

Key Findings

from a Nationally Representative
Survey of Roma Communities
in Bulgaria



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Why the study matters to us

Over the past decade, significant investments have been made to increase access to education and educational attainment for marginalized groups in Bulgaria. At the same time, up-to-date information on educational outcomes is lacking. This is why the Trust for Social Achievement (TSA) commissioned a nationally representative study to determine the current educational and employment status among Roma communities in Bulgaria.

With these findings, TSA hopes to provide the most up-to-date information on the current status of Roma communities across Bulgaria. This information will help inform the work of non-governmental organizations and public entities in the fields of education and employment.

The following are highlights from the study. These results show a significant change in the current situation of the Roma community in Bulgaria in terms of household income, employment, educational attainment, school attendance and educational aspirations.

Emerging Labor Market Challenges

Bulgaria's working age population is in decline, with the UN predicting that **the labor supply will decrease by 40% by 2050**. Compounding this problem, Bulgaria also faces the possibility that a growing share of adults will be ill-equipped for future employment, lacking the skills and education necessary to successfully enter the labor market.

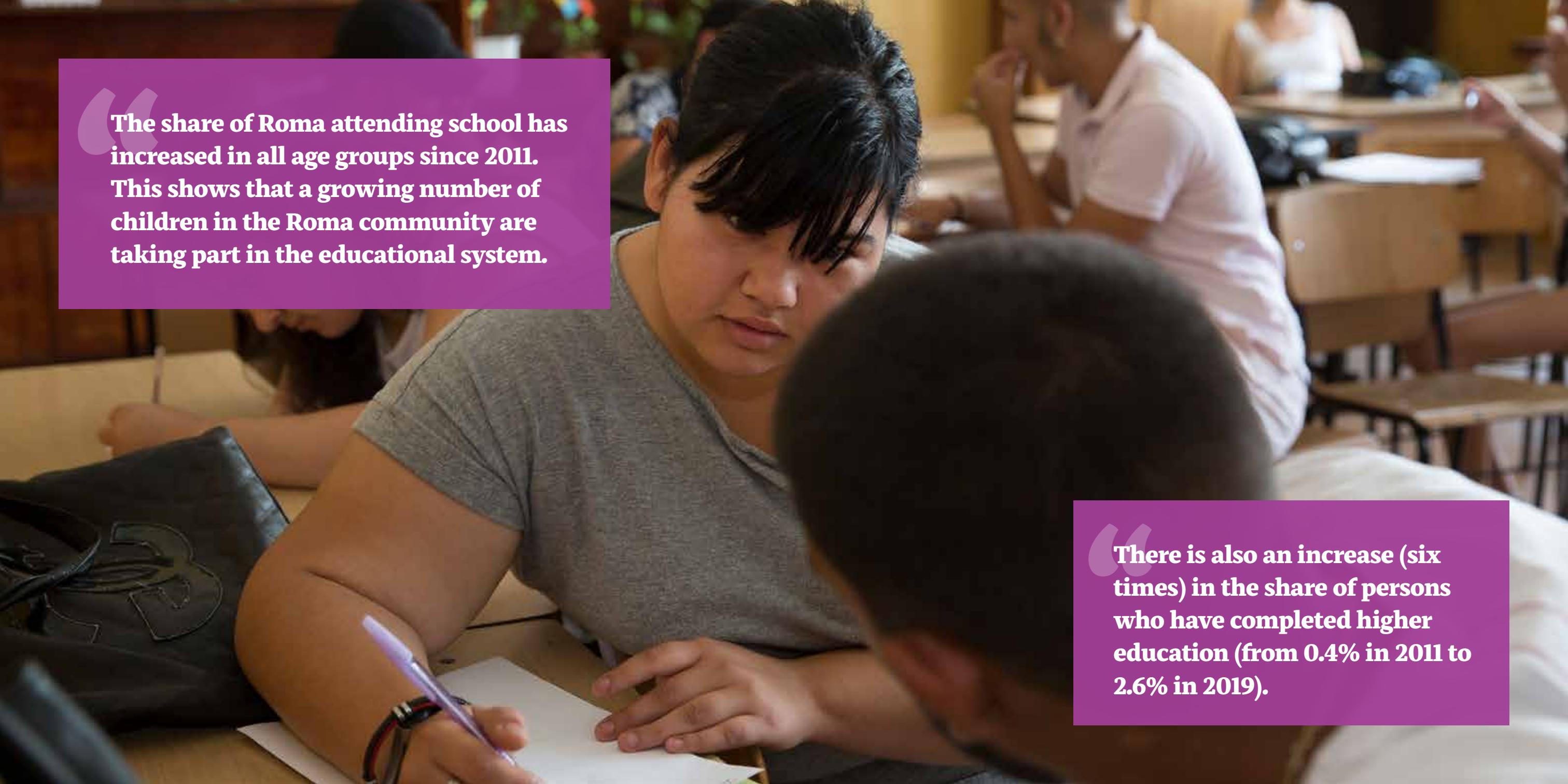
40%

23%

At present, **23% of new entrants into Bulgaria's labor force are Roma.**

1%

The most recent data from 2011 pointed toward significant gaps in Roma educational outcomes, with just over a third of Bulgaria's Roma finishing junior secondary school, 13.5% completing secondary school and **less than 1% completing higher education.**



“The share of Roma attending school has increased in all age groups since 2011. This shows that a growing number of children in the Roma community are taking part in the educational system.”

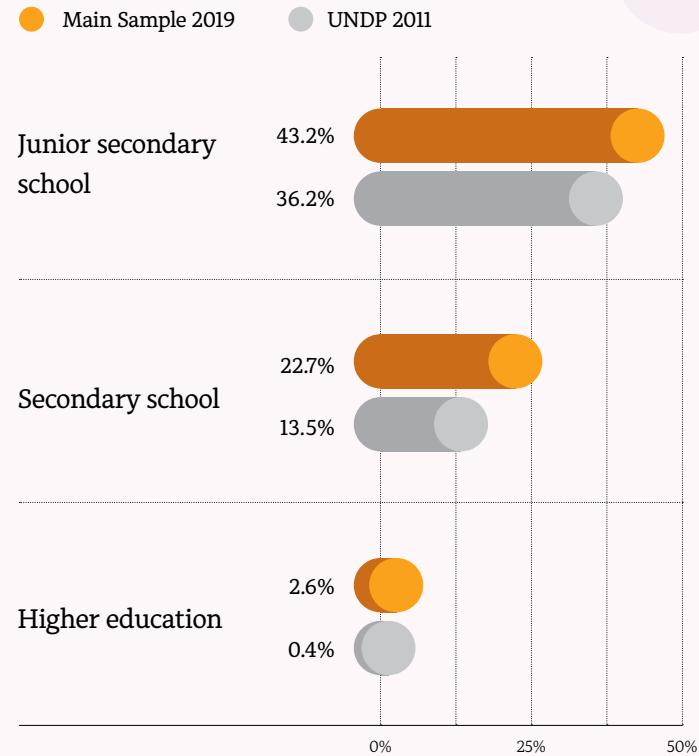
“There is also an increase (six times) in the share of persons who have completed higher education (from 0.4% in 2011 to 2.6% in 2019).”



School Attainment

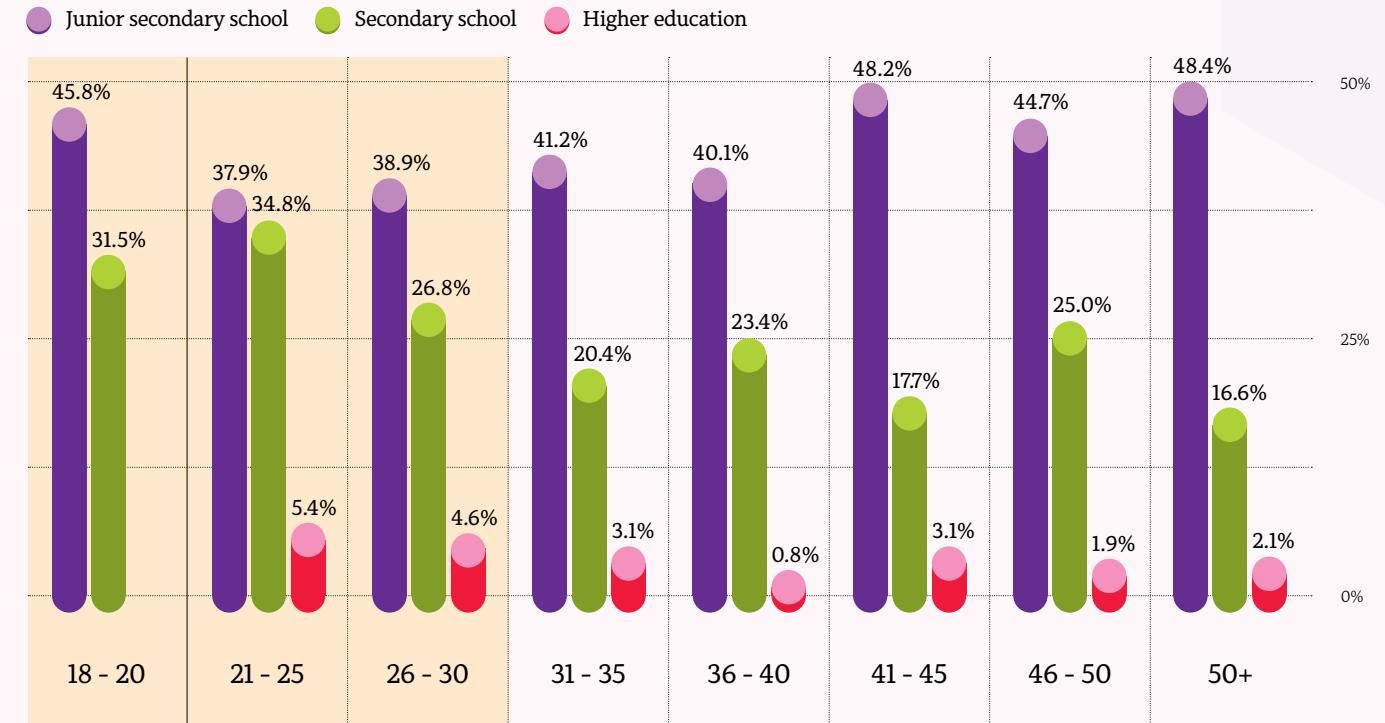


Highest level of education completed



The educational attainment of Bulgaria's Roma is improving over time, with younger generations showing the greatest achievements.

Highest level of education completed by age group (2019)





Educational Aspirations

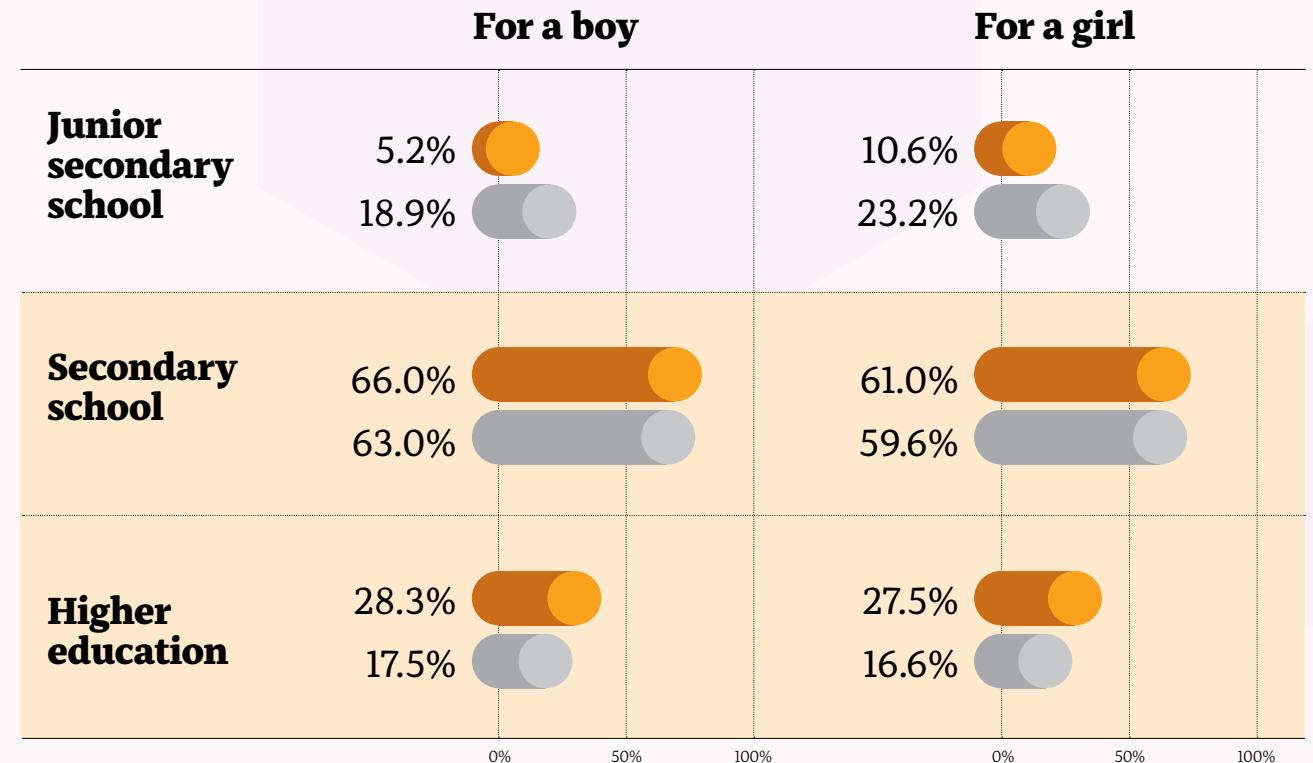
Over the past decade, aspirations inside the Roma community for children to pursue a secondary or higher education have significantly increased.

A growing share of Roma believe that it is good for Roma youth to stay as long as possible in education, with the greatest number citing secondary school, followed by higher education.



Attitudes towards completing each stage of education (“Which level do you consider sufficient?”)

● Main Sample 2019 ● UNDP 2011





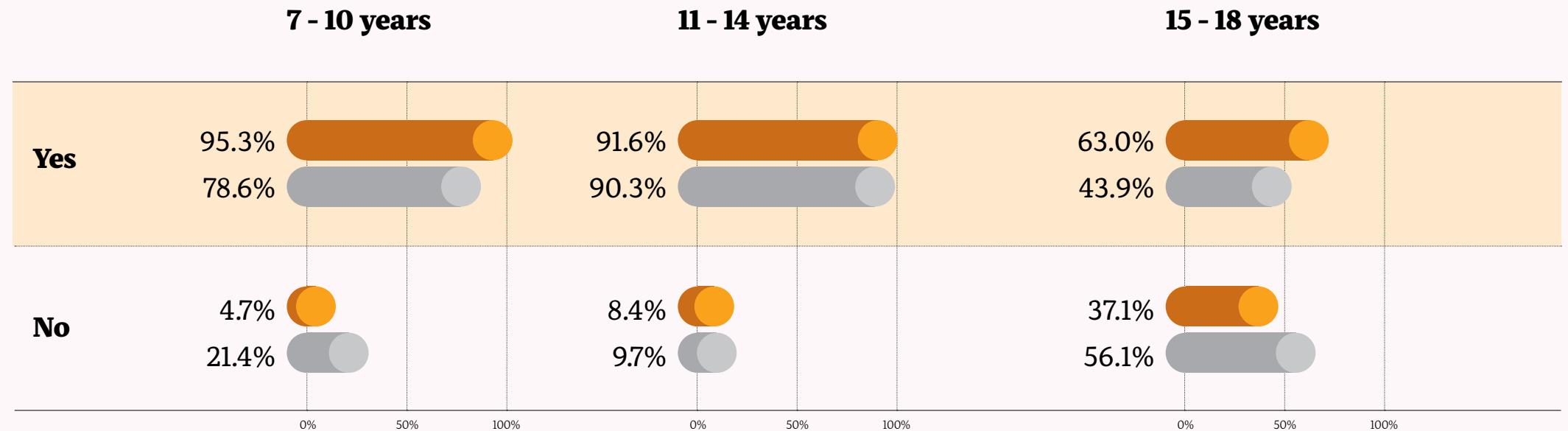
School Attendance

The share of Roma students attending school has increased in all age groups since 2011. This shows that a growing number of children in the Roma community are taking part in the educational system.



School attendance by age group

● Main Sample 2019 ● UNDP 2011





“The share of Roma graduating from higher education is two times greater among students that have attended kindergarten.”



Kindergarten Attendance

and its influence on life outcomes



Kindergarten attendance increases the chances of completing higher education by about 35%.



The employment rate among people who have attended kindergarten is 40% higher, and their income is 30% higher than among those who have not.



The probability of completing secondary education is only 15% for those who have not attended kindergarten. For those attending kindergarten, the chance of completing secondary education ranges from 29% for those with one year of attendance to 39% for those who have attended kindergarten for four years.



The share of graduates of higher education is two times higher among those students that have attended kindergarten.



A photograph of a garment factory. In the foreground, a woman with dark hair is focused on her work at a sewing machine. Behind her, a long line of other women is also working at similar machines. The room is brightly lit, and the machines are white with various spools of thread. A purple text box is overlaid on the right side of the image.

“ In 2019 the share of employed Roma was two times higher than in 2011. ”

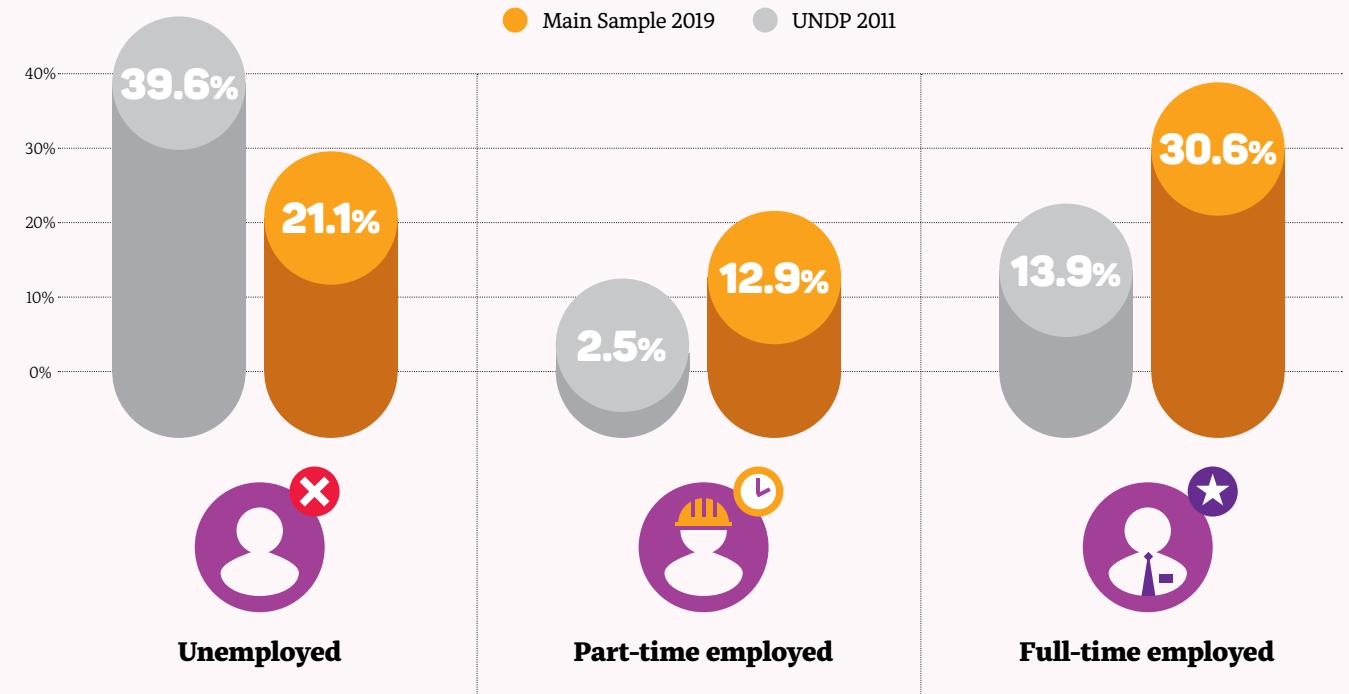


Employment

The past decade has seen a significant decrease in the unemployment rate and an increase in the employment rate (full-time and part-time) in the Roma community. In 2019 the share of employed Roma was two times higher than in 2011. The percentage of employed Roma in the age group 15+ grew from 19% in 2011 to 45% in 2019.

Persons with a lower education level are most often employed as low-skilled or unskilled workers. Persons with secondary education are **more likely to find work as skilled workers, and higher education graduates are more likely to occupy managerial or expert positions.** Both persons who have completed higher and secondary education start their own businesses more often than people with a lower education level.

Employment in the Roma community



Note: The findings from 2019 are prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic impact.



Household income has increased in Roma communities, with higher educational levels strongly correlated to higher household income.



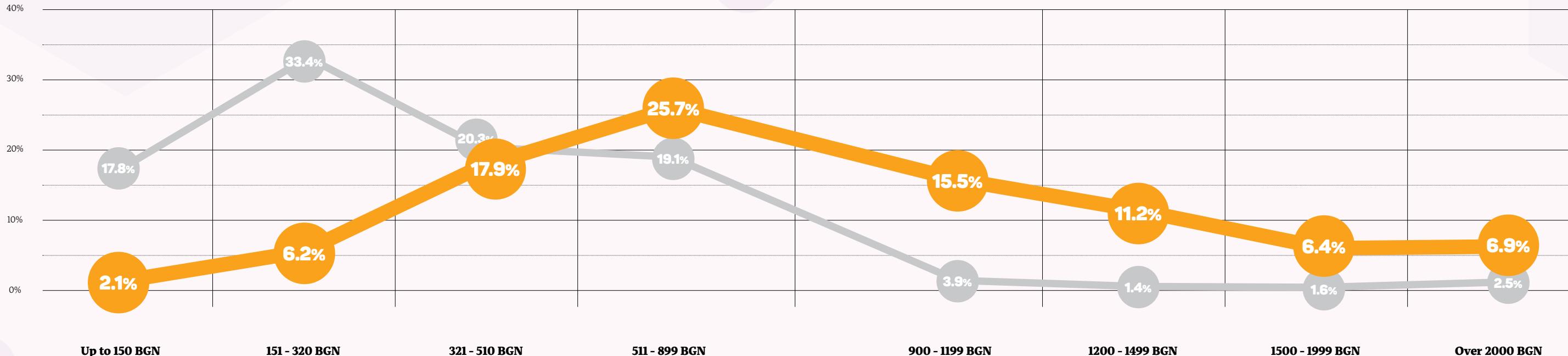
Household Income



Persons with higher education are clearly positioned in the highest income groups, while those who have only completed primary and lower education dominate the lowest income brackets.

Roma Families Income Distribution

● Main Sample 2019 ● UNDP 2011



Methodology

The implementing partner, Global Metrics, conducted a nationally representative survey of 4165 individuals, of which 3655 live in compact Roma neighborhoods. Individuals were surveyed in 140 locations across Bulgaria. The survey was designed so that it is comparable to the UNDP, World Bank and European Commission's 2011 Roma Regional Survey, the last comprehensive educational survey of the Roma community in Bulgaria.

The report uses the following terminology to describe educational levels:

Ages 3 – 6

Grades 1st – 4th

Grades 5th – 8th

Grades 9th - 12th

Tertiary / university

Kindergarten

Primary school

Junior secondary school

Secondary school

Higher education





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