF ONE'S OWN QUALIFICATIONS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES

Majority of target population members, with the exception of those with high potential, believe that their qualifications and education don't enable them to find an acceptable job, but a considerably smaller share of them believe that their personal qualities are a barrier for finding work

How much do your current education, qualifications, knowledge and skills enable you to find an acceptable job?

How much are your other skills, such as communication skills, resourcefulness, self-confidence and your other qualities a barrier for employment?





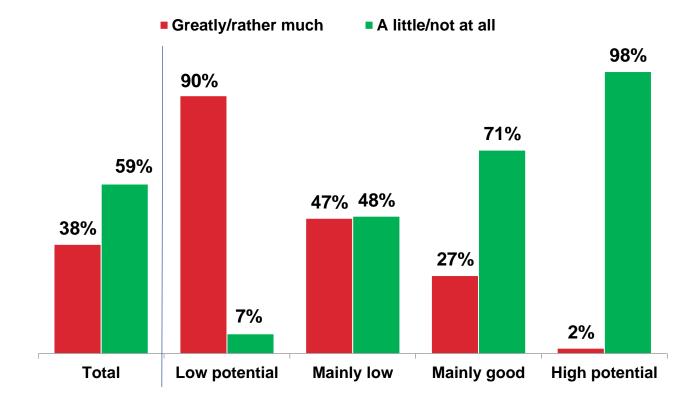
Base: Total target population



#### FAMILY SITUATION AS A BARRIER TO EMPLOYMENT

Majority of target population members don't see their family situation as a barrier to employment, but a considerable share of target population with lower potential does mention this as a problem.

How much is your family situation a barrier for employment?



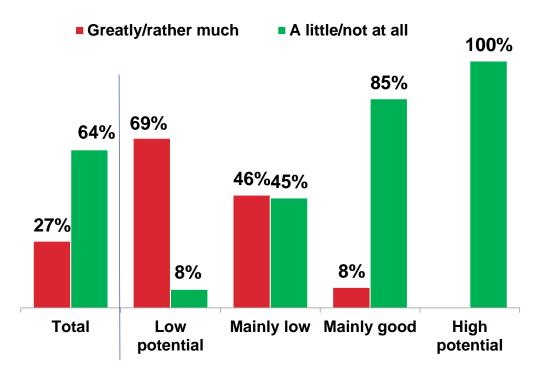


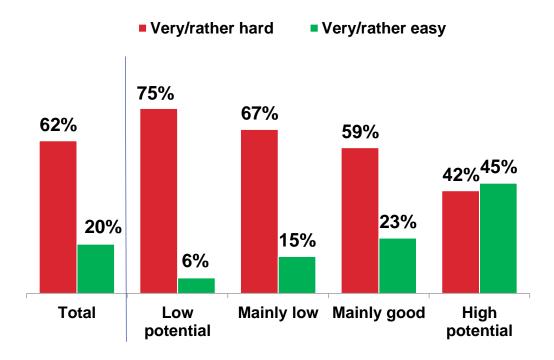
#### THE FACTOR OF LOSS OF FINANCIAL AND OTHER TYPES OF ASSISTANCE

Majority of target population members say that the notion of losing financial and other types of social assistance is not very discouraging, but this factor reduces employment motivation a lot in the lower potential segment. However, majority believes that it would be hard for them to get this assistance again, with the exception of the highest potential segment, where opinions are not uniform\*.

Finally, thinking about financial social assistance and other types of assistance that you receive, how much does the notion that you would lose all that if you found a job affect your wish/motivation to look for work and finally get a job?

If you were employed and lost your job out of any reason, how easy or hard would it be for you to get social assistance and all other types of assistance that you receive now?





<sup>\*</sup>The correlation between the effect of losing assistance on motivation to look for a job and expectations of the difficulty of regaining assistance is positive and statistically relevant, but relatively low, r=0.33, and explains about 11% variance in the effect of losing assistance on motivation to look for a job





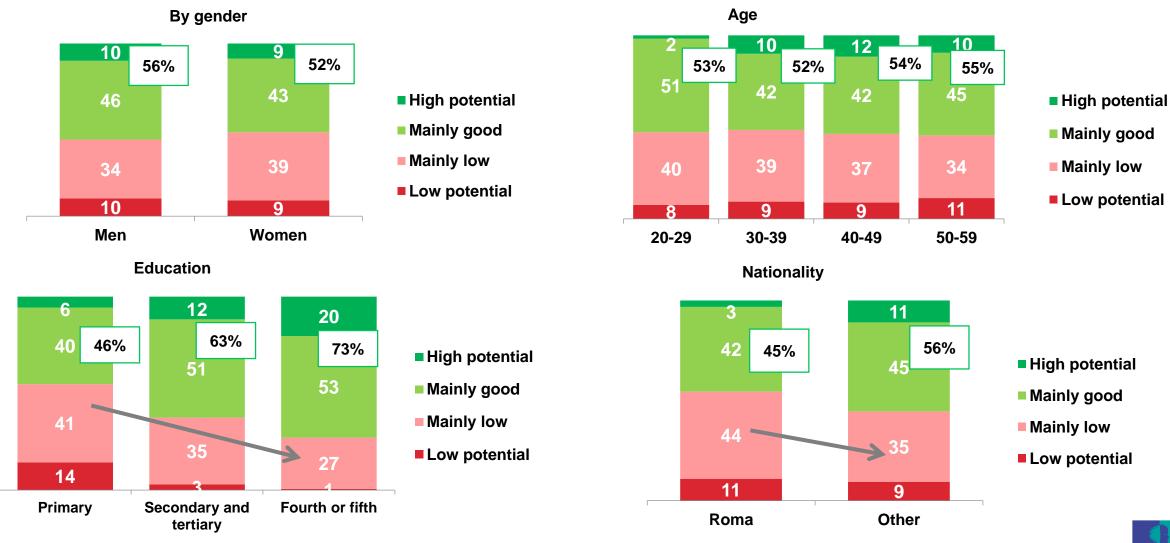
## DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT POTENTIAL BY SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS





#### BY GENDER, AGE, EDUCATION AND NATIONALITY

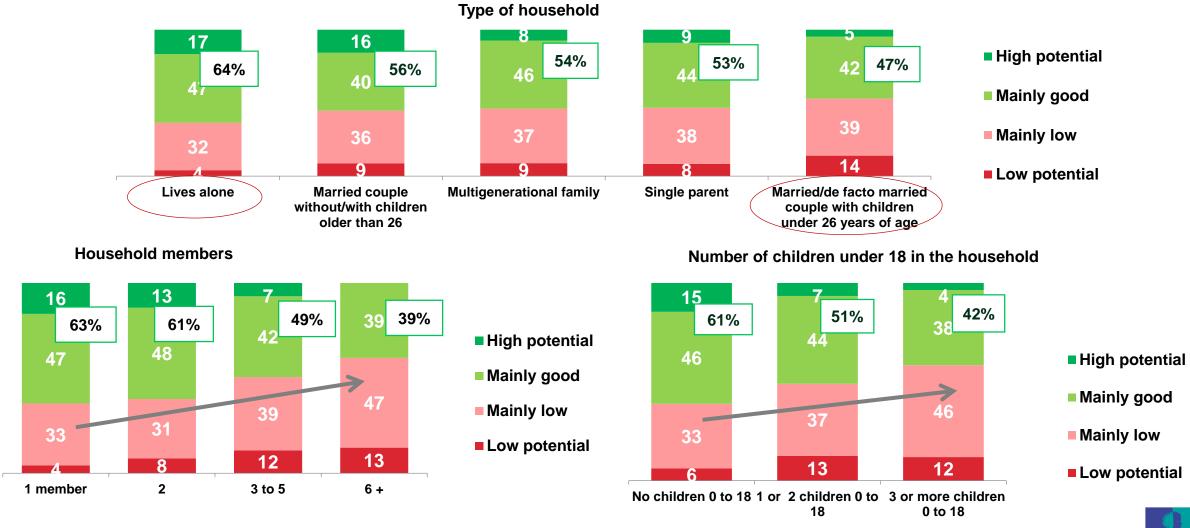
As for the basic demographic characteristics, education seems to be the key determinant of employment potential, but there are differences between Roma population and target population members of other nationalities.\*



<sup>\*</sup>differences by gender and age have no statistical relevance

#### BY TYPE OF HOUSEHOLD AND NUMBER OF MEMBERS

The level of employment potential also varies depending on the type of household, and it is lower in multimember households with more children

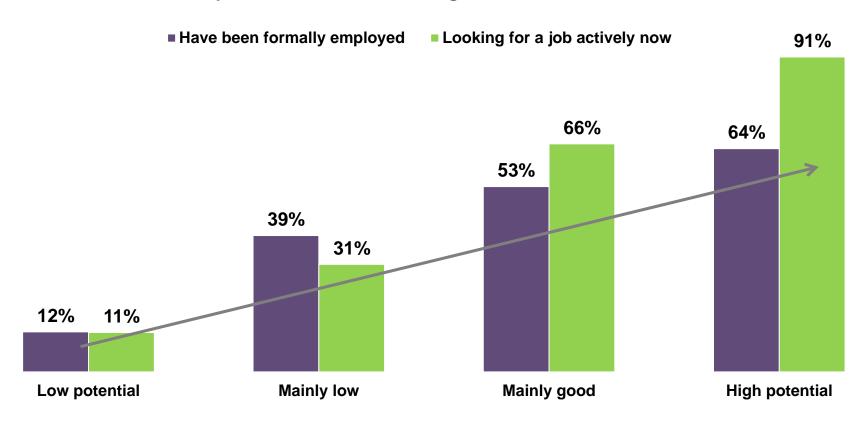


Base: Total target population

#### WORK EXPERIENCE AND ACTIVE LOOKING FOR WORK

Members of the higher employment potential segments are more likely to have been formally employed and looking for work now.

#### Work experience and active looking for work





ROMA POPULATION COMPARED WITH TARGET POPULATION OF OTHER NATIONALITIES





### **KEY FINDINGS**





#### KEY FINDINGS SUMMARY

- Research results confirm greater vulnerability of Roma target population than target population of other nationalities.
- Roma population members are more likely to be characterized by socio-demographic features generally present in the target population with lower employment potential:
  - Roma population has **considerably lower education level** (91% has the lowest education level, compared with 55% among members of other nationalities)
  - Roma households have, on average, more members and more children
  - Roma population members are a lot less likely to have any experience with formal employment (only 18% have ever been formally employed),
- Members of Roma population, compared with other nationalities, live in households that have been receiving, on average, financial social assistance for many years and they are a lot more likely to have grown up in households that also received social assistance
- Compared with target population of other nationalities, Roma are more engaged in supplementing their income with informal jobs (83% Roma and 69% of other nationalities have at least one informal job)
- Near one third of Roma households supplement their income by collecting secondary raw materials, and this is what differs them most from target population members of other nationalities (31% and 13%, respectively).
- As for the reasons for unemployment, Roma stand out most for blaming lack of education, niche skills and work
  experience, mentioned by more than 60% of Roma, and only somewhat more than one third of target group members
  of other nationalities



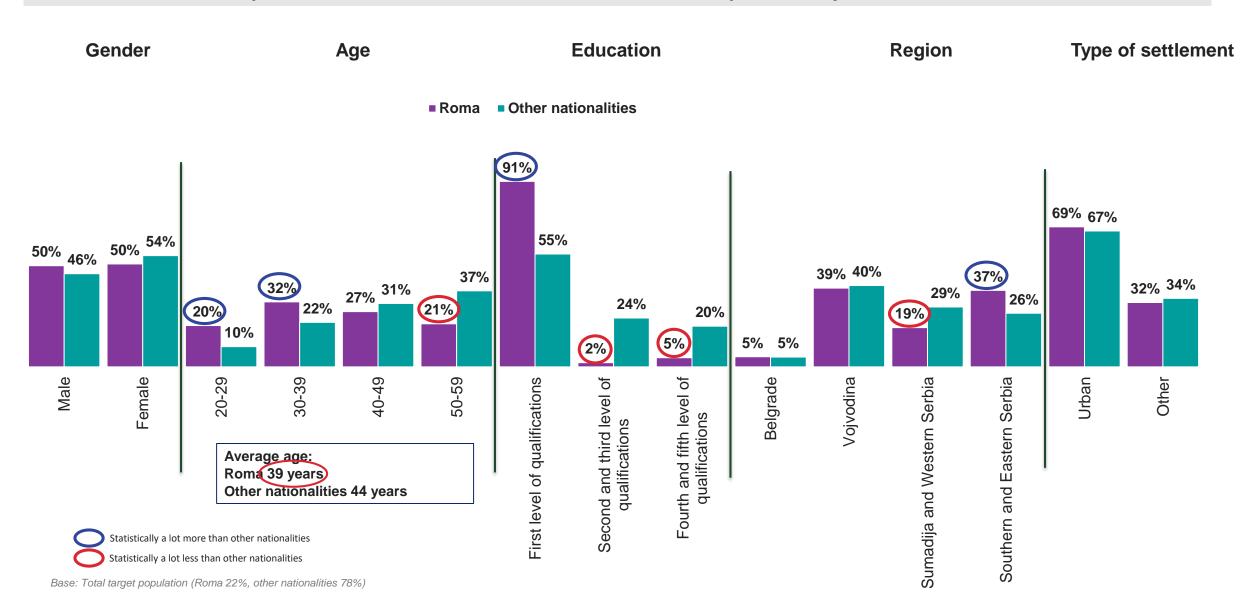
## SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE





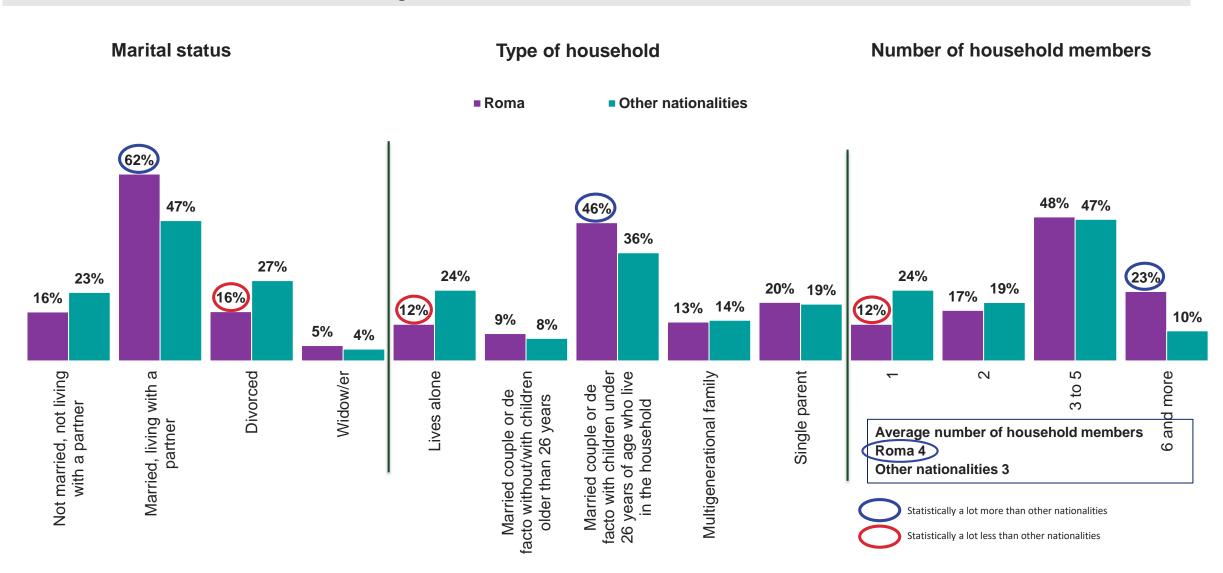
#### SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE

Roma population members, compared with target population members of other nationalities, are younger, with extremely low education and more likely to live in Southern and Eastern Serbia, and less likely in Sumadija and Western Serbia.



#### SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE

Roma target population members are a lot more likely to be married/living with partner and children under 26 who live in the household, and their households, on average, have more members.



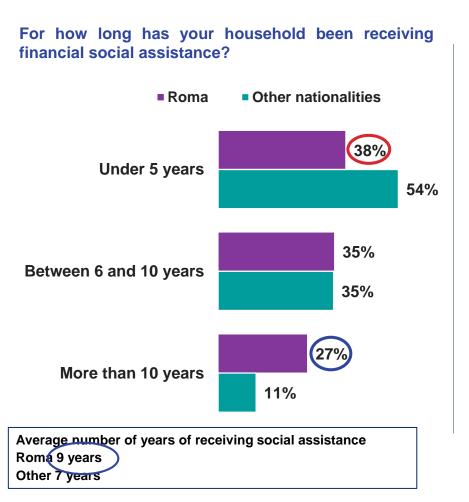
# SOURCES OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME

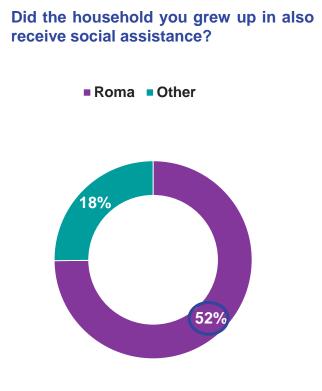


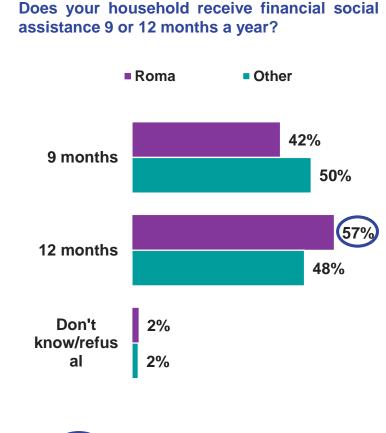


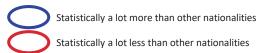
#### HISTORY OF RECEIVING SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Members of Roma population, compared with other nationalities, live in households that have been receiving, on average, financial social assistance for a longer period and they are a lot more likely to have grown up in households that also received social assistance, while they receive social assistance now for a larger number of months.









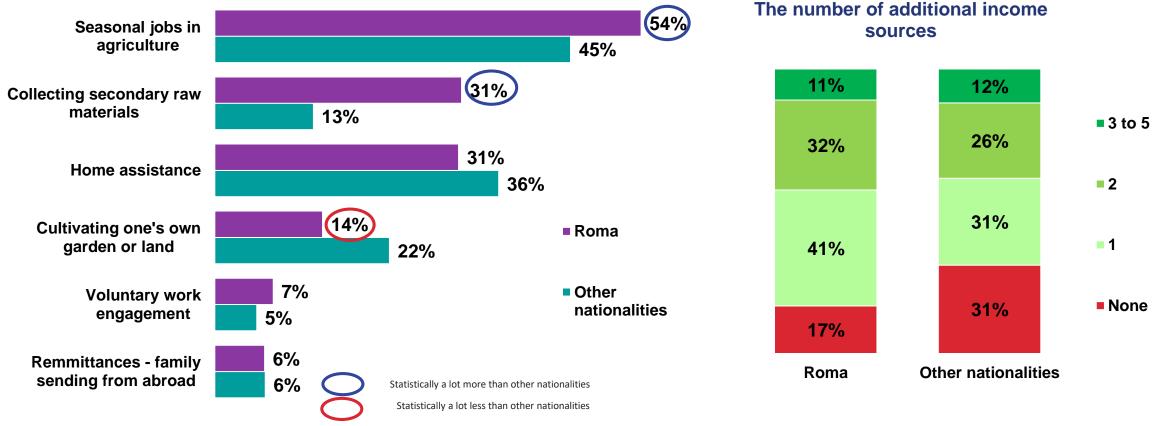




#### HOUSEHOLD INCOME SUPPLEMENTING METHODS

Compared with target population of other nationalities, Roma are more engaged in supplementing their income with informal jobs. Roma households, same as the rest of the target population, opt for seasonal work as the main source of income, and they are even more likely to be engaged in this type of work than the rest of the population. Near one third of Roma households supplement their income by collecting secondary raw materials, and this is what differs them most from target population members of other nationalities.

We know that social assistance can't meet all the needs of a household, so do you supplement your income in any of the following ways?





# WORK EXPERIENCE, REASONS FOR UNEMPLOYMENT AND ACTIVATION FACTORS

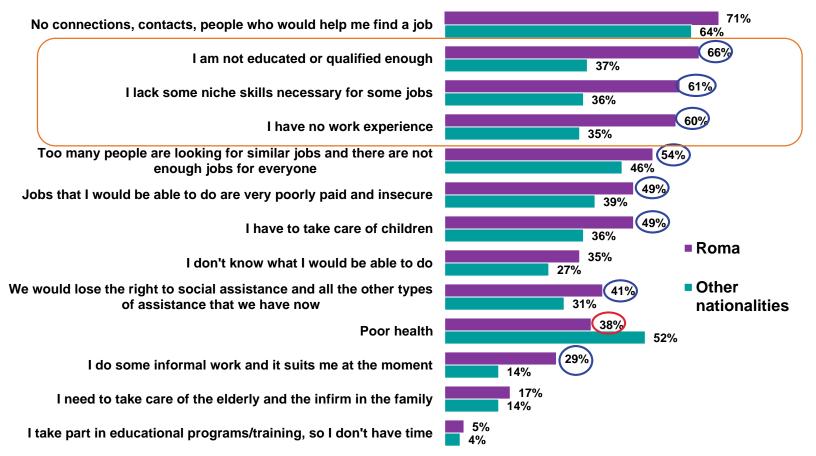


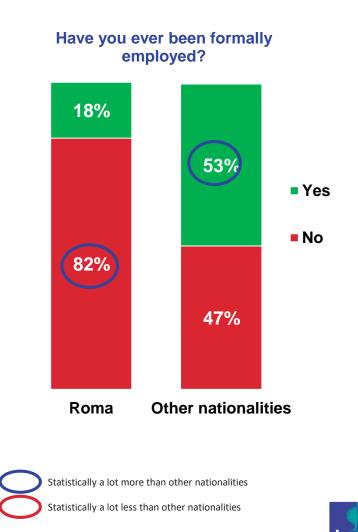


#### WORK EXPERIENCE AND REASONS FOR UNEMPLOYMENT

Compared with other nationalities, Roma population members are a lot less likely to have had any experience with formal employment, and as for the reasons for unemployment, Roma stand out most for blaming lack of education, niche skills and work experience.

Which of the following are the reasons why you are not formally employed at the moment?



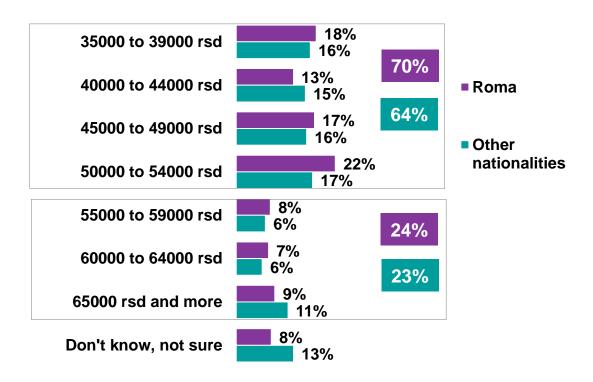




#### **EXPECTED WORK CONDITIONS**

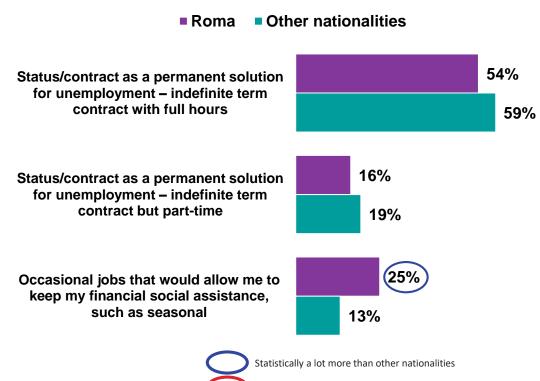
Salary amount that would motivate employment and loss of social assistance varies greatly both among Roma and in the rest of the target population – majority opts for a salary up to 54.000 rsd in both segments.

What is the salary amount sufficient to motivate you to get a job and stop receiving social assistance?



Roma, same as members of other nationalities, say that an indefinite term contract with full hours would suit them most, but one in four Roma say that they would prefer occasional jobs that would allow them to keep the right to social assistance.

And as for the employment status (the type of employment contract), which status would suit you most?



Statistically a lot less than other nationalities

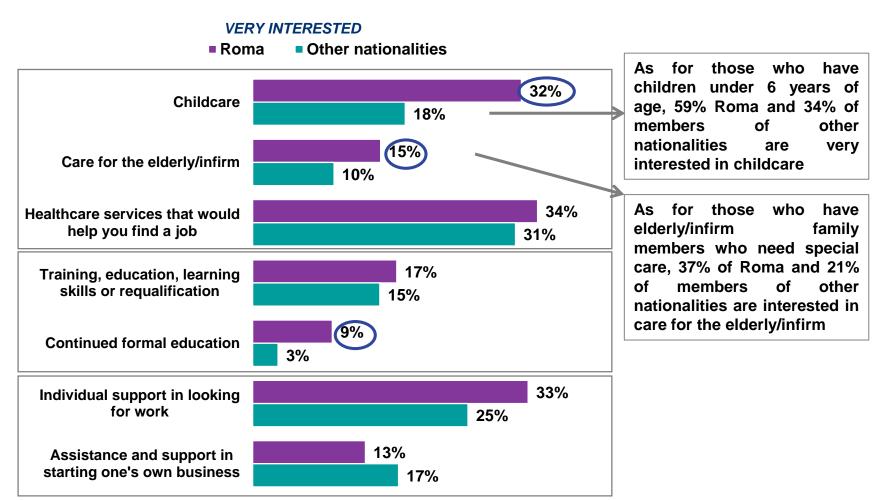


Base: Total target population (Roma 22%, Other nationalities 78%)

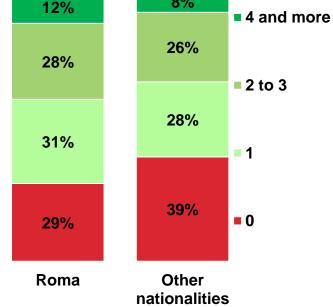
#### INTEREST IN SUPPORT

Compared with other nationalities, Roma are somewhat more interested in the offered services (71% compared with 61% are interested in at least one service), and the difference is most obvious in regard to interest in childcare.

How interested are you in the following free services as support to look for work more actively?



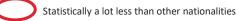
# Services that they are very interested in 12% 8% 4 and n



On average, Roma mention 2 services, and other nationalities 1 service









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