

“Boosting Female Social
Entrepreneurship and Enterprise Creation
for inclusion groups - PAL Women”
(2019-1-CZ01-KA204-061118)



INTELLECTUAL OUTPUT 1

*Development of Skills Assessment: Social Entrepreneurship
for Social Inclusion Groups in Europe*



SEGE
GREEK ASSOCIATION OF
WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
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Results of the literature review and the focus group in Greece about the current situation and problems faced by Roma Women

Roma Characteristics in Greece

The presence of Roma or “Gypsies” – as there are still often called including by the community itself - can be traced back to the 14th century, though their Greek nationality was effectively given to them as late as in 1979.

The Roma are the largest minority in Greece, even though they are not recognized as a national minority. Even the concept of a ‘national minority’ is not accepted by the state. Due to high rates of illiteracy, heavily bureaucratic and costly procedures, and the state’s indifference, many do not have official documents. As a result, the exact number of Roma in Greece is difficult to estimate since many of them are not registered, and thus officially do not exist, and no details on ethnic affiliation, language or religion have been given at censuses carried through in Greece since 1951. According to the “Minority Rights Group Greece” however, it is more likely that the Roma number up to 350,000 people, about half of who are tent-dwelling Roma.

Roma population in Greece is not an entirely homogeneous group, but it consists of different “tribes” of Roma people. The main categories of Roma in Greece are as follows:

- ✚ domestic nomadic Roma (albeit an extremely limited number);
- ✚ long-term settled distinct Roma communities,
- ✚ recent Roma migrants from new EU Member States (mainly Bulgarian and Romanian Roma);
- ✚ completely integrated/assimilated Roma who may never even identify themselves as Romani;
- ✚ Roma Muslims in Thrace, who benefit from the minority protections available under the peace treaties between Greece and Turkey following the Treaty of Lausanne;

In addition, there are recent Roma migrants who are not EU nationals (especially from Albania, but also from Kosovo* and “the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia”) and fall within the responsibility of the migration policy.

Roma Women in Greece

Gender disaggregated data on Eastern European countries show that Romani women’s educational level is lower than those of Romani men and than that of non-Romani-women.

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Roma women usually care for young children and do the household chores. Children are particularly affected by the poverty of their communities, and many girls work to help to earn a living for their families.

In addition to these external structural and cultural barriers, Roma women have to deal with that strongly limits their opportunities for paid employment outside of their community as well as for economic independence. In the patriarchal family system women are accountable for house and family care, even if Roma women frequently take part in small family-run economic activities such as working in markets, rural trade and seasonal agricultural work. Women's low educational level precludes them any occupation in production or services. Roma women's integration into the labour market was aggravated by the socio-economic transformations which took place in the 1990s in former Eastern European countries.

Except for single mothers, who often have to work on a par with men, Roma women's family responsibilities and the lack of adequate public services to support childcare strongly affect women's participation to the labour market. Roma women usually care for young children and do the household chores. Children are particularly affected by the poverty of their communities, and many girls work to help to earn a living for their families.

Romani women are subordinated to men within the Roma patriarchal family system. Nonetheless, relations between men and women differ according to groups and nationalities. In most of the Roma communities, young women's choices are overdependent from family and communities' rules and interests. The young woman is expected to be a good and caring mother, housewife, wife and daughter-in-law and simultaneously to prove constantly her fertility. Usually this is proved by giving birth to second and third child within short periods of time.

Many people seem to believe that the situation of the Roma people is chosen out of free will, and conclude that the "refusal" of education, work and way of life were some kind of expression for "not wanting to participate" in Greek society, and thus experience it as a deep humiliation of Greek values. (A woman claimed that Greeks feel offended when they see a Romani woman begging in the street with her child on the arm as a Greek mother would never put her child in this situation). There is a complete non-understanding for the circumstances that Roma live in, and a commonly unquestioned disrespect for their rights. The idea that the Roma are excluded from society, and that Greek authorities are willingly keeping them in these conditions, is foreign to Greeks in general.

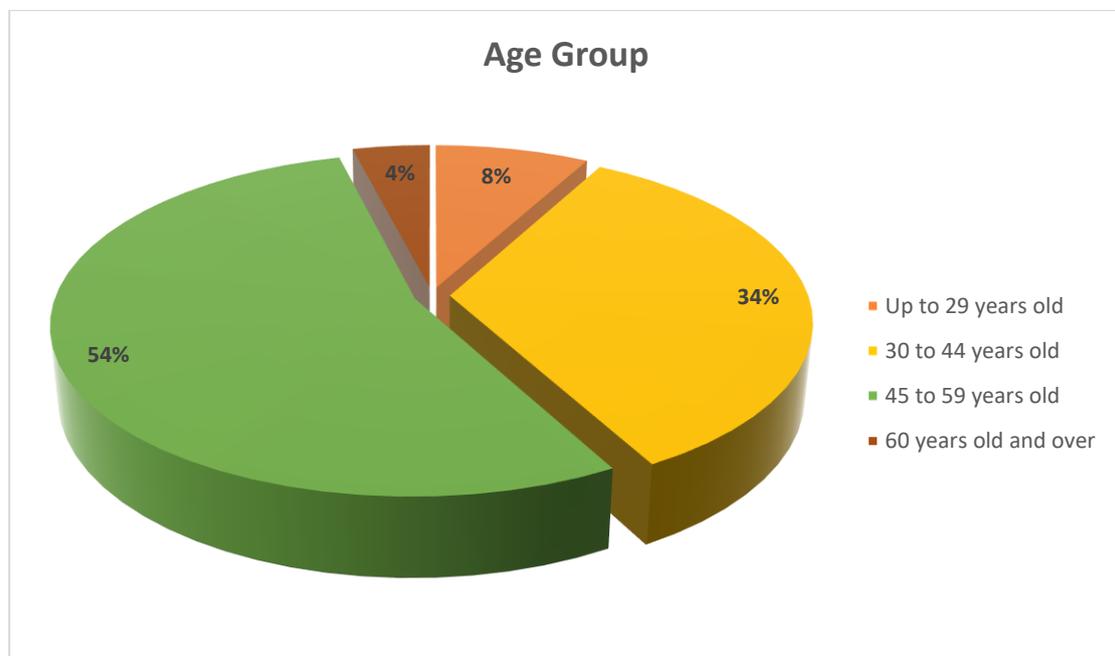
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Analysis of the questionnaires results for Roma Women in Greece

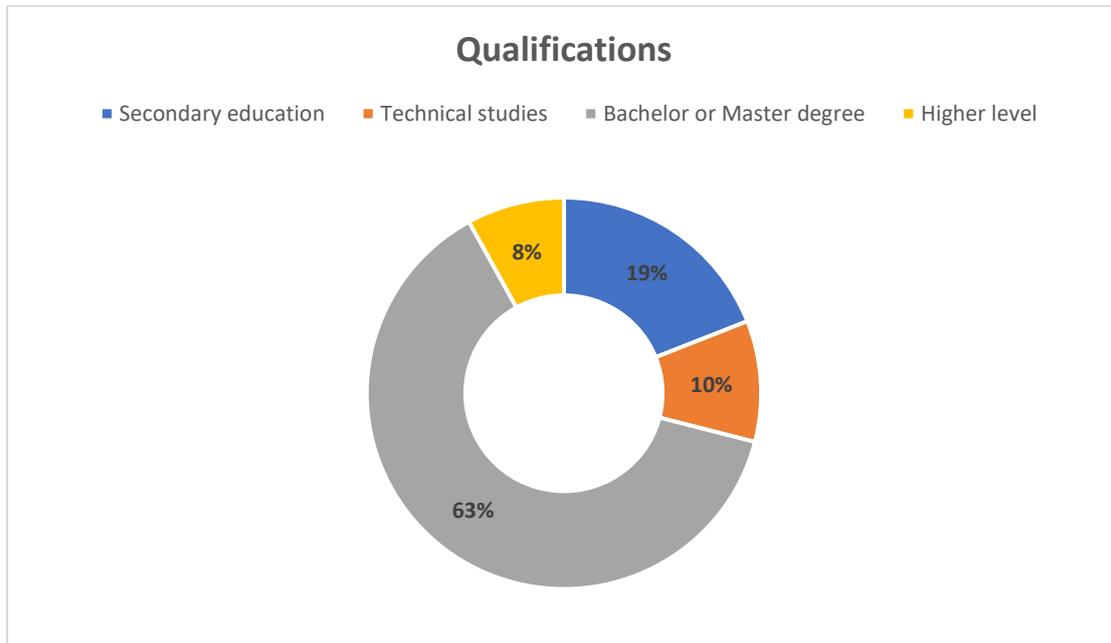
The second stage of the research activities included the creation of an online survey on Roma people and entrepreneurship. The survey was adapted to Greek reality and was addressed to people who have worked or is currently working in the fields of entrepreneurship and/or the integration of vulnerable Roma populations, with a stronger focus on Roma women. The research was anonymous, confidential and the results are used strictly in the context of the project.

The sample

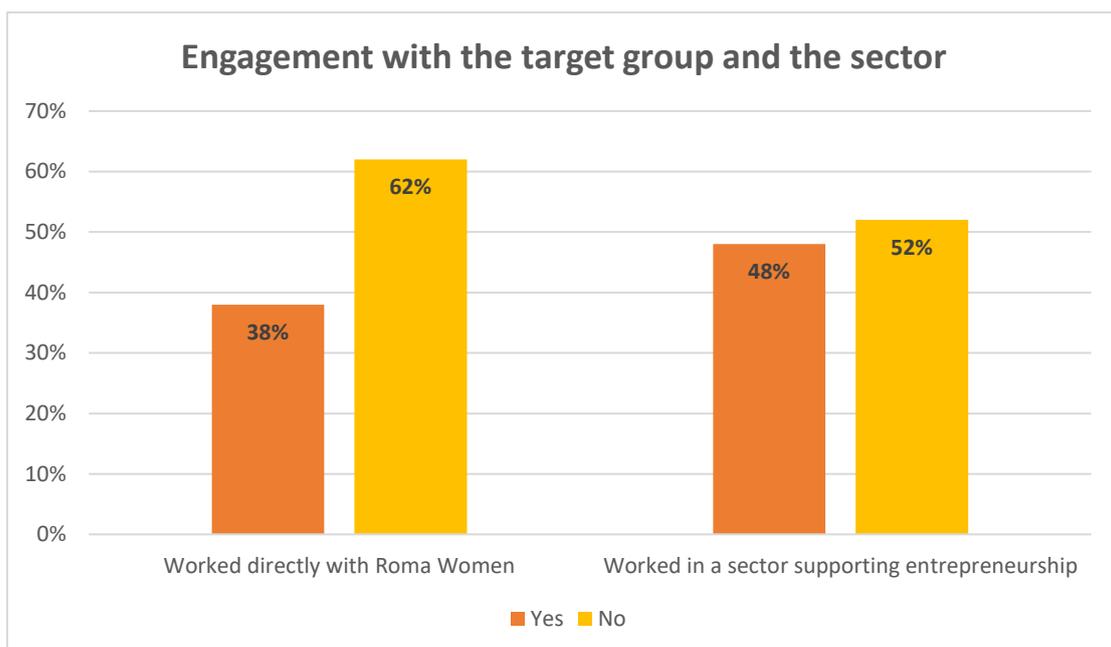
In total, 52 relevant stakeholders participated and filled the online survey, 45 from Greece and 7 from other EU countries not participating in the PAL Women project. The largest part of the sample consists of respondents older than 30 years. Specifically, 54% of them belong to the age category “from 45 to 59 years” and 34% “from 30 to 44 years”. 8% are younger than 29 years and only 4% are older than 60 years.



Most of the respondents, the 63%, hold a bachelor or a master’s degree. While 19% of them have completed secondary school, 10% have technical studies and only 8% have a higher level of qualifications.



Regarding their employment status, 48% of the respondents are currently working in the business sector (CEOs, Directors, Presidents), 21% in the social sector (Psychologists, Social Workers), 17% in the educational sector (Educators, Teachers) and 14% in other sectors (Health Workers, Youth Workers). Unfortunately, the 62% of the respondents, have never worked directly with Roma Women. But most of them (48%) have been engaged in activities supporting entrepreneurship for several years.

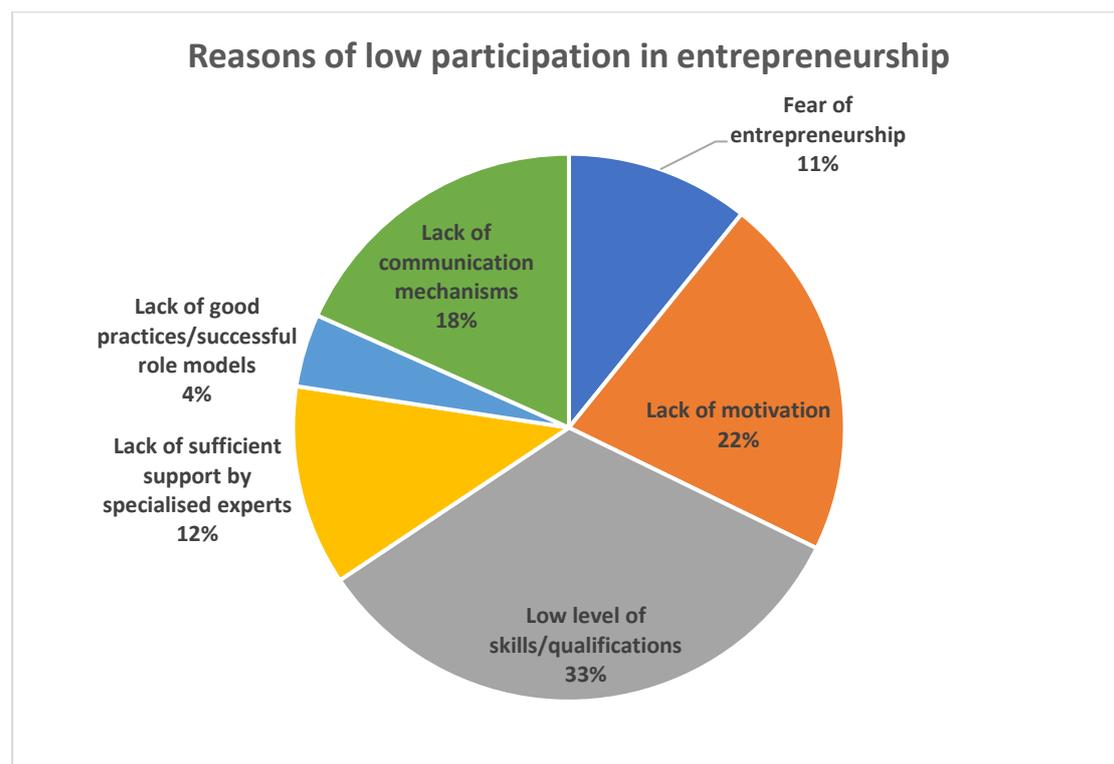


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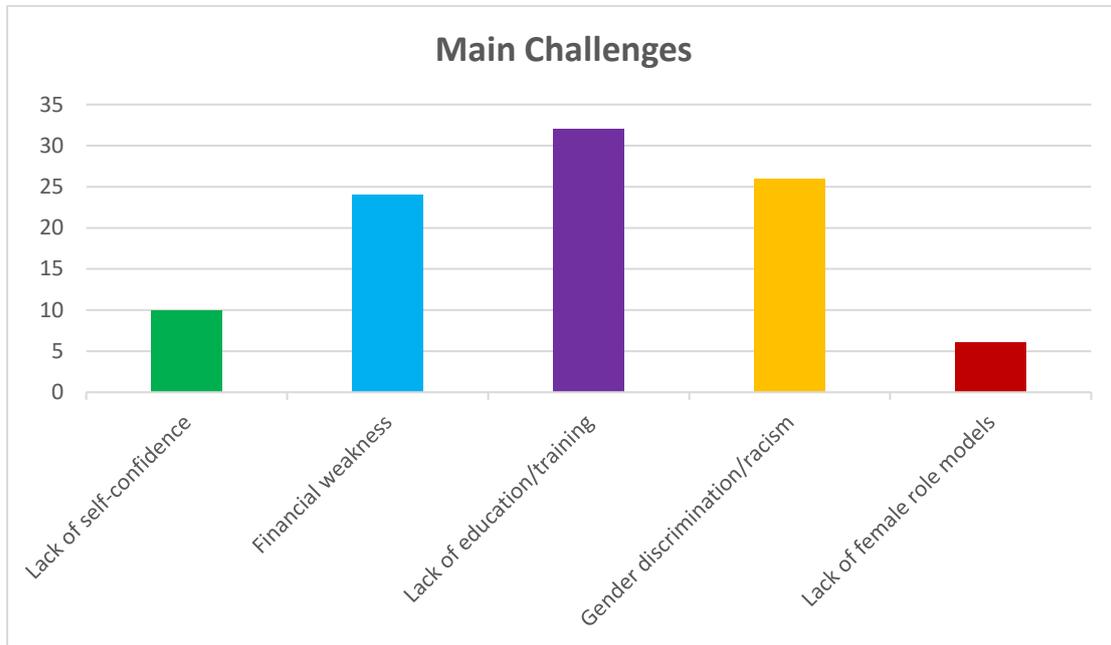
The results

56% of the respondents have NOT heard of Roma Women who have taken any entrepreneurial activities. Although such percentage seems discouraging, we should take into account the social norms and the discrimination against women inside Roma populations in Greece.

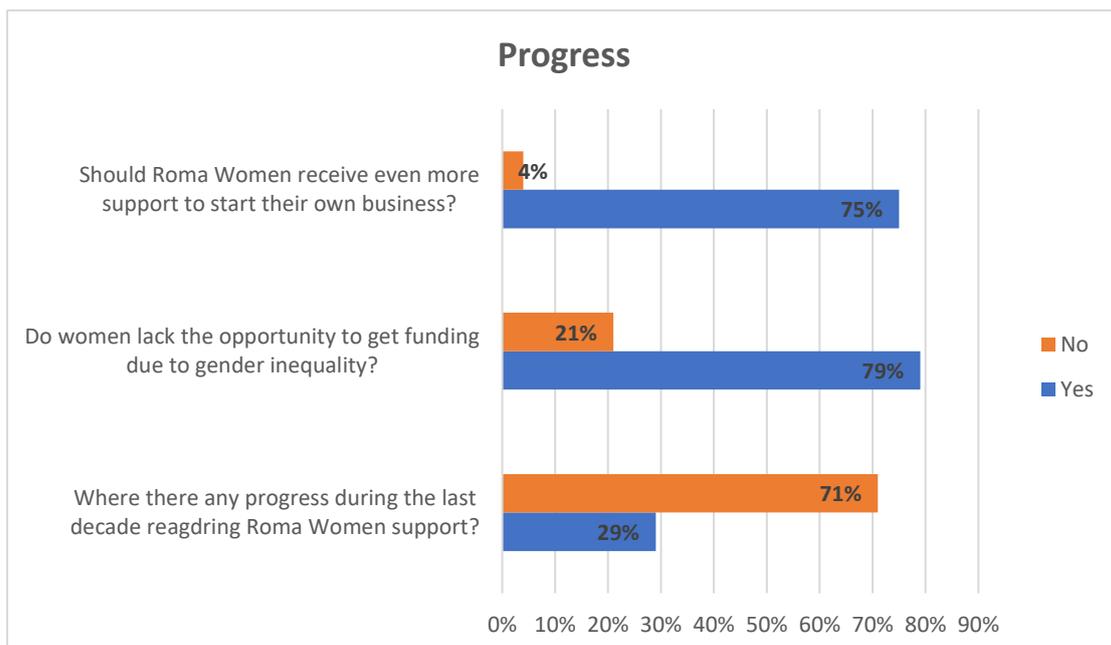
Following the previous questions, we asked our participants their opinion in several matters regarding the engagement of Roma Women in entrepreneurship. In the question “Why Roma women are less active in entrepreneurship than other women’s groups” the majority of the respondents believe that it is due to their low level of skills/qualifications, while the second most popular opinion was because of lack of communication mechanisms to motivate Roma Women.



Not surprisingly, most of the respondents, the 87%, believe that the environment and the families of Roma Women do not accept and encourage their participation in entrepreneurship, while only 13% thinks otherwise. Besides family, the majority of the correspondents think that the lack of education/training, the gender discrimination/racism and the financial weakness and liquidity problems are the main challenges that Roma Women face during the initial stage of entrepreneurship.

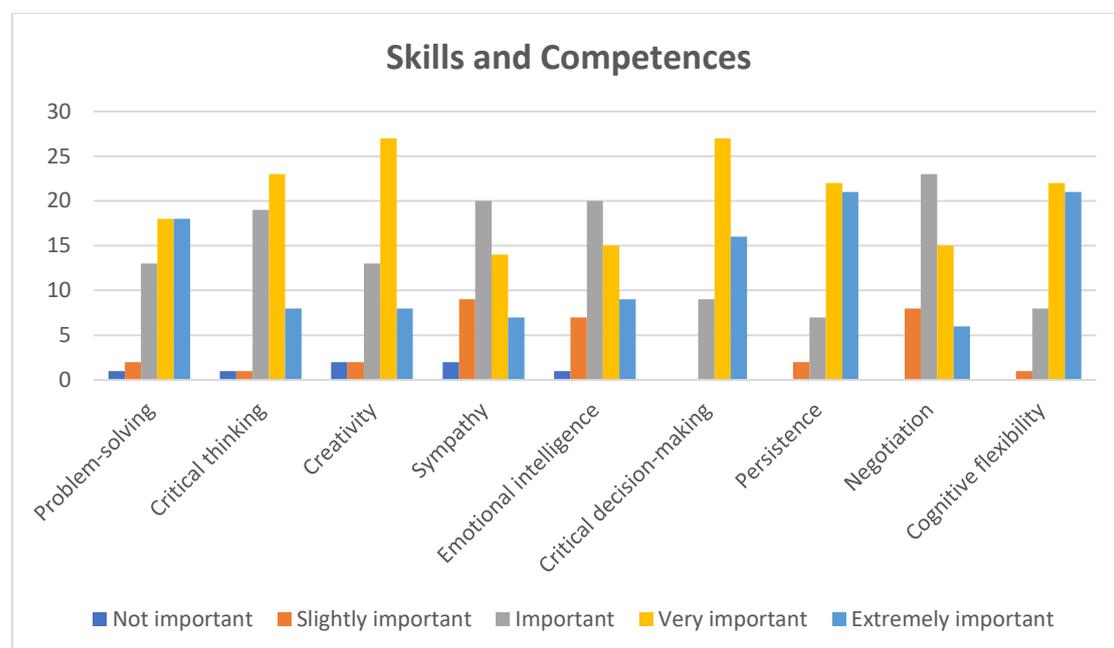


In the question, if there were any changes over the last decade in supporting Roma Women towards entrepreneurship, the overwhelming 71% of the respondents believes there was no development at all. Following such a high percentage, it was not surprising that the 79% of the respondents feel that women in general lack the opportunity to get funding due to gender inequality, therefore Roma Women should receive even more support to start their own business.



Regarding future actions that needs to be implemented for Roma Women to be empowered and actively involved in entrepreneurial activities, the 48% of the respondents believe that the entrepreneurial education of Roma Women should be the first step, followed by the creation of policies that address particularly their opportunities for entrepreneurship (29%) and the awareness of stakeholders for supporting entrepreneurial activities on the needs of Roma Women (23%).

About the competences that Roma Women need to make it into entrepreneurship, the respondents believe that very important skills are Critical decision-making, creativity and Persistence, while the least important skills are Sympathy and Emotional intelligence.



Furthermore, the two most relevant areas that the respondents believe that Roma women should be trained to become entrepreneurs are Business Administration, Marketing and Communication, followed by Planning and time management, Finance, Networking, Branding and Communication with business support organization.

Also, the respondents think that the ideal way to train Roma Women to take up entrepreneurship roles is by:

- Sharing motivational videos on social media and personal website – 8%;
- Conducting public seminars – 37%;
- Sharing educative material (such as training materials, documents) on social media or websites – 4%;
- All of the above – 63%.

