

ROMA ENTREPRENEURSHIP CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES

THE ROMA ARE THE LARGEST AND MOST VULNERABLE ETHNIC GROUP IN SERBIA

According to the 2011 Census, there are around 150,000 Roma living in Serbia, and according to the Council of Europe's data, the number is estimated at 600,000. Roma in Serbia face numerous problems, including a more difficult access to the labour market. According to the 2011 Census data, only 28% of Roma belong to the category of economically active people, of which 59% are unemployed. Also, the number of unemployed Roma women is four times bigger than Roma men. One of the possible solutions for such a position of Roma population is to create an supportive environment for the development of Roma entrepreneurship.

LOW ECONOMIC ACTIVITY OF THE ROMA

According to the 2011 Census, only 28% of Roma belong to the category of economically active people, which is significantly less than the state average (41%). Of economically active Roma, only 41% work, which is also significantly less than the state level (78%). According to the same data, of the total number of economically active Roma who work, 16% have their own business and they are usually own-account workers.

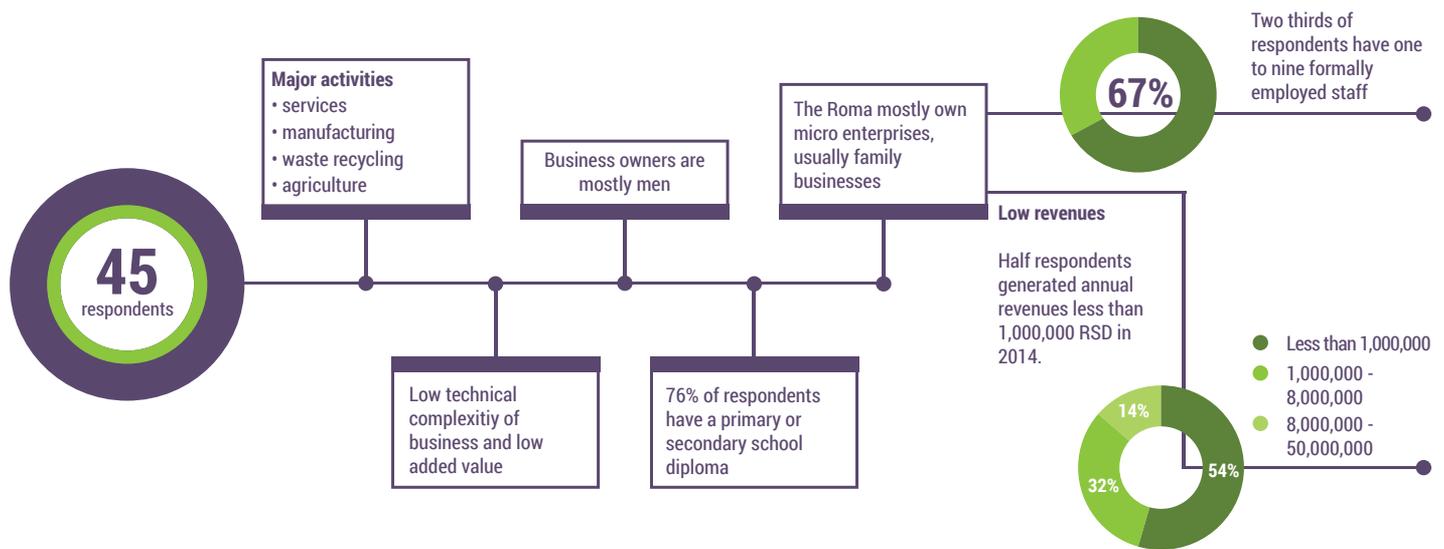
ECONOMIC ACTIVITY OF ROMA



ECONOMIC ACTIVITY OF THE TOTAL POPULATION



GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SURVEYED ROMA ENTREPRENEURS



BUSINESS CHALLENGES FOR ROMA ENTREPRENEURS

ACCESS TO FINANCE AND OPERATING FUNDS

64% of respondents say that they need financial assistance for business development.

HIGH LABOUR TAXES AND CONTRIBUTIONS

60% of Roma entrepreneurs say that reduction of labour taxes and contributions would contribute to the improvement of their business operations.

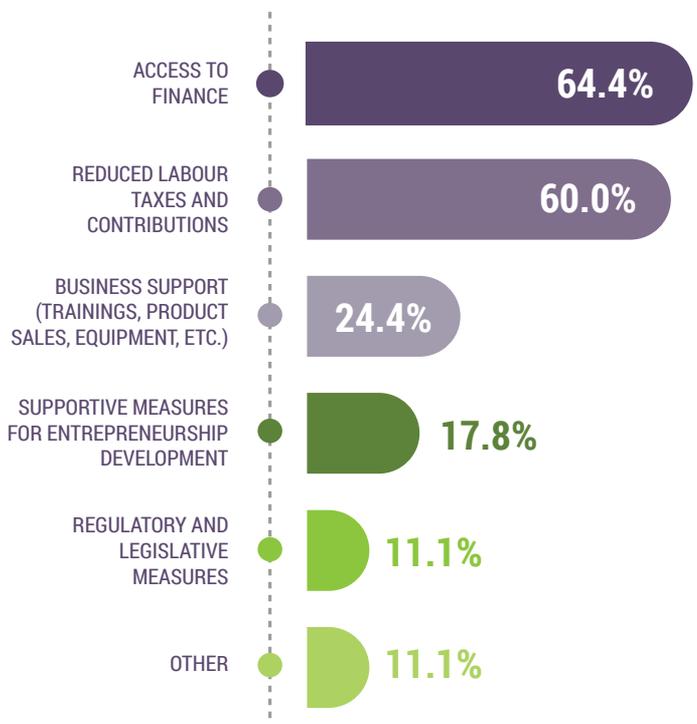
LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT LAWS AND PROCEDURES

A third of respondents say that the lack of knowledge and procedures limits their business operations.

GREY ECONOMY

A third of respondents say that **unfair competition** is the main problem they encounter in the market.

PREJUDICE ABOUT THE ROMA CAUSE LOWER PRICES OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES.

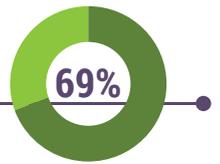


BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS AND COOPERATION BETWEEN ROMA ENTREPRENEURS



ROMA ENTREPRENEURS HAVE A LOW INVOLVEMENT IN BUSINESS ASSOCIATIONS.

ACCORDING TO THE RESULTS, 69% OF RESPONDENTS ARE NOT MEMBERS OF ANY BUSINESS ASSOCIATION.



- Roma entrepreneurs rarely establish contacts with organisations providing business development services.
- There is no association of Roma entrepreneurs in Serbia or any other entity that would advocate for improvement of conditions for their business, development of business skills or joint market approach.
- Roma entrepreneurs recognise **cooperatives as a suitable form of association for Roma entrepreneurs.**

ROMA ENTREPRENEURS MOST OFTEN COOPERATE WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND NGOs.

OF THE STATE INSTITUTIONS, ROMA ENTREPRENEURS MOST OFTEN COMMUNICATE WITH THE NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICE.

SUPPORT TO ROMA ENTREPRENEURSHIP DEVELOPMENT

THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL DONOR AND NATIONAL PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS SUPPORTING ROMA ENTREPRENEURSHIP.

- OSCE Mission to Serbia
- Help e. V.
- UNOPS
- European PROGRES
- National Employment Service
- Roma Inclusion Office



TRAININGS ARE MOST FREQUENT TYPE OF NON-FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE RECEIVED BY ROMA ENTREPRENEURS, MOSTLY FOR BUSINESS PLANNING, EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS REGISTRATION.

ACCORDING TO THE RESULTS, 36% OF RESPONDENTS USED NON-FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR ROMA ENTREPRENEURS MOSTLY INCLUDED BUSINESS START-UP AND EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE FOR MEMBERS OF ROMA COMMUNITY, AND FUNDS WERE MOST OFTEN ALLOCATED FOR PROCUREMENT OF EQUIPMENT AND MACHINERY.

MORE THAN 60% OF SURVEYED ROMA ENTREPRENEURS RECEIVED GRANTS.



THERE IS A LACK OF PROGRAMS PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO THE EXISTING ROMA ENTREPRENEURS.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF ROMA ENTREPRENEURSHIP:

- Develop a special program for economic empowerment of existing and potential Roma entrepreneurs.
- Support the development of local business support centres to provide non-financial business services to entrepreneurs from the Roma community.
- Support the establishment and capacity building of associations of Roma entrepreneur and encourage other types of associations (cooperatives, social enterprises, etc.).
- Support the transition of Roma entrepreneurs from informal to formal economy.
- Promote entrepreneurship among Roma men and women.
- Introduce a practice of analysing long-term effects of programs targeting Roma entrepreneurs.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH

OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

Between March and December 2016, Institute for Territorial Economic Development (InTER) and Yurom Centre conducted a research on "Roma Entrepreneurship: Challenges and Perspectives", aimed at providing an insight about the characteristics of Roma entrepreneurs, specific burdens for their business operations, and offering practical policy solutions. This research was implemented with support provided by the Open Society Institute Budapest Foundation.

SCOPE

- 100 registered entrepreneurs identified
- 45 registered Roma entrepreneurs surveyed in the territory of the Republic of Serbia
- Eight Roma entrepreneurs and 13 representatives of different institutions and organisations interviewed.

LIMITATIONS

It was not possible to determine the number of registered entrepreneurs in the Republic of Serbia from the Roma ethnic community, since the registration of entrepreneurs does not include taking record about their ethnicity. The lack of this information affected the definition of the sample size and identification of Roma entrepreneurs. However, in the interviews with Roma entrepreneurs and in panels, the findings related to the problems in their business operations have been confirmed.



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This research was realised with support provided by the Open Society Institute Budapest Foundation. Responsibility for the content lies entirely with the Institute for Territorial Economic Development (InTER) and YUROM Centre and it does not reflect the opinion of the Open Society Institute Foundation.