

RESEARCH RESULTS

The legal-social position and vulnerability of readmitted families and children who live in informal settlements in Belgrade

THE LEGAL-SOCIAL POSITION AND
VULNERABILITY OF READMITTED FAMILIES
AND CHILDREN WHO LIVE IN INFORMAL
SETTLEMENTS IN BELGRADE

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The **Center for Youth Integration** is a child centered community development organization based in Belgrade, Serbia, which works in consultation with the children and community members that it serves.

OUR MISSION is to contribute to building an inclusive society by providing assistance to street-involved child and children at risk of becoming street involved and their families.

Center for Youth Integration 2019

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Introduction

In 2018 the Centre for Youth Integration, in partnership with GIZ, undertook a household survey of families living in twenty-eight informal settlements located in Belgrade's ten inner city municipalities (municipalities of Cukarica, Novi Beograd, Palilula, Rakovica, Savski Venac, Stari Grad, Vozdovac, Vracar, Zemun, and Zvezdara).

The purpose of the survey was to identify socially excluded children that have been returned to Serbia under Readmission Agreement with the EU and assess their circumstances and needs as a basis for providing support to secure their social integration. Informal settlements are, by their nature, outside of the reach of most public services. Therefore, in order to provide integration support to returnee children living in informal settlements, it is necessary to actively reach-out to them.

As an added value, the opportunity was used to collect data about the circumstances of all children and their families living in the twenty-eight informal settlements in Belgrade in which CYI works. There has been severe lack of information about the number and circumstances of children (and their families) living in informal settlements in Belgrade. Available data was previously based on smaller samples, lacked sufficient detail and/or were out of date. The lack of accurate, up-to-date information about informal settlement populations has been serious barrier to planning and taking action to support the social inclusion of children and families living in them. Collecting accurate personalized data (rather than indicative data) is vital in order to plan and deliver support systematically to children and their families living in informal settlements.

Section 1

Key results of the research

Methodological Framework

The survey was undertaken in the period August-December 2018.

The survey covered 28 informal settlements located in Belgrade's ten inner-city municipalities (Cukarica, Novi Beograd, Palilula, Rakovica, Savski Venac, Stari Grad, Vozdovac, Vracar, Zemun, and Zvezdara). CYI works regularly with families in these settlements. In total 772 households were recorded. Of these, 564 households participated in the survey - the remaining 208 declined to participate.

Informal settlements covered by the survey: Ledine, Okretnica 75, Dr. Ivana Ribara, Bezanijska kosa, Jabucki rit, Vracar, Kijevo, Marije Bursac, Plavi horizonti, Tosin bunar, Zemun vojni put,

Vuka Vrcevic, Grmec, Kamendin, Mali Leskovac, Orlovsko naselje - barake, Orlovsko naselje - kontejneri, Orlovsko naselje - stanovi, Reva 2, Brace Jerkovic, Ustanicka ulica – okretnica tramvaja, Cukaricka suma, Cukaricka suma 2, Cukaricka padina, Vidikovac 1, Vidikovac 2, Zarkovo ispod mosta, Banjicka suma.

The survey was implemented in the form of a questionnaire with a scale of views. The questionnaire contained of two sections: The first part of the questionnaire targeted all households. The second part of the questionnaire specifically targeted children in families that have been returnee to Serbia under the Readmission Agreement with the EU.

The first section of the questionnaire was comprised of a total of 264 questions, including both open and closed questions. These questions were divided into eight groups:

- (1) **Basic data about household members** (number of household members, gender structure of the household, number of children);
- (2) **Legal status** (readmission process, status in the country from which they were readmitted, personal documentation, residence registration, rights to social protection and work insurance);
- (3) **Socio-demographic characteristics** (place of birth of household members, languages spoken, ethnicity, marital status and education of parent(s)/guardian(s) of children, working status, income, means of income generation);
- (4) **Key needs of the family** (food, clothing, hygiene, water, health care, school books, toys, translation, telephone, etc.);
- (5) **Educational status of children** (pre-school and school education, attainment, repetition of grades, drop-out and school leaving);
- (6) **Psychological and behavioral status of children** (psychosomatic problems, emotional-behavioral problems, street-involvement, discrimination violence, trauma and abuse of children);
- (7) **Health status of household members** (medical needs, chronic diseases, mental health, addiction, developmental difficulties of children, vaccination, early pregnancy, juvenile parenting);
- (8) **Housing conditions** (construction materials, access to electricity, water and sewage, humidity, heating, space, refuse disposal, etc.).

The second section of the questionnaire specifically targeted children from families that have been returned to Serbia under the Readmission Agreement with the EU. This section of the questionnaire was comprised of 22 questions (6 open and 16 closed). The purpose of this section of the survey was to understand returnee children's experiences, circumstances and needs, and challenges during the process of returning to Serbia. A sample of 34 children was selected, comprising 16 boys and 18 girls, aged 10 to 17 years. Interviews with children were conducted in the settlements where they live. Every child who participated in the interviews was asked if they would prefer to be accompanied by a trusted adult (parent, guardian, sibling or other family member), assured they did not have to answer questions if they chose, and were given the opportunity ask questions themselves, if they required clarification about the interview.

Basic data about household members

Average number of household members: **4.9**

12% of households have more than **eight** members: these large households need more support to ensure they can cope. Providing assistance to them should be a priority.



Children per household
(households with children)

Households with
one or two children

43.2%

Households with
three to five children

45.8%

Households have
six or more children

10.9%

Legal status of household members

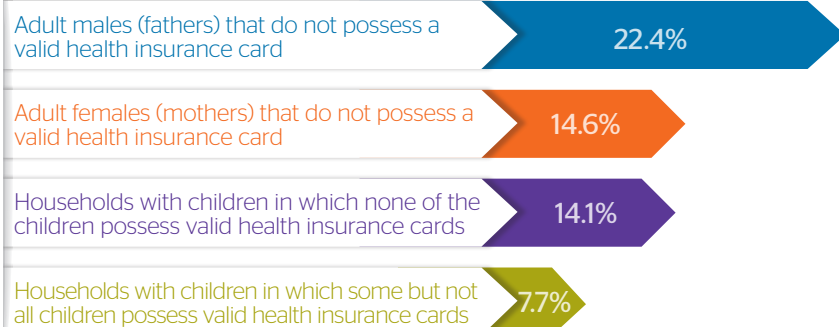
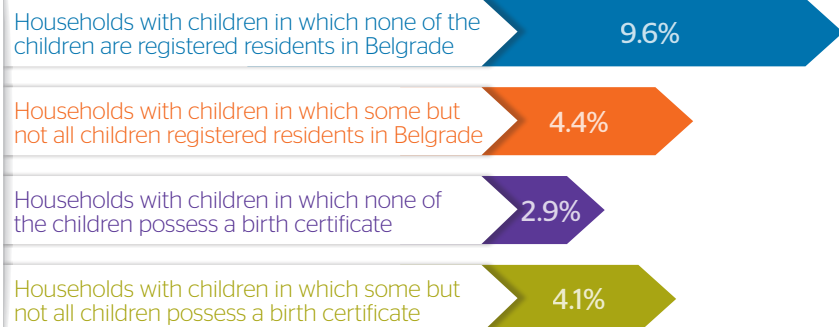
7.3% of adult males (fathers) and **5.5%** of female adults (mothers) report that they are not registered as residents in Serbia. A further **3.1%** of adult males (fathers) do not know if they are registered as residents in Serbia.

9.6% of adult males (fathers) and **6.1%** of female adults (mothers) report that they do not possess valid ID card. A further **3.3%** of adult males (fathers) do not know if they possess a valid ID card.

66.9% of adult males (fathers) and **64.7%** of female adults (mothers) report that they possess a valid passport.

4.6% of adult males (fathers) and **3.7%** of female adults (mothers) report that they possess a passport issued by a foreign country.

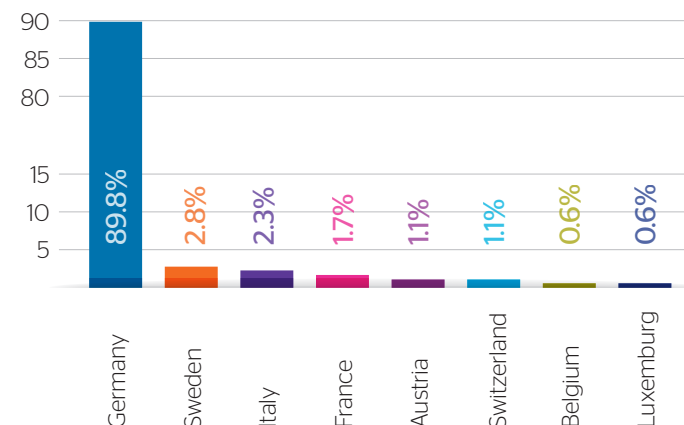
45% of adult males (fathers) and **36.6%** of female adults (mothers) report that they are not currently registered with the National Employment Service.



Legal status of returned during their residency in an EU country

31.9% of all households that participated in the survey were returned to Serbia under the Readmission Agreement (177 households in total).

Countries from which families were returned to Serbia under the Readmission Agreement with the EU	Families	Proportion
Germany	159	89.8%
Sweden	5	2.8%
Italy	4	2.3%
France	3	1.7%
Austria	2	1.1%
Switzerland	2	1.1%
Belgium	1	0.6%
Luxembourg	1	0.6%



*The **overwhelming majority** of readmitted households living in informal settlements in Belgrade were returned from **Germany** (159 households).*

94.4% of readmitted households report that they traveled to the EU legally; **5.6%** report that they travelled illegally.

10.6% of readmitted households report that they overstayed the legally allowed period in the EU country in which they were resident.

44.2% of readmitted households report that they resided in rented accommodation during their stay in an EU country; a further **44.2%** report that they resided in a camp; **3.9%** report that they stayed with family members; others resided in other forms of accommodation.

28% of readmitted households report that they were not informed by the local authorities in the EU country in which they resided that they would be returned to Serbia prior to being readmitted.

Most families report that they have been appropriately informed prior to being returned to Serbia; however, it is important for EU countries take special measures to ensure that all families -particularly those that are vulnerable or from marginalized groups- are given due notice prior to being returned and are supported through the process. Given the high proportion of returnee families among the informal settlement population, it is vital that every opportunity it taken to reduce the risk of severe social exclusion upon their return.

80.4% of readmitted households report that they did not experience unpleasant treatment by local authorities during their stay in an EU country; however, **19.6%** did report negative treatment by institutions in host EU countries.

Contact with the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia



It is vital that the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia makes special efforts to reach out to and support the most vulnerable families returned to Serbia under the Readmission Agreement. Given that such a large proportion of returnee families living in informal settlements have slipped through the Commissariat's net of support, significant improvements must clearly be made.

79.6% of adult males (fathers) in readmitted households report that they were unemployed while they resided in an EU country. **7.2%** report that they were occasionally legally employed and **4.6%** that they worked illegally.

91.5% of adult females (mothers) in readmitted households report that they were unemployed while they resided in an EU country. **4.2%** report that they were occasionally legally employed.

Fulfillment of rights to social protection and child welfare

41.9% of households benefit from social financial assistance.

49% of households receive a financial support for child.

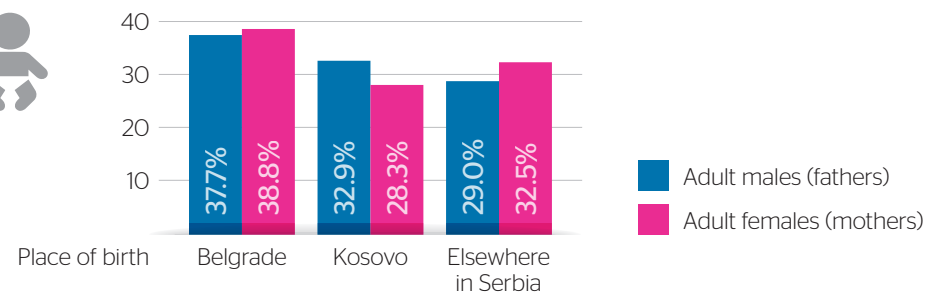
17.2% of households have received one-off financial support.

25.9% of households receive free meals.

14.2% of households use services provided by NGOs.

Social and demographic characteristics of households

57.4% of co-habiting adults share a common law marriage, **21.1%** are legally married, **6.8%** are divorced, **5%** are widows/widowers, **9.6%** of respondents are not in a partnership, and one household is a same-sex partnership.

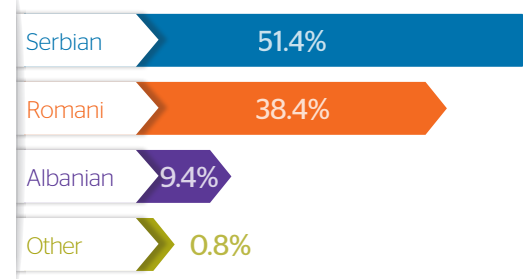


85% of children were born in Belgrade.

The large proportion of adults living in informal settlements in Belgrade that are IDPs from Kosovo highlights the numerous challenging circumstances that have led to families living in informal settlement.

Primary language spoken in the household

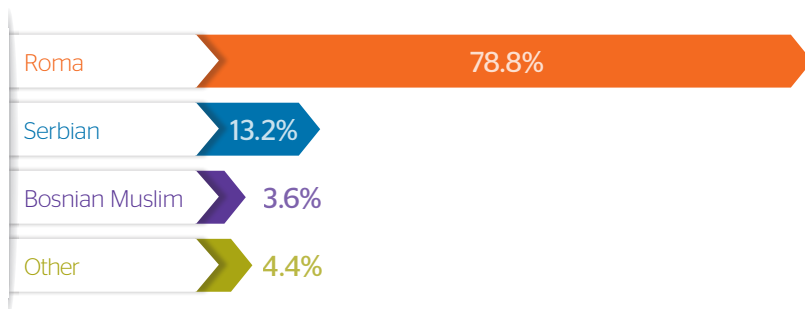
Percentage of households



Almost half of households do not speak Serbian as their primary language. Although most families (93.2%) report that their children speak Serbian well enough to (adequately) learn at school, lack of Serbian language skills at an early age can be a serious barrier to the social inclusion, particularly in education. Additional language support should be targeted at children that do not speak Serbian as their first language, in order to ensure they are able to learn on an equal footing with their peers.

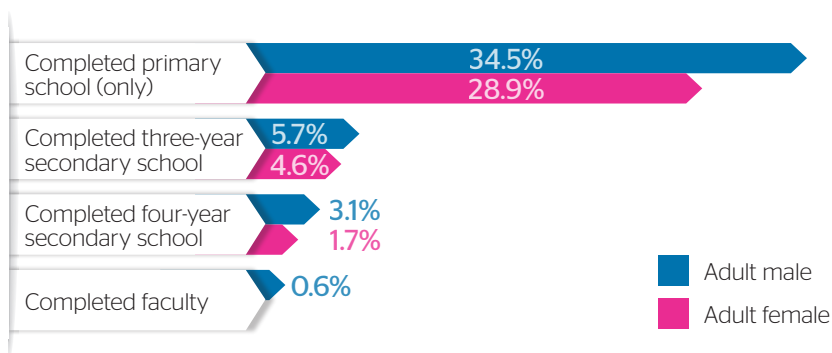
Household ethnic identity

Percentage of households



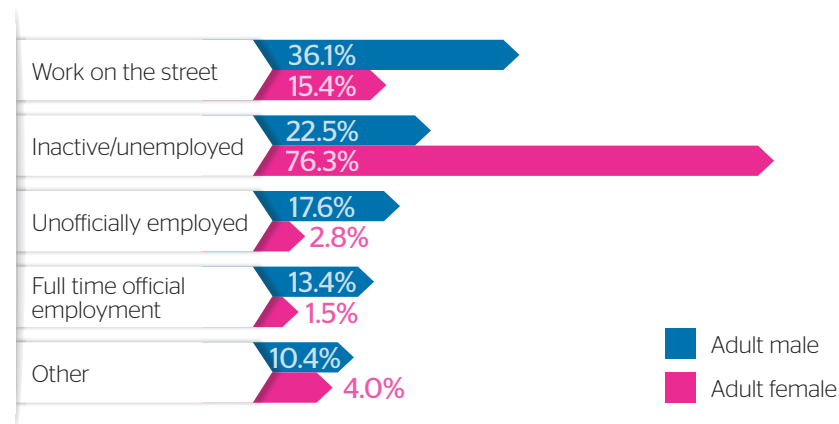
The overwhelming majority of families living in informal settlements identify as Roma. This is indicative of the uniquely marginalized position of the poorest Roma families in Serbia.

Education



Only a third of adult household members have completed primary school and only a fraction have completed secondary school. Lack of education is a serious barrier to gaining employment in the formal labour market and drives life-long exclusion and deprivation. It is vital to support the current generation of children living in informal settlements to fully benefit from education, in order to break the cycle of exclusion.

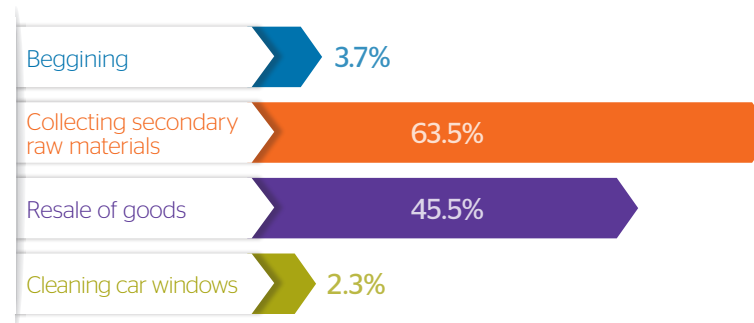
Work



A third of adult males and one in six adult females living in informal settlements in Belgrade work on the streets. Children whose parents work on the street are themselves at heightened risk of becoming street-involved. While working on the street is arduous for all, it is inherently dangerous for children. Assisting parents to find alternative forms of work/income is vital in order to break the cycle of street-involvement. Three-quarters of adult women are inactive/unemployed; the exclusion of women from work is also a serious problem that must be addressed in order to right gender roles and drive social inclusion and empowerment among women and girls.

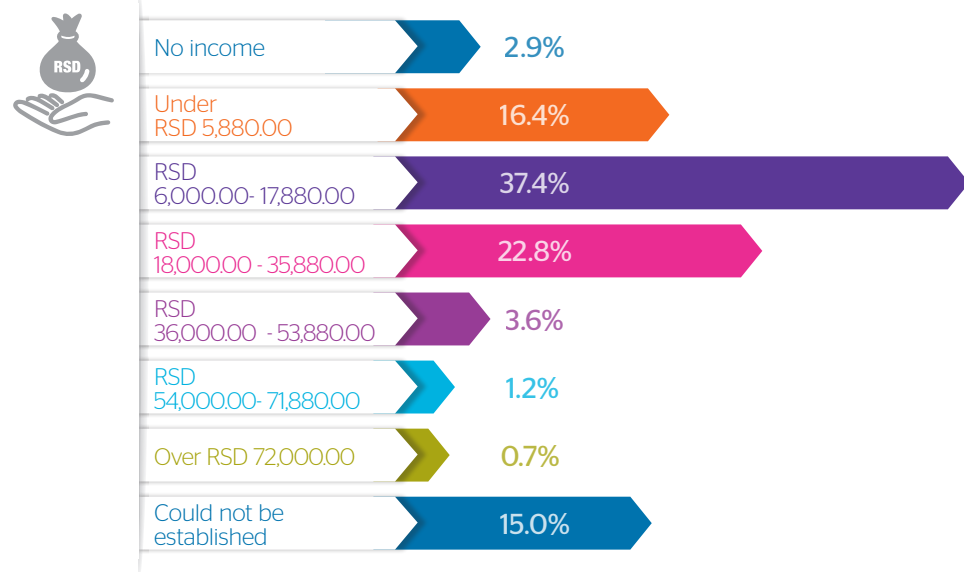
Sources of household income

Percentage of households



Almost two-thirds of households generate income from collection secondary raw materials (recycling - usually discarded household and industrial waste). This is arduous and poorly remunerated work that exposes the people involved to health risks, and is symptomatic of the exclusion from formal employment that most families living in informal settlements face.

Monthly household income (including financial assistance of any kind)



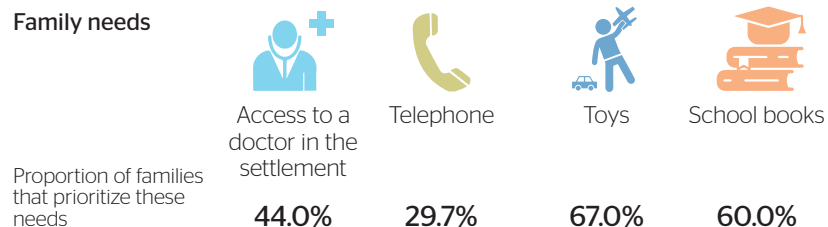
Only 5.5% of households have an income of more than 36,000 RSD per month. The overwhelming majority of households live in extreme material poverty.

Key family needs identified by respondents

Family needs



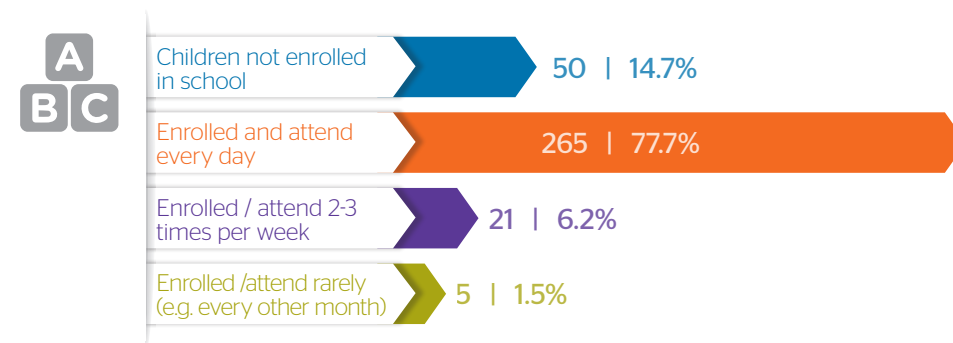
Family needs



Educational status of children

35.4% of households with children of pre-school-age report that their children are enrolled in pre-school.

School enrolment and attendance among children in households with children of school-age



30.2% of households report that at least one child has repeated at least one grade at school.

While a relatively high proportion of households report that their children regularly attend school, the significant proportion of children that have repeated at least one grade at school indicates that attendance is not enough; more must be done to support attainment, so that children can get the best out of the educational opportunities available to them.

In the previous school year, children in 56% of households are reported to have achieved good (3) grades, 18% achieved very good (4) grades, 11.5% achieved excellent (5) grades; 8.1% achieved a pass (4) grade, while 5.5% failed to achieve a passing (1) grade.

In 5.3% of households all children have permanently left school and in a further 13.1% of households some children have permanently left school. In 78.8% of households children attend school regularly.

Participation in education during residency in an EU country

59.1% of returnee households with children that were of pre-school-age during their residency in an EU country report that their children were enrolled in pre-school; 5.7% of returnee families report that some preschool-aged children were enrolled in pre-school and some were not.

68.5% of returnee households with children that were of school-age during their residency in an EU country report that their children were enrolled in school.

Strengthens and risks of children and their families

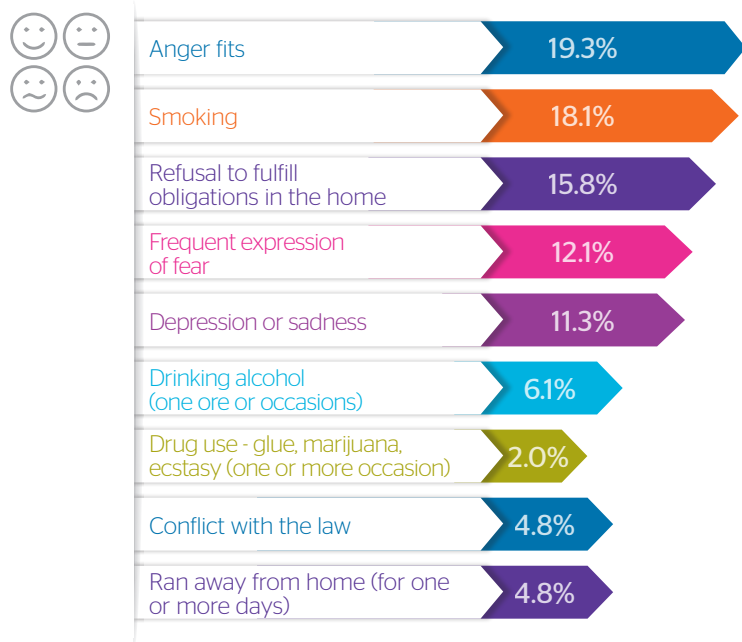
CHILDREN'S STRENGTHS: Parents-guardians report that their **children's strengths** include: their ability to **care** for other younger children and **help** others that are in trouble, **consideration** for the feelings of other people, willingness to **share** (food, toys, etc.) with other children, and to a lesser degree their willingness to **accept** other children and **focus** on their tasks.

FAMILIES' STRENGTHS: Parents-guardians report that their **families' strengths** are **togetherness** (88% of families – always; 11% of families – sometimes), their ability to **find information** necessary to exercise their rights (58.4% of families – always; 29.6% of families – sometimes), and to a lesser extent the **support** given by wider family and friends to **care for children** (35% of families – always; 29% of families – sometimes, 35% of families – never) and the **support** given by wider family in **times of need** (29% of families – always; 35% of families – sometimes, and 35% of families – never).

PROMINENT CHALLENGES FACED BY FAMILIES: 12% of households do not know how to exercise their rights. 5.6% of parents-guardians are not aware how their children spend free time outside the settlement. In 16% of households children are involved in work/income generation. In 10.5% of households one or more child wakes up in the night because of nightmares and that in 12.6% of households at least one child has bedwetting problems. In 13.8% of households one or more child stutters.

Parents-guardians assessment of children's emotional-behavioral problems

Proportion of households



Families are characterized by complex needs. To support these families to overcome the challenges they face it is necessary to take an individualized approach, recognize and build on their strengths and develop trusting relationships that can survive setbacks.

Work on the streets

29% of households report that children are engaged in the collection of secondary raw materials on the streets.

15.2% of households report that children are engaged in reselling goods on the streets or at markets.

5.2% of households report that children are engaged in begging on the streets.

2% of households report that children are engaged in washing car windows on the street.

A large proportion of children are engaged in work on the streets. Street-involvement puts children's health, wellbeing and futures at risk. Street-involvement is extremely rare in Belgrade among children from other backgrounds: only among children that live in informal settlements are commonly engaged in work on the streets.

Discrimination, violence, trauma and abuse against children

22.3% of households report that children have been insulted due to their ethnicity or place of residence by other children outside the settlement (in school, in public transport, on the street, etc.).

6.1% of households report that children have been insulted due to their ethnicity or place of residence by teachers in school.

13.3% of households report that children have been the victim of physical violence by other children in the past three years.

2.3% of households report that children have experienced sexual provocation, attempted abuse or assault by other people.

In 14.2% of households children have experienced abandonment by their father; in 7.2% of households children have been abandoned by their mother; and in 2.5% of households children have been abandoned by both parents.

In 6.6% of households the father has been imprisoned.

In 4.2% of households children have experienced the death of their father and in 1.1% of households the death of their mother.

Health status

9.9% of households report that one or more **children require medical treatment that the family cannot afford**; **24.4%** of adult males (fathers) and **28.2%** of adult females (mothers) also report that they require medical treatment that they cannot afford.

9.8% of households report that one or more children suffer from **chronic diseases**; **27.6%** of adult males (fathers) and **32.5%** of adult females (mothers) report that they suffer from one or more chronic disease.

1.3% of households report that one or more children have been diagnosed with a **mental health problem**; **5.7%** of adult males (fathers) and **10.7%** of adult females (mothers) report that they have been diagnosed with a mental health problem.

3% of adult males (fathers) and **2%** of mothers have been treated for alcoholism.

10.4% of households report that one or more child suffers from **blindness or poor eyesight**; **7.8%** that one or more child is **deaf or hard-of-hearing**; **5.3%** that one or more child possess **developmental difficulties** and **2.7%** that one or more children possess **physical disabilities**.

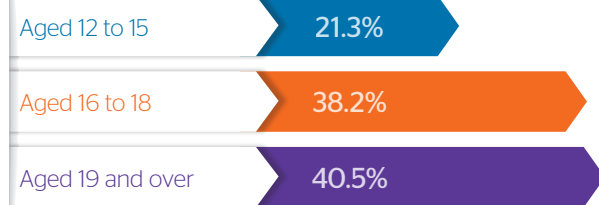
4.4% of households report that children have not been **vaccinated** against infectious diseases and **6.4%** of households report that some of the children have been vaccinated and some have not.

60% of mothers **gave birth** for the first time aged 18 or under. **14.3%** of households report that a resident **juvenile is a parent**.

First Pregnancy



Proportion of Mothers



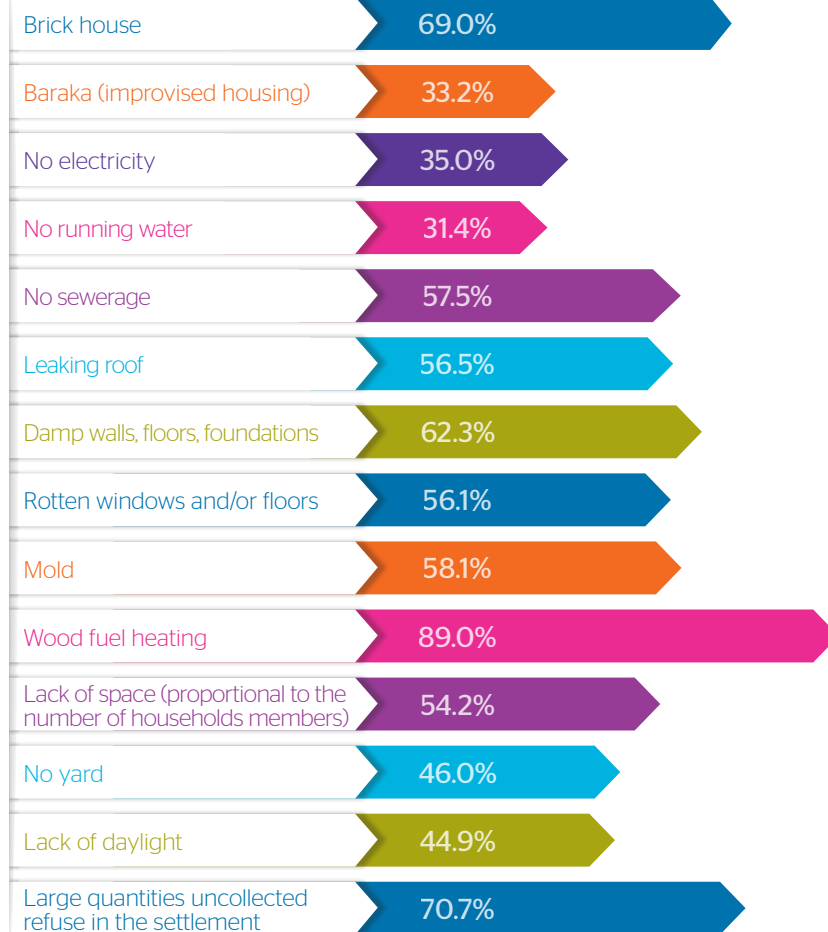
Juvenile pregnancy is a serious risk to a girl's health. Globally, pregnancy related deaths are the leading cause of mortality among girls aged 15-19. Girls with children are also usually excluded from education and work, driving social isolation and exclusion of this already vulnerable group. It is vital that comprehensive action is taken to encourage and support girls, their partners and families to delay pregnancy until they are fully physically developed and psychologically ready to have children.

Housing conditions

Living conditions



Proportion of households



Living conditions in informal settlements in Belgrade are in many cases extremely poor. The most serious problems are the unhygienic conditions in settlements, particularly the large amounts of undisposed of refuse in many settlements and the lack of sewerage, the lack of electricity in many homes and the poor and unhealthy condition of housing, particular for those families living in improvised housing (Baraka), including leaking roofs, damp, mold and lack of daylight.

Children's experience of readmission

How did the children feel during the traveureturn to Serbia?

- > Regret that they are returning to Serbia.
- > Looking forward to returning because they are better off in Serbia:
"I want to live in my house. I love my country."
- > The return went smoothly.
- > Ambivalent feelings - a mix of happiness and sadness: happiness to see their wider family in Serbia; sadness because they left a society and culture that they had adapted to and because of the poor living conditions in settlements that they were returning to in Serbia.
"I was happy about the return but also sad because it is dirty in the settlement."
- > Feeling of sadness:
"I did not feel well, I cried and I did not want to go back. I felt like my heart had broken. I was sad because the decision to return was sudden."
- > Uncertainty, fear and concern:
"I did not know what was waiting for me when I came back"

Do children miss something about the country they have come from?

- > Social environment - school, relatives, siblings, friends, teachers:
"Everything was better there."
- > Means for meeting basic needs - food, home equipment, etc.:
"I lack school stuff, phone and clothes."
- > Material goods: apartment, house, bicycle, phone:
"The house there was much better"
- > Better living conditions, which were a motivation for education.

What was their greatest concern after they returned to Serbia?

- > Some were not worried.
"I couldn't wait to come. My parents made me feel secure."
- > Concern about continuing their education.
- > Concern about separation from their mother.

- > Concern about money, the housing situation and poorer living conditions than abroad.
- > Concern for parents' health and poor medical care.
- > Concern about adapting to society and culture in Serbia (getting to know new friends, new school and Serbian language).
- > Concern about safety.

What is their greatest wish, what would make their life better and easier in Serbia?

- > Better living conditions - a new home and your own room:
"My greatest wish is that we have a house and that we all live together."
- > Things for everyday life (bike, phone, etc).
- > Changing their place of residence because of feelings fear and insecurity.
- > Completion of education and getting a job.
"I wish I had better grades at school. I would like to become a football player so I can to help my family."
- > Money and other material values.
- > Improving the health of their closest family members.
- > Better social care.

When were they the happiest in their life?

- > When they lived abroad.
"When I was at school in Germany - nobody insulted me there, nobody called me gypsy."
- > When they were with their friends.
- > When they go on an excursion (to the seaside or to other cities).
- > During emotional events (the birth of a baby in the family, being in love).
- > When they get gifts (toys).
- > During family events (when the family is together, weddings, etc.).

Relationships with others (answers of the readmitted children)

	Yes	No	Sometimes	Not sure
Do you feel safe in school you are attending in Serbia?	82.8	3.4	3.4	10.3
Do you feel safe/secure in the country you have returned from?	94.1	5.9	-	-
Do you feel safe in your neighborhood?	58.8	20.6	8.8	11.8
Have you been afraid of other children in school since you returned?	3.2	83.9	12.9	-
Did you fear other children in the country you have returned from?	2.9	91.2	5.9	-
Have other children or adults behaved badly towards you since you have returned to Serbia?	17.6	73.5	5.9	2.9
Did other children or adults behave badly to you while in other country?	5.9	94.1	-	-
Did you feel happy before you returned to Serbia?	97.1	2.9	-	-
Do you feel happy here?	55.9	14.7	23.5	5.9
Are you satisfied with the way teachers behave towards you, help you to understand the curriculum and transfer knowledge? (for children that attend school)	80	10	6.7	3.3
Has an adult in your neighborhood behaved badly towards you?	8.8	85.3	2.9	2.9
Have other children (in Serbia) in your neighborhood or outside ever ridiculed, taunted or threatened you?	29.4	50	20.6	-
Have other children (in Serbia) in your neighborhood or outside ever been physically violent to you?	14.7	67.6	17.6	-

Children felt very safe and happy in the EU country from which they were returned to Serbia, and rarely experienced fear and insecurity.

In Serbia, one in five children does not feel safe in their neighborhood and one in six children has experienced negative behavior towards them from other people in their neighborhood. Children are less satisfied with their situation and less happy than during the period they lived abroad.

One in five children states that they have been dissatisfied with the behavior of a teacher towards them and/or how are teach.

Almost one-third of children report that they frequently experience mistreated from other children (threats, mockery, etc.); one in five children state that they occasionally experience mistreatment.

One third of children have experienced physical violence, often or occasionally, from other children in the settlement or outside the community.

Recommendations

- ✓ The high social vulnerability of inhabitants of informal settlements requires a range of integrated social protection, housing, health, education, labor and cultural policies.
- ✓ It is necessary to improve the living conditions of people living in informal settlements, above all by improving housing conditions and communal infrastructure.
- ✓ Household members who do not have the necessary documents (residence registration, ID card, health insurance card, NES registration) must be assisted to apply for them.
- ✓ Support should be provided to residents of informal settlements by institutions and NGOs in order to better access social care and child care services in accordance with their rights.
- ✓ Educational support should be provided to those children who do not speak Serbian proficiently.
- ✓ Professional training and work-based empowerment mechanisms should be developed in order to prevent street-involvement of families (collecting secondary raw materials, reselling good on the street and at market, etc.).
- ✓ More humanitarian assistance for the inhabitants of informal settlement should be provided, particularly for nutrition, clothing, hygiene and provision of educational and school materials.
- ✓ Children from informal settlements must be actively included in kindergarten and pre-school programmes.
- ✓ Programmes should be developed to prevent early school leaving.
- ✓ Assistance should be provided to improve education outcomes through provision of tailored educational and pedagogical support to children.
- ✓ All empowerment, prevention and intervention programmes should build on the identified strengths and resources of children and families.
- ✓ Special education support and speech therapy should be provided to children with psychosomatic problems.

- ✓ Prevention programmes should be developed to support children and families with cigarette, alcohol and drug addiction.
- ✓ Community-based services to support people with mental health problems should be developed.
- ✓ Comprehensive action must be taken to prevent street-involvement among children.
- ✓ Action must be taken to prevention of discriminatory practices against children living in informal settlements.
- ✓ Psychosocial support should be provided by social protection institutions for children living in single parent families.
- ✓ Roma medical mediators should be engaged.
- ✓ Coordinated action should be taken by health, education and social protection services to prevent juvenile pregnancy.
- ✓ Special educational support should be provided for children with sensorimotor and developmental difficulties and action taken to strengthen their social inclusion.
- ✓ Psychosocial and educational programmes must be developed to empower and integrate the readmitted children.

Section 2

Analysis of key indicators of social inclusion among returnee children living in informal settlements in Belgrade

The Centre for Youth Integration (CYI), in partnership with GLZ, is providing support to socially excluded children returned to Serbia under the Readmission Agreement with the EU that live in informal settlements in Belgrade.

Building on the data collected through the household survey, CYI has collected additional actionable data on four **key indicators of socially inclusion** among returnee children living in informal settlements in Belgrade.

The four indicators are (1) access to education (verified by enrollment in school), (2) access to health care (verified by possession of a valid health insurance card), (3) access to social welfare support (verified by registration at the relevant local Centre for Social Work) and (4) street-involvement (verified by observation of the child working on the street and/or confirmation from the child and/or family).

This data has been collected by CYI's outreach workers in the field and is based on an assessment of each family's circumstances; some of this data does not fully align with the data collected through the household survey.

Data collected about these indicators has provided a basis for CYI to provide psychosocial support to returnee children living in informal settlements, aiming at enabling excluded returnee children to access education, health care and social protection, and to prevent street-involvement.

All children should, at a minimum, be able to access education and health care. It is the responsibility of schools and health centers and related specialized services to ensure children are provided inclusive, high quality education and health care, respectively. All children living in informal settlements -due to their material circumstances and informal living conditions- should be supported by the Centers for Social Work, in the form of social financial aid and/or individualized psycho-social support, as well as, where appropriate, other specialized services. Children that are not enrolled in schools or in possession health insurance should be supported by local Centers for Social Work to access these basic services in accordance with their rights.

No child should be street-involved: it harms children's development, health and wellbeing and puts them at risk of violence, abuse and exploitation. Children become street-involved in almost cases due to extreme poverty, and in some cases due to exploitation. In either case, street-involvement is a clear indicator that children need support; in most cases, their families need

support, too. Due to their circumstances and needs, street-involved children usually require highly specialized, flexible and long-term support.

Data on access to education, health care and social protection among returnee children living in informal settlements in Belgrade

Returnee children - informal settlements Belgrade

% of ALL returnee children inc. EHS services

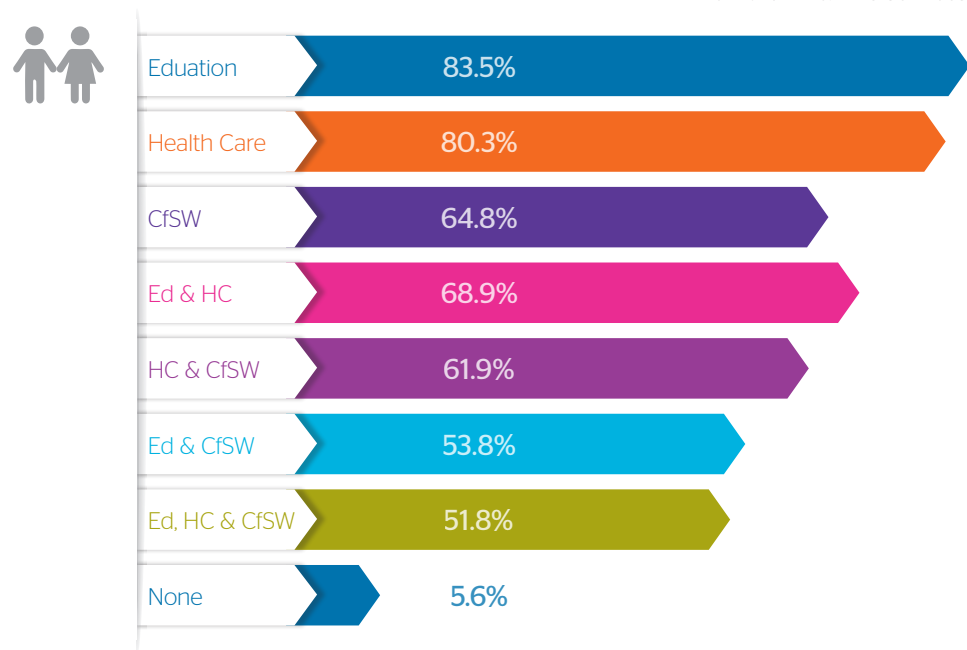


Figure 1 Proportion of Returnee children living informal settlements in Belgrade with health insurance cards, connected to CfSW and attending school

The survey identified 483 returnee children living in 28 settlements in Belgrade's ten inner-city municipalities.

Most of returnee children are currently enrolled in school (83.5%) and possess health insurance cards (80.3%).

It should be noted that all children are able to access health care in an emergency, irrespective of whether they possess health insurance. However, possession of health insurance is indicative of the coverage of health care, which *figure 1, above*, shows is not complete.

The survey indicates that only two-thirds (64.8%) of returnee children living in informal settlements are registered with a municipal center for social work (CfSW). Due to their material and

social circumstances, there is a strong case to argue that all children (returnee or otherwise) living in informal settlements should be provided social welfare support.

Most (81%) returnee children living in informal settlements are reached by / included in multiple services (education and health care / education and CfSW / health care and CfSW), and only 6% are not reached by any of these services. However, it is nonetheless concerning that only half (51.8%) of children are reached by / included in all three of these key services (education, health care and social protection) – see *figure 1, above*.

School enrolment

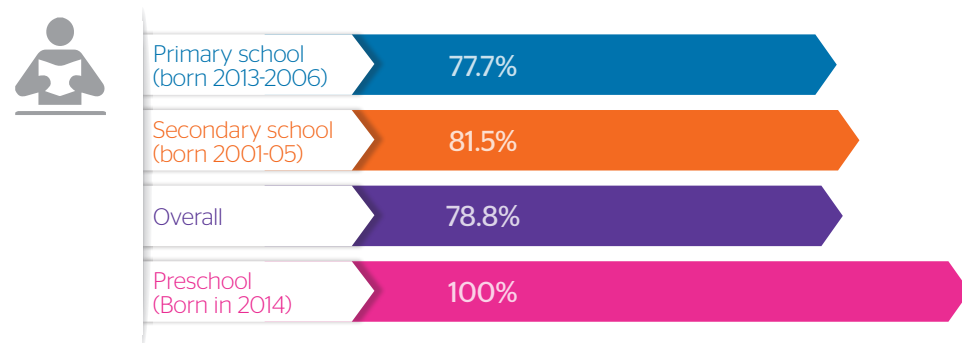


Figure 2 Proportion of children living in informal settlements attending school by age group

School enrolment among returnee children living in informal settlements in Belgrade is relatively high (80.9%), but nonetheless significantly lower than among the general population in Serbia – see *figure 2*. It is important to highlight that these figures are based on reported enrolment in school rather than confirmed attendance.

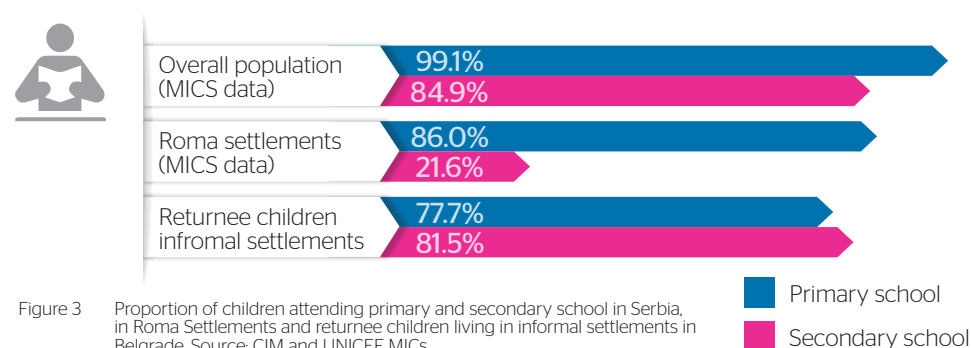


Figure 3 Proportion of children attending primary and secondary school in Serbia, in Roma Settlements and returnee children living in informal settlements in Belgrade. Source: CIM and UNICEF MICS.

The gap in overall participation in education between returnee children living in informal settlements in Belgrade and the general population is, however, smaller than between the general population and Roma settlements nationally (according to UNICEF's MICS data – see *figure 3*).

It is noteworthy that the proportion of returnee children living in informal settlements in Belgrade that are enrolled in education is lower than among children from Roma settlements nationally at a primary school age (78% compared to 86%) but *far higher* at a secondary school age (82% compared to 22%) – as shown in *figure 3*, above.

This situation suggests that while older returnee children are being successfully included in the education system, the readmission process has had a particularly disruptive impact on younger children's participation in education. Given that primary school education in Serbia is compulsory, more must be done by schools and other relevant institutions, including the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia, and their partners in countries from which families are returning, to ensure younger returnee children enroll in school upon their return to Serbia.

The data highlights the **important role played by CfSW** in securing returnee children's access to other services. Most returnee children living in informal settlements in Belgrade that are supported by centers for social work are also able to access education and health care, as shown in *figure 4*, below: less than 10% of children registered with a center for social work are not enrolled in school and less than 3% do not possess a health insurance card. Conversely, the vast majority (85.3%) of children that do not possess health insurance and nearly half (39.7%) of children that are not enrolled in school are NOT supported by a center for social work. 15.9% of children that are not supported by a CfSW are not enrolled in school and do not possess health insurance.

Role of CfSW in facilitating access to other services

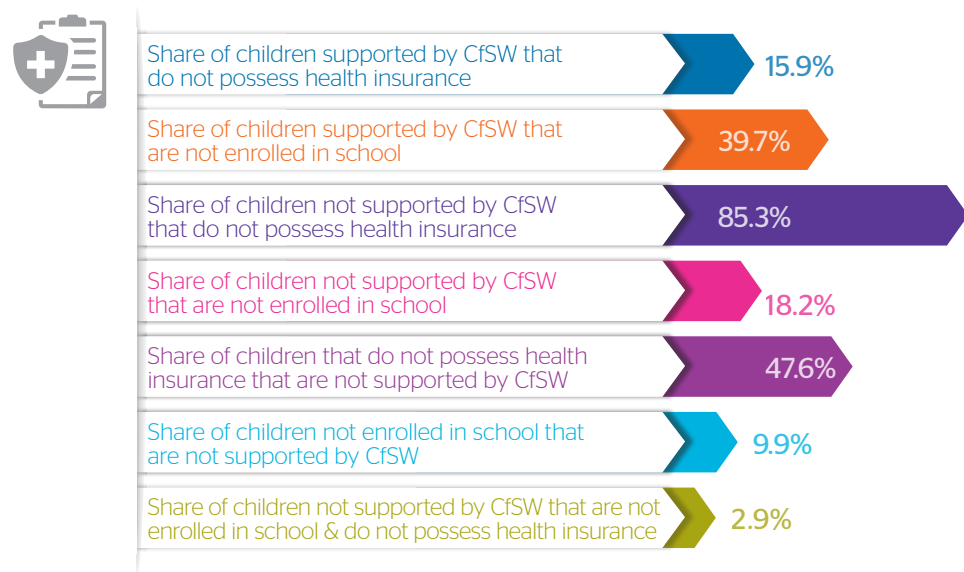


Figure 4 Role of Centers for Social Work in facilitating access to education and health care among returnee children living in informal settlements in Belgrade.

While the data indicate that CfSW play an important role of connecting vulnerable children with other services when they do reach them, it is concerning that many children that clearly need such support are NOT reached by social protection services: Among returnee children living in informal settlements in Belgrade that are NOT supported by the CfSW, one in five (18.2) are not enrolled in school and half (47.6%) do not possess health insurance. These children clearly should be receiving support from the CfSW.

In this regard, the data tells a story of the success and failure of social protection in Belgrade: when returnee children living in informal settlements in Belgrade are provided support by CfSW, they highly likely to benefit from at least formal inclusion (enrollment in school and possession of health insurance); when they are not provided such support, they are overwhelmingly likely not to possess health insurance and significantly likely not to be enrolled in education. To further illustrate this point; returnee children living in informal settlements in Belgrade that are not supported by the CfSW are nearly twice as likely not to be enrolled in school as those who are not supported by the CfSW and sixteen times more likely to not to possess health insurance.

While this data highlights that CfSW must do more to reach all returnee children living in informal settlements in Belgrade, given the evident limited coverage of social protection services it is vital that when education and health care services do reach vulnerable children living in informal settlements they refer them to social protection services and take measures to actively contribute to securing their social inclusion. The fact that most children are reached by at least one service but in many cases not by others indicates that such communication and coordination between institutions is not, at present, being implemented effectively.

Data on access to education, health care and social protection among street-involved returnee children living in informal settlements in Belgrade

One in five (98 of 487) of the returnee children documented in the survey are street-involved – see *figure 5*, below.

Returnee children living in informal settlements in Belgrade

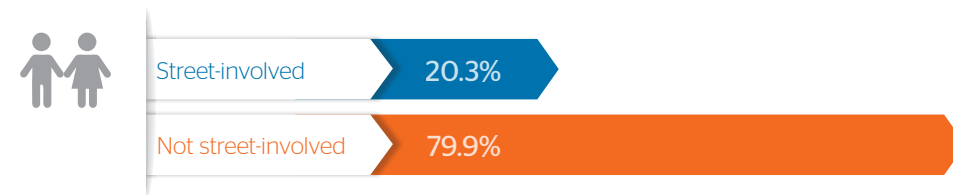


Figure 5 Street-involved returnee children living in informal settlements in Belgrade

Street-involved returnee children are significantly more excluded than non-street-involved returnee children. Every indicator shows that the proportion of street-involved children benefiting from inclusion is lower than the proportion of non-street-involved children, as shown by *figure 6*, below.

The gap in possession of health insurance between street-involved children and non-street-involved returnee children is particularly large.

It is concerning that a smaller proportion of street-involved children (57.1%) are registered with the CfSW than non-street-involved (66.8%), further highlighting the limited capacity of CfSW to reach those children that are most in need of support.

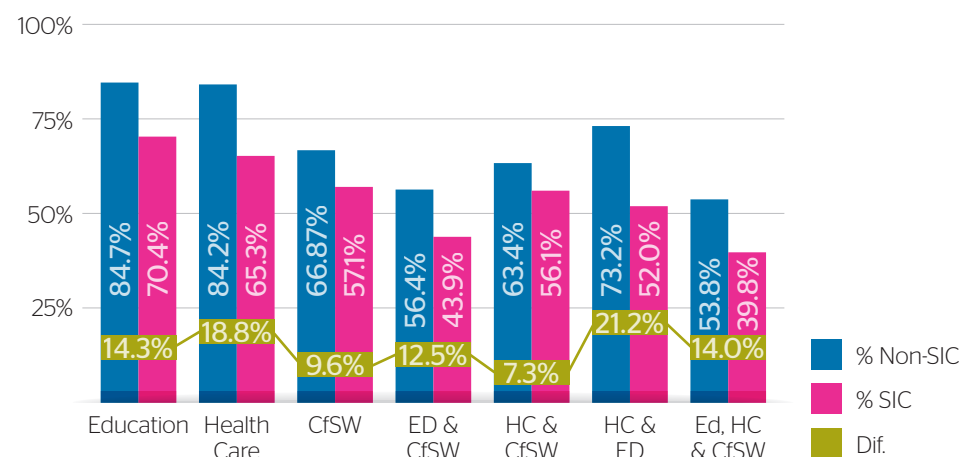


Figure 6 Proportion of street-involved and non-street-involved returnee children living informal settlements in Belgrade with health insurance cards, connected to CfSW and attending school.

Fewer than four in ten street-involved children are connected to education, health care and social protection services.

Two-thirds (64.3%) of street-involved children are reached by multiple services (education and health care / education and CfSW / health care and CfSW) – a quarter fewer than non-street-involved children (83.9%). One in six (15.3%) of street-involved children cannot access any of these services – a rate five times higher than among non-street-involved (3.1%), as shown in *figure 8*, below.

The rate of enrolment in school among street-involved returnee children living in informal settlements in Belgrade (69.9%) is significantly lower than among non-street-involved children (84.6%), as shown in *figure 7*, below – highlighting that street-involvement drives exclusion and denies children a normal childhood.

However, the proportion of street-involved children that are enrolled in school is, nonetheless, relatively high, indicating that enrolment in school does not, in itself, prevent children from being street-involved.

This is an important insight that further demonstrates that street-involved children require specialized support to facilitate their social inclusion and prevent street-involvement.

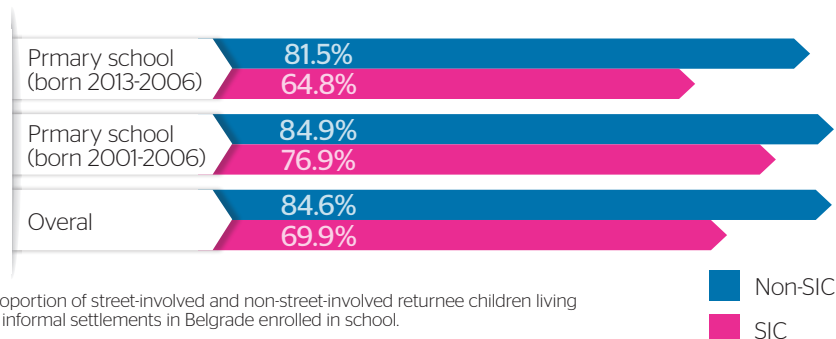


Figure 7 Proportion of street-involved and non-street-involved returnee children living in informal settlements in Belgrade enrolled in school.

Figure 8, below, highlights a **large gap** in inclusion between street-involved children that are reached by the CfSW and those that are not. Slightly more than one in ten (13.3%) street-involved returnee children supported by the center for social work are not enrolled in school; however, almost all (97.1% – i.e. 33 of 34) street-involved returnee children that are not enrolled in school are not supported by the center for social work. This situation may be explained by the fact that children must attend school in order for families to access social financial aid. Nonetheless the link between enrolment in school of street-involved children –an important aspect

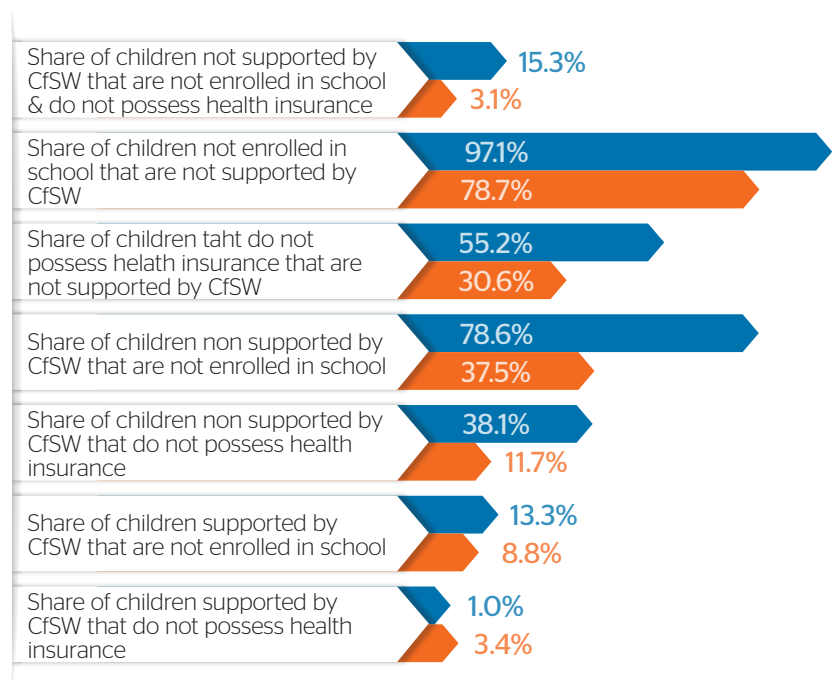


Figure 8 Role of Centers for Social Work in facilitating access to education and health care among children living in informal settlements in Belgrade.

of securing their long-term social inclusion- and the provision support by the center for social work is clear. A similar but less pronounced gap exists in relation to the provision of support by the center for social work and possession of health insurance.

This situation serves to further emphasize that action must be taken to strengthen the capacity of centers for social work in Belgrade and other specialized services so that they are able to effectively reach the most vulnerable and excluded children. The number of children in these extremely excluded circumstances is relatively small, as shown below. There is no excuse not to provide them the support they need to enroll in school and access health care.



RETURNEE CHILDREN

194 - street-involved, not enrolled in school

143 - not enrolled in school and/or do not possess health insurance

78 - not enrolled in school

95 - do not possess health insurance

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