

TOPICS OF INTEREST

URBAN POPULATION

Interest in the socio-political developments in the country

How interested are you in the current socio-political developments in the country and in the world?

16%

Very

37%

Somewhat

29%

Not much

18%

Not at all

Similarly to the rural population, more than half (53%) of the urban population are “very” or “somewhat interested” in socio-political developments, while 47% are “not at all” or “not very” interested.

Six out of ten respondents sometimes or often discuss these issues with other people, while four out of ten rarely or never do. People in urban areas tend to be more willing to share their opinion on socio-political developments compared to people living in rural areas (51% sometimes or often discuss these issues with other people).

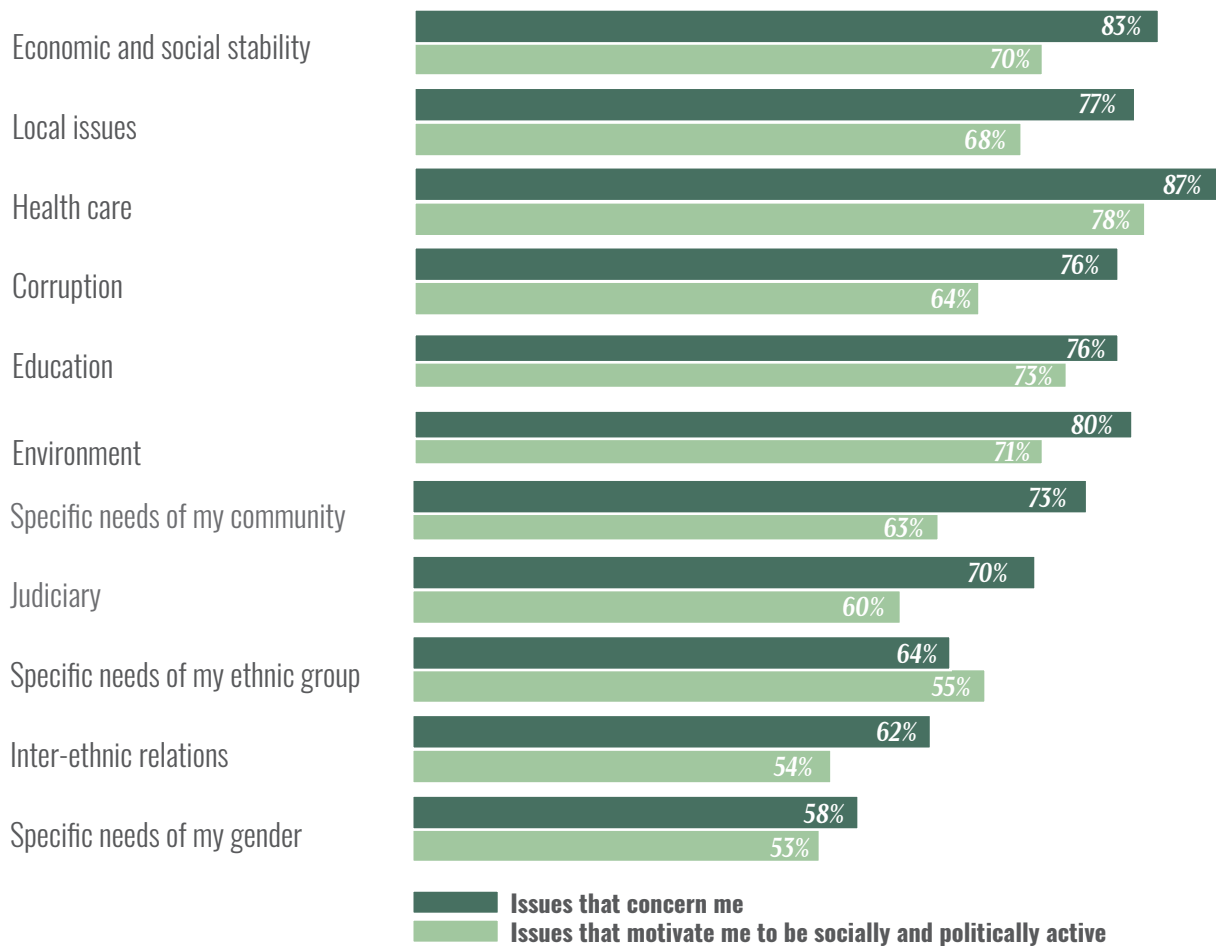
According to the focus group participants, the COVID-19 pandemic ranks the highest among the socio-political issues of relevance to the quality of life.

Significant for this demographic group are the concerns related to air pollution, urbanisation, and urban mafia, stray dogs and other local problems.

Concerns

How much would you say the following information/issues/topics concern you?

How much would you say the following issues/topics motivate you to be socially and politically active?



Health care (most likely because of the COVID-19 pandemic), economic and social stability and environment are the three most important issues for people living in urban settlements, as indicated by more than 80% of the respondents. In addition, these issues are the key motivators for their social and political activation.

Common across all profile groups subject to this research is the little concern about the specific needs of their gender, their ethnic group or interethnic relations in general.

RURAL POPULATION

Interest in socio-political developments in the country and sources of information

How interested are you in the current socio-political developments in the country and in the world?

16%

Very interested

38%

Somewhat interested

29%

Not much interested

17%

Not at all interested

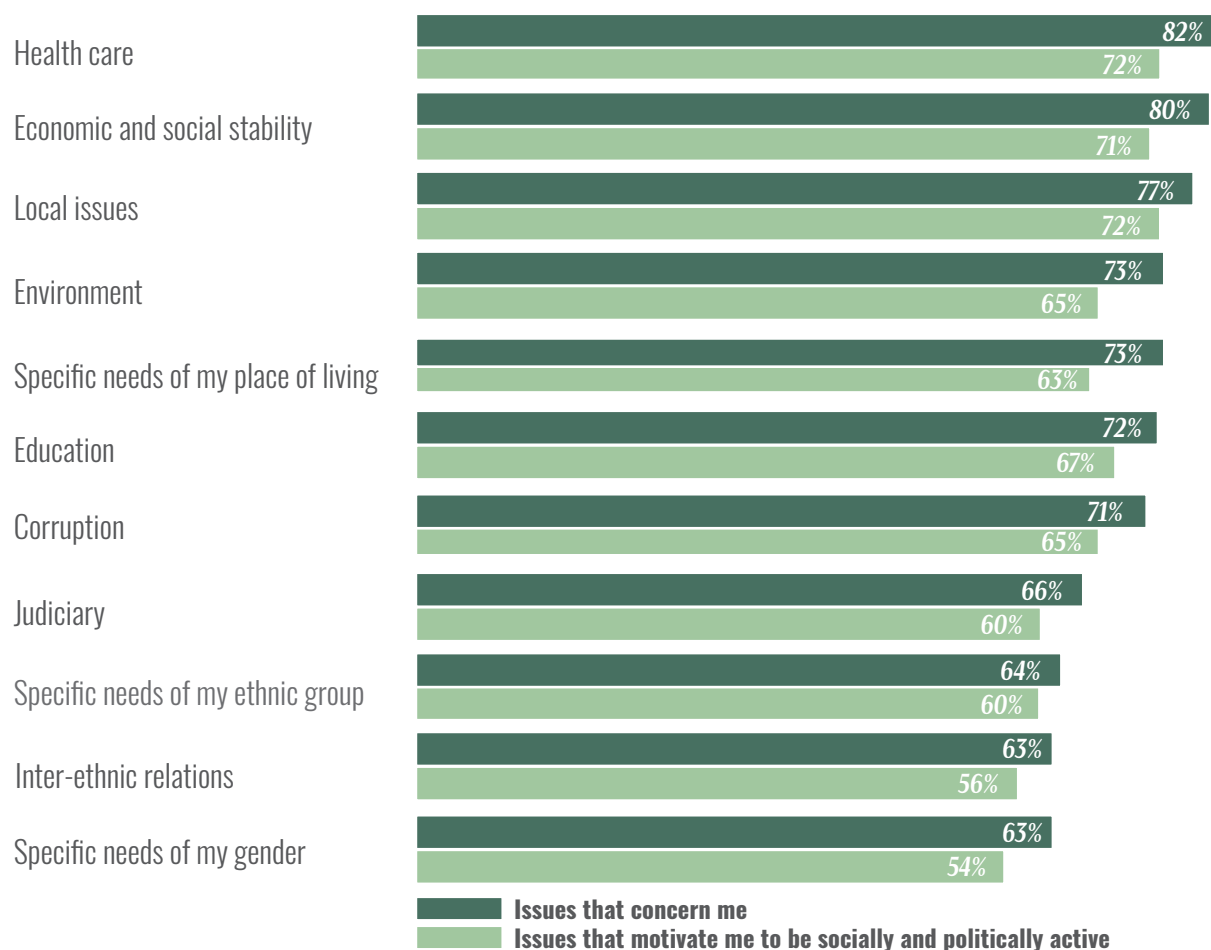
The research shows that slightly over half of the respondents (54%) are very or somewhat interested in the current socio-political developments in the country, while 46% are not interested. Similarly to the trends in the general population, the highest interest within this demographic group is observed among men and respondents with higher education, while farmers and housewives are less interested in socio-political developments. Fifty-two per cent (52%) of the respondents discuss socio-political developments sometimes or often, while 48% rarely or never do.

Women and young people from this group discuss these issues less often.

Concerns

How much would you say the following information/issues/topics concern you?

How much would you say the following issues/topics motivate you to be socially or politically active?



Health care, economic and social stability and local concerns rank the highest on the list of concerns specific to this group, as indicated by more than three quarters of the respondents. These are considered the key driving factors for their social and political activation.

This group is the least concerned about the specific needs of their gender, ethnic group or interethnic relations.

The concerns of this demographic group also relate to unemployment, nepotism and political party membership as a precondition for employment, low standard of living, migration (youth in particular), poor infrastructure, sewage and wastewater problems, frequent power outages, lack of kindergartens, parks/playgrounds, and recreational facilities for children, homeless animals, poor public transport, poor living conditions for people with disabilities, and lack of freedom of speech/fear to express their personal opinion.

Of note is that people living in rural settlements are still struggling with access to social services such as health care, clean water, electricity, sewerage system, and roads.

People living in rural settlements are interested in the current socio-political situation in the country, as well as the pandemic crisis. However, primary points of concern remain their local problems and immediate surroundings.

“ I was expecting that the current local self-government would make a difference, for example, to provide us with access to sewerage. Also, the street is not paved, we walk in mud. But there is no change, only party employments. ”
Female, 70, Kisela Jabuka

YOUTH

Interest in the socio-political developments in the country

How interested are you in the current socio-political developments in our country and in the world?



The research shows that 60% of the survey respondents are “not at all” or “not very interested” in the current socio-political developments in the country and in the world, while 39% are “very” or “somewhat” interested.

Focus group findings show that some young people tend to avoid political news, while others are prone to incidental sourcing of information on the social networks of their choice.

Almost two thirds of the survey respondents (65%) rarely or never discuss political developments with other people.

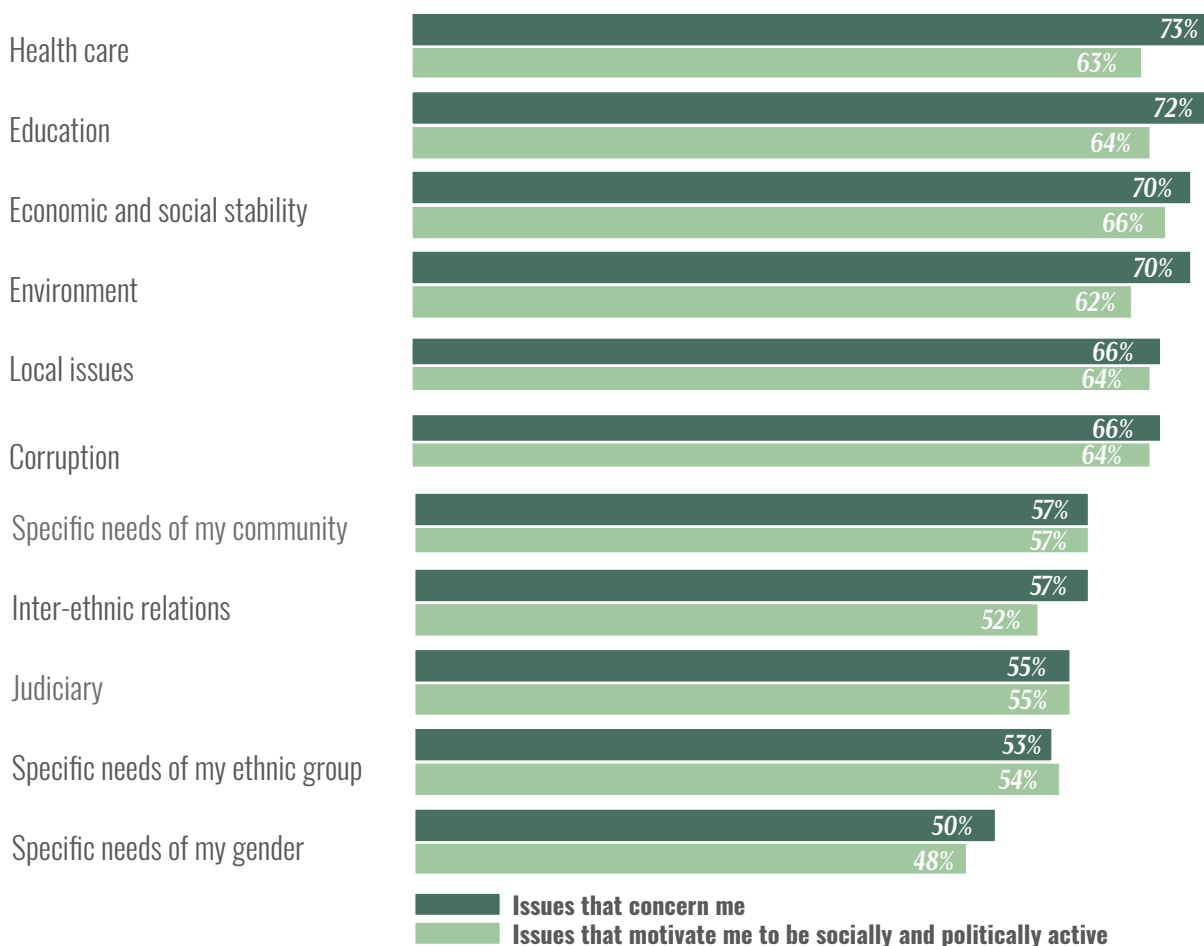
There are no significant differences in regards to the interest in current socio-political developments across gender, ethnicity, education and household incomes for this group.

On the other hand, this research shows that young people who were previously engaged in civic activities or show interest to be engaged, are also more interested in socio-political developments and more often prepared to take part in discussions on these issues.

Concerns

How much would you say the following information/issues/ topics concern you?

How much would you say the following issues/topics motivate you to be socially or politically active?



Health care, education, and economic and social stability are the top three issues of concern for young survey respondents, indicated by more than 70% of the respondents. In addition, these are the key motivators for social and political activism among youth.

Young survey respondents are the least concerned about specific needs of their gender group, ethnic group, and the judiciary.

In addition, the participants in the youth focus group are mostly interested in learning about education and the start of the new academic year during the pandemic, local sports events, entertainment and cultural events as well as projects of youth organization and student exchange programs.

FIRST TIME VOTERS

Interest in the socio-political developments in the country

How interested are you in the current socio-political developments in the country and in the world?

3%

Very interested

18%

Somewhat interested

33%

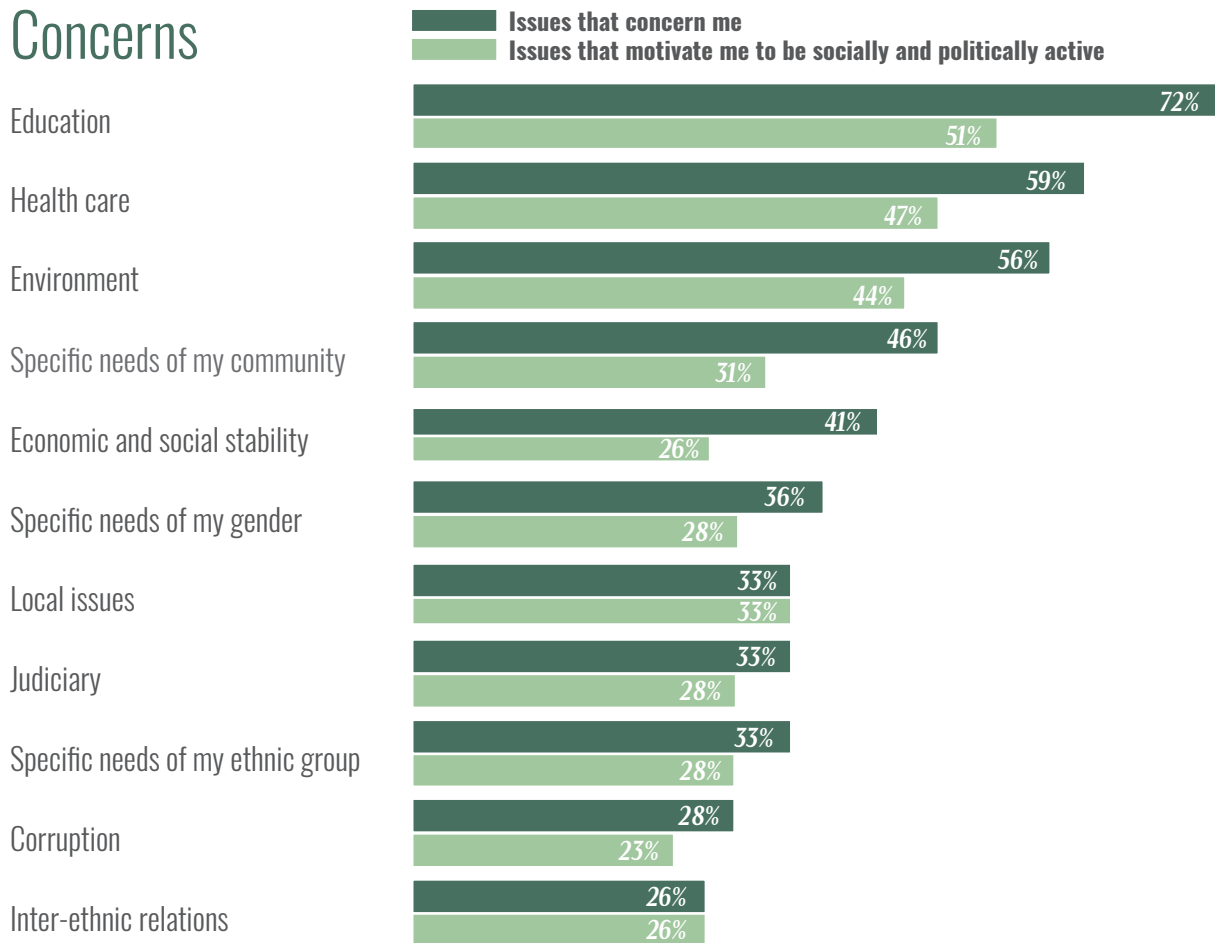
Not much interested

46%

Not at all interested

The research shows that almost 80% of the first time voters are not at all or not very interested in the current socio-political developments in the country or in the world. Nine out of ten respondents (87%) rarely or never discuss these issues with other people.

Concerns



Education, health care, and environment are the top three concerns that incentivise social and political participation of the first time voters.

While seven out of ten survey respondents cited education as the top area of concern, half of the respondents expressed interest in becoming socially and politically active on issues related to education.

Despite the high percentage of respondents concerned with these issues, they tend to be less motivated to be socially and politically active.

They are the least concerned with the specific needs of their ethnic group, corruption, and inter-ethnic relations.

The focus group findings show that this group is mostly interested in information concerning education, sports, music, and entertainment, and compared to the general population and other demographic groups, they are the least interested in socio-political developments.

RURAL YOUTH

Interest in the socio-political developments in the country

How interested are you in the current socio-political developments in the country and in the world?



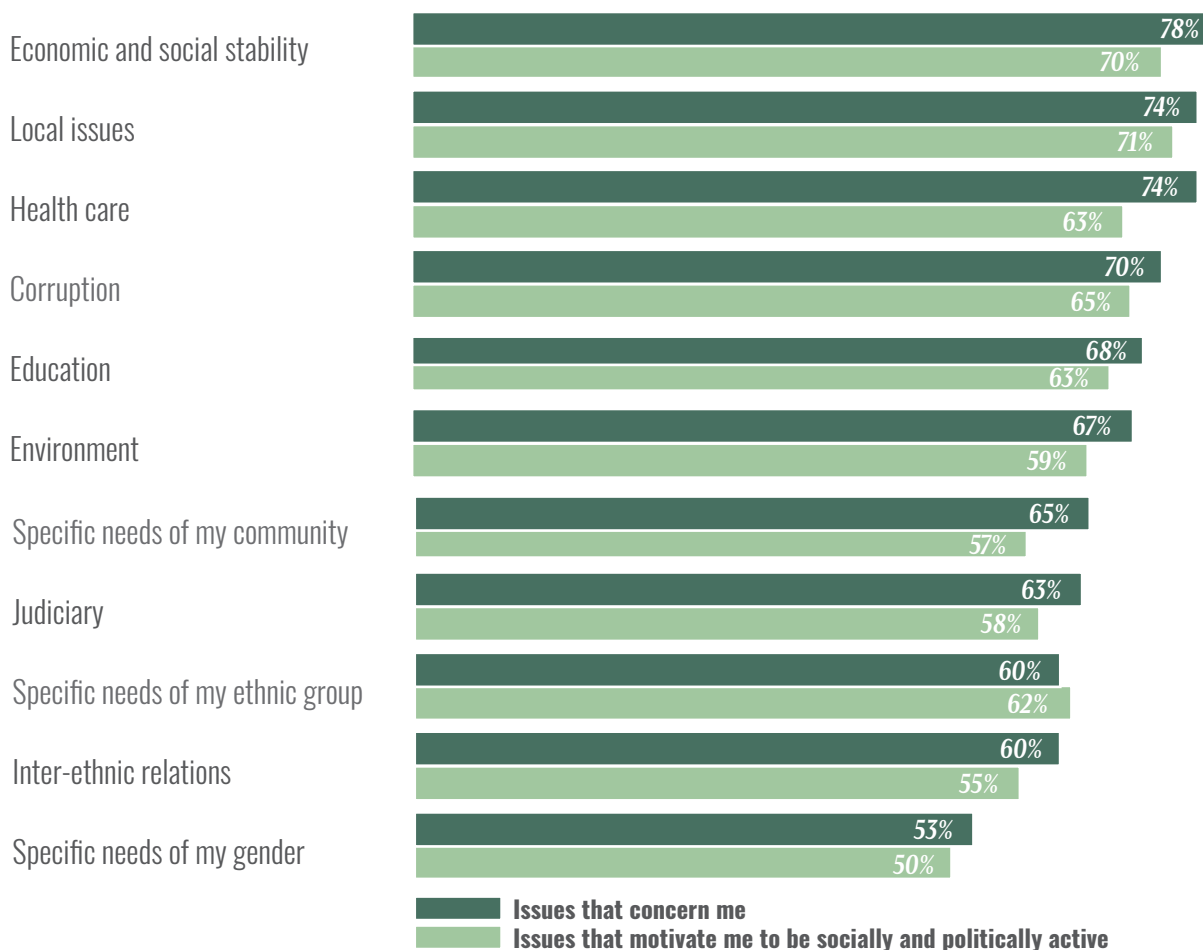
Compared to other youth groups (general youth and first time voters), rural youth tend to be more interested in socio-political-developments and are more civically engaged. The research shows that almost half (45%) of the respondents are “very” or “somewhat interested” in socio-political development issues, while 54% are “not at all” or “not very” interested. Respondents with higher education tend to have a more pronounced interest in socio-political development issues (76% are “very” or “somewhat interested”). Four out of ten respondents sometimes or often discuss these issues with other people, while six out of ten rarely or never do.

According to the focus group participants, the COVID-19 pandemic ranks the highest among the socio-political issues relevant to the quality of life. Other issues of concern include the current economic situation in the country, unemployment, and social stability.

Concerns

How much would you say the following information/issues/topics concern you?

How much would you say the following issues/topics motivate you to be socially and politically active?



More than 70% of the survey participants indicated that economic and social stability, local issues, and health care (most likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic) rank the highest on the list of concerns specific to this group, and are the key driving factors for their social and political activation.

Compared to the other groups included in the research, this group is the least concerned about the specific needs of their gender, ethnic group or interethnic relations in general.

This demographic group expresses dissatisfaction with the quality of life of the young people in rural areas. Concerns were about the lack of cultural events, entertainment and engaging content, due to which young people tend to spend their free time in local cafes and gambling facilities.

Migration also ranks high among the issues of concern, with young people leaving rural areas and moving to bigger places and/or outside the country. The respondents also indicate disinterest in agriculture, a profession which is slowly dying.

Furthermore, the group faces difficulties with public transportation to neighbouring towns, which force young people to travel in groups together and use taxi services instead.

WOMEN

Interest in the socio-political developments in the country

How interested are you in the current socio-political developments in the country and in the world?

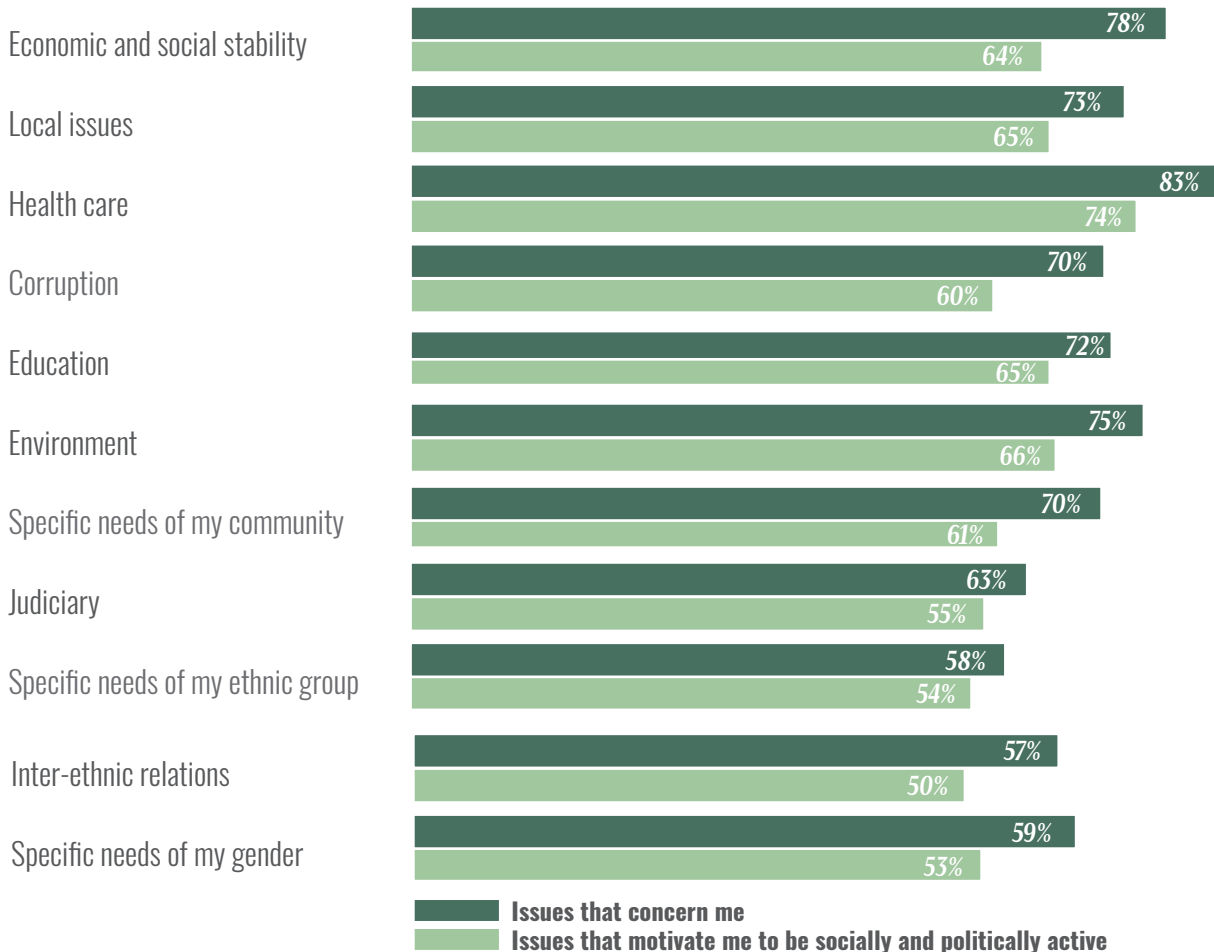


The research shows that 52% of the respondents are “not at all” or “not very interested” in the current socio-political developments in the country and in the world, while 47% are “very” or “somewhat interested.” Slightly over half (51%) rarely or never discuss these issues with other people. Further analysis shows that 13% fewer women than men indicate interest in socio-political developments and readiness to discuss these issues with other people.

Concerns

How much would you say the following information/issues/topics concern you?

How much would you say the following issues/topics motivate you to be socially or politically active?



Health care (83%), economic and social stability (78%), and environment (75%) are the top three prevailing concerns of the respondents and are considered the key motivators for their social and political activation, followed by education and local governance concerns.

Women respondents are the least concerned with specific needs related to their ethnic group, interethnic relations, and interestingly, with the specific needs of their gender.

Both qualitative and quantitative research demonstrates that women's major priorities are of social and infrastructure nature concerning child care, kindergartens, schools, and safe neighbourhoods. Women are mostly interested in tangible and specific issues that could improve their lives and those of family members, and are less interested in abstract and political issues.

RURAL WOMEN

Interest in the socio-political developments in the country

How interested are you in the current socio-political developments in the country and in the world?



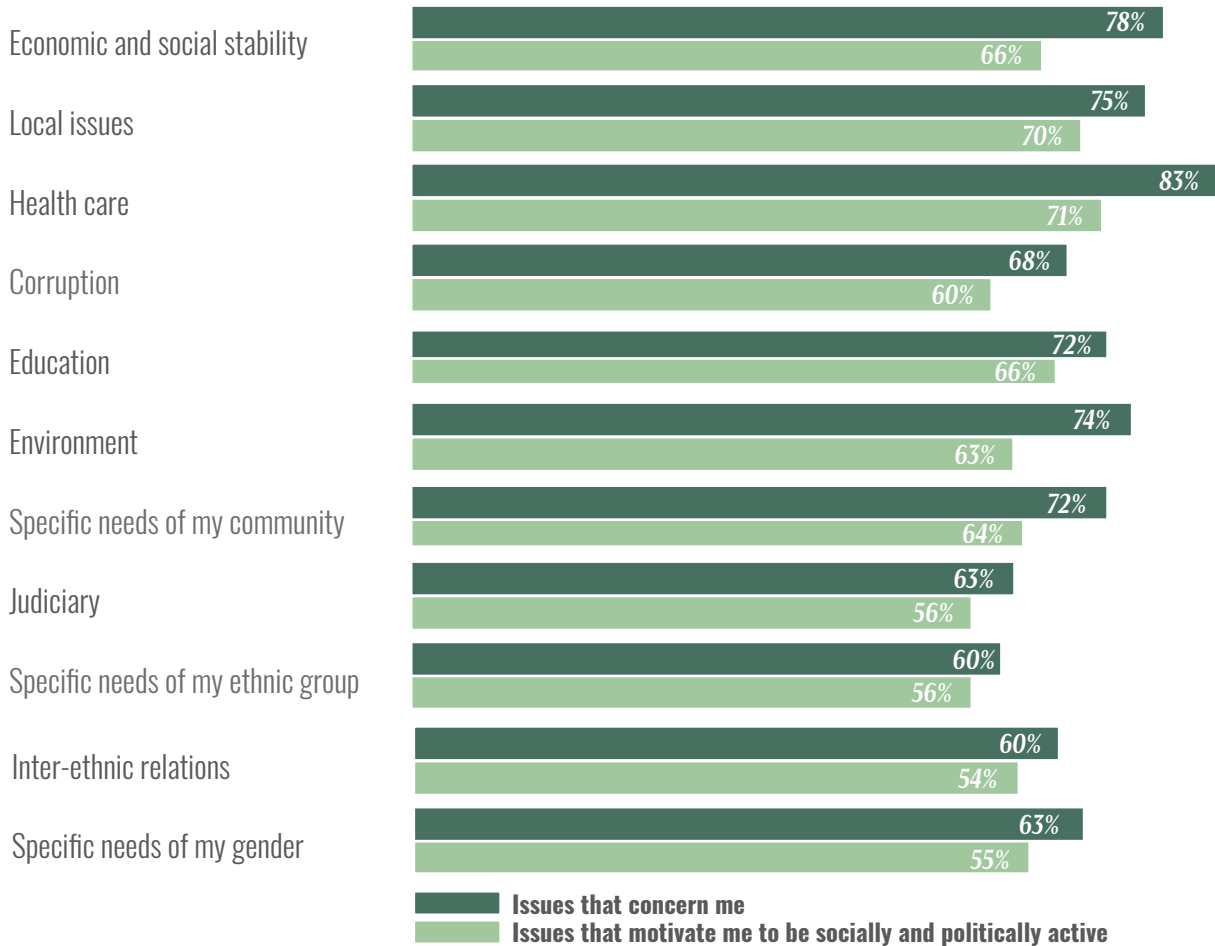
The research shows that 53% of women respondents living in rural settlements are “not at all” or “not very interested” in the current socio-political developments in the country and in the world, while 46% are “very” or “somewhat interested.” There is no difference related to the interest shown compared to urban women.

Slightly over half of these women (55%) rarely or never discuss these issues with other people, compared to 46% of urban women who are not willing to discuss the socio-political issues.

Concerns

How much would you say the following information/issues/ topics concern you?

How much would you say the following issues/topics motivate you to be socially or politically active?



Health care (83%), economic and social stability (78%) and local issues (75%) are the top three prevailing concerns of the respondents. These issues, including education, are considered the key motivators for their social and political activation.

This group is the least concerned about the inter-ethnic relations and the specific needs of their ethnic group, their gender and the judiciary.

The results referring to the “specific needs of their gender” could be read in conjunction with the lack of knowledge and certain gender blindness in perceiving their social concerns as concerns in general, excluding gender inequality and the systemic disadvantage and discrimination against women.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Interest in the socio-political developments in the country

How interested are you in the current socio-political developments in the country and in the world?



The research shows that 55% of the survey respondents are “not at all” or “not very interested” in the current socio-political developments in the country and in the world (9% more compared to the general population), while 42% are “very” or “somewhat interested”. Almost half of the survey participants (49%) rarely or never discuss these issues with other people (5% more than the general population).

The group expressed concerns with regards to the COVID-19 pandemics and the restricted functioning of the institutions, primarily in the sphere of health care and education. They also expressed concerns about the situation in the private sector.

The persons with disabilities are a vulnerable group which is still on the margins of society.

They are often faced with isolation in the community where they live. In addition to the unfavorable socio-economic relations of persons with disabilities, there is a need for social protection in all spheres of social life including health care, education, and employment.

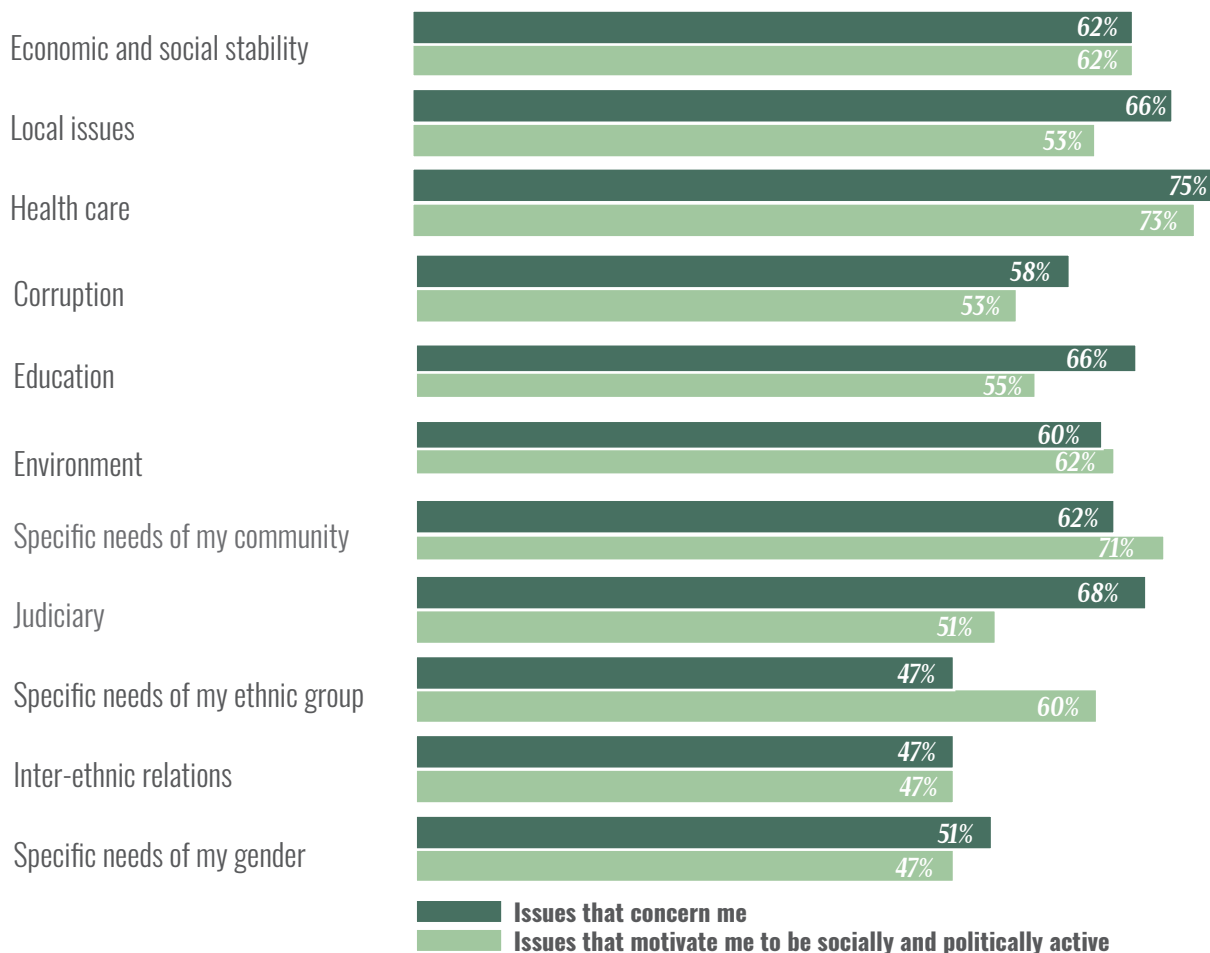
Furthermore, the unemployment rate of the persons with disabilities is three times higher than that of the general population¹⁶ and most often these people take up low paid work and are segregated from the open labor market.

¹⁶ <http://iph.mk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Upatstvo-lica-so-posebni-potrebi-so-cip.pdf>

Concerns

How much would you say the following information/issues/topics concern you?

How much would you say the following issues/topics motivate you to be socially and politically active?



The survey respondents indicated that health care (75%), education (66%) and local issues (66%) are their primary issues of concern.

The respondents are the least concerned with the specific needs related to their ethnic group, interethnic relations and the specific needs of their gender.

Additionally, healthcare (73%), specific needs related to their place of living (71%) and economic and social stability (62%), along with the environment (62%) are the key motivators for this group to become more socially and politically active.

ROMA

Interest in the socio-political developments in the country

How interested are you in the current socio-political developments in the country and in the world?

8%

Very interested

29%

Somewhat interested

30%

Not much interested

32%

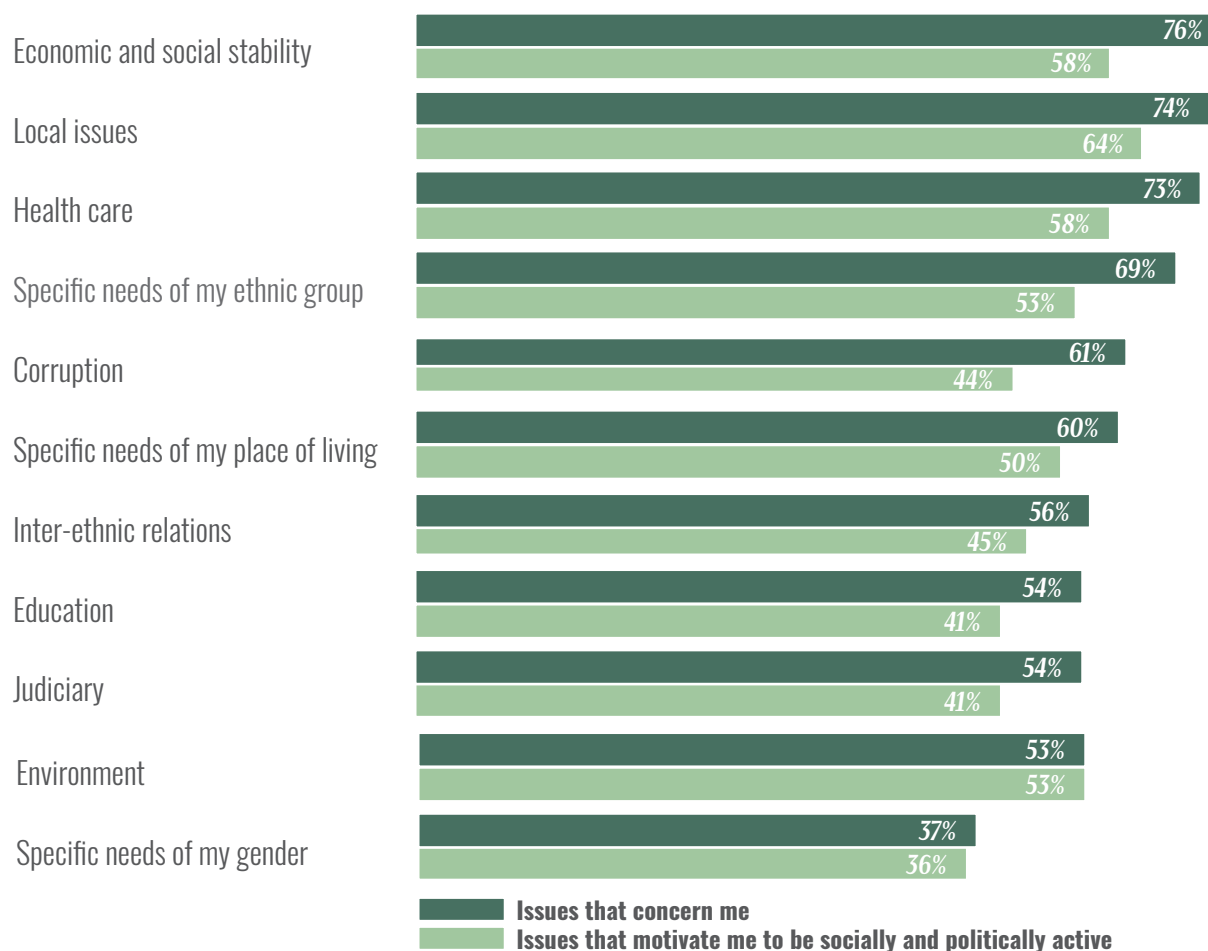
Not at all interested

The research shows that 62% of the respondents are “not at all” or “not very interested” in the current socio-political developments in the country and in the world, while 37% are “very” or “somewhat interested”. Almost half of the survey participants (45%) rarely or never discuss these issues with other people. Roma citizens with completed high school or university tend to be more interested in the current socio-political developments.

Concerns

How much would you say the following information/issues/topics concern you?

How much would you say the following issues/topics motivate you to be socially and politically active?



More than 70% of the survey participants indicated that economic and social stability, local issues, and health care rank the highest on the list of concerns specific to this group and are the key driving factors for their social and political participation.

The survey participants are the least concerned with the specific needs related to their gender, the environment, and the judiciary. They are also concerned with everyday problems relating to informal Roma settlements, construction of illegal buildings, lack of personal documentation, infrastructure, water supply and sewerage, social and health care.

REMOTE COMMUNITIES

Interest in the socio-political developments in the country

How much would you say you are interested in the current socio-political developments in the country and in the world?

14%

Very

45%

Somewhat

24%

Not much

18%

Not at all

Compared to the general and rural population, people living in remote communities tend to be more interested in socio-political-developments and more often discuss these issues with other people.

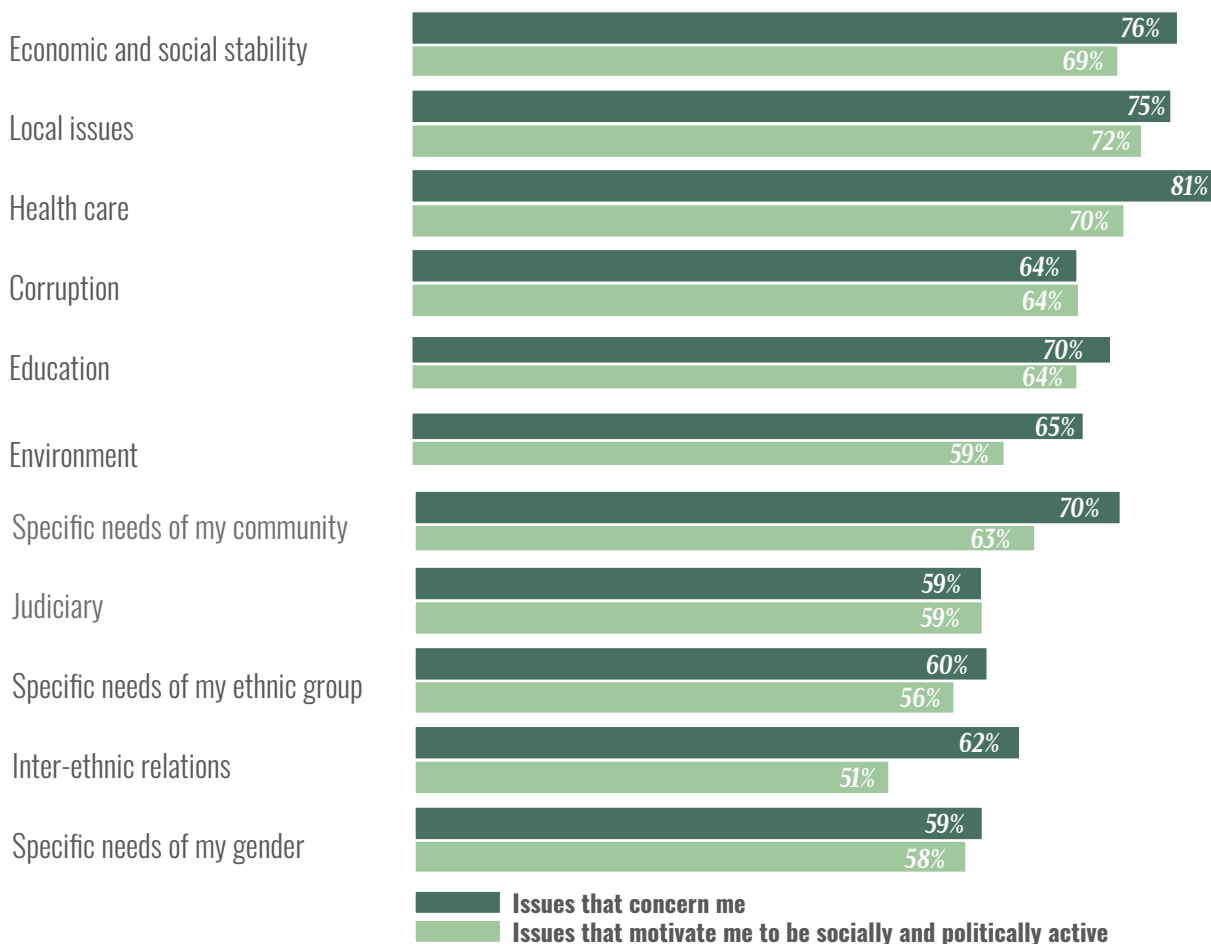
The research shows that around 59% of the survey respondents are “very” or “somewhat interested” in socio-political development issues, while 42% are “not at all” or “not very” interested. Sixty-four per cent (64%) of the respondents sometimes or often discuss these issues with other people, while 36% rarely or never do.

According to the focus group participants, the COVID-19 pandemic and the formation of the new government rank the highest among the socio-political issues of interest. These two prioritized issues were affected by the developments in the period of the conduct of the survey. Other issues of concern are the current economic situation in the country, social stability, private sector problems as well as family violence.

Concerns

How much would you say the following information/issues/topics concern you?

How much would you say the following issues/topics motivate you to be socially and politically active?



Health care, economic and social stability, and local issues are the most important issues for people living in remote communities, as indicated by more than three quarters of the respondents. Respondents further note that these concerns, in particular the local issues, are key motivators for them to be more socially and politically active.

This group is the least concerned about the specific needs of their gender, the judiciary and the specific needs related to their ethnic group.

People living in remote communities express dissatisfaction with the poor infrastructure, water supply, waste management, and landfill sites, poor public transportation and lack of health care services.

“ We pay the highest prices, we get the worst products and services. I’m talking about clothes, food and services. We can only be grateful for the clean air and no air pollution. ”

Male, 33, Delcevo

This group faces difficulties with unemployment, low standard of living and migration issues, with young people leaving rural areas and moving to bigger places, and/or outside the country.

“ There is no replacement for the retired doctors. There is no neurologist or gynecologist. In fact there is only one gynecologist for the for the whole Eastern region of the country. ”

Female, 53, Pehcevo

VERY POOR

Interest in the socio-political developments in the country

How interested are you in the current socio-political developments in the country and in the world?

13%

Very

32%

Somewhat

34%

Not much

22%

Not at all

Compared to the general population, very poor people tend to be less interested in socio-political developments in the country and in the world. Similarly to other marginalized and vulnerable demographic groups, this is likely due to the fact that the very poor are mostly concerned to “make-ends-meet” and survive the day.

This research shows that some 45% of the survey respondents are “very” or “somewhat interested” in socio-political issues, while 56% are “not at all” or “not very” interested.

Fifty-four per cent (54%) of the respondents sometimes or often discuss these issues with other people, while 46% rarely or never do.

Given the extremely difficult financial situation of this demographic group, their primary concern is how to survive the day.

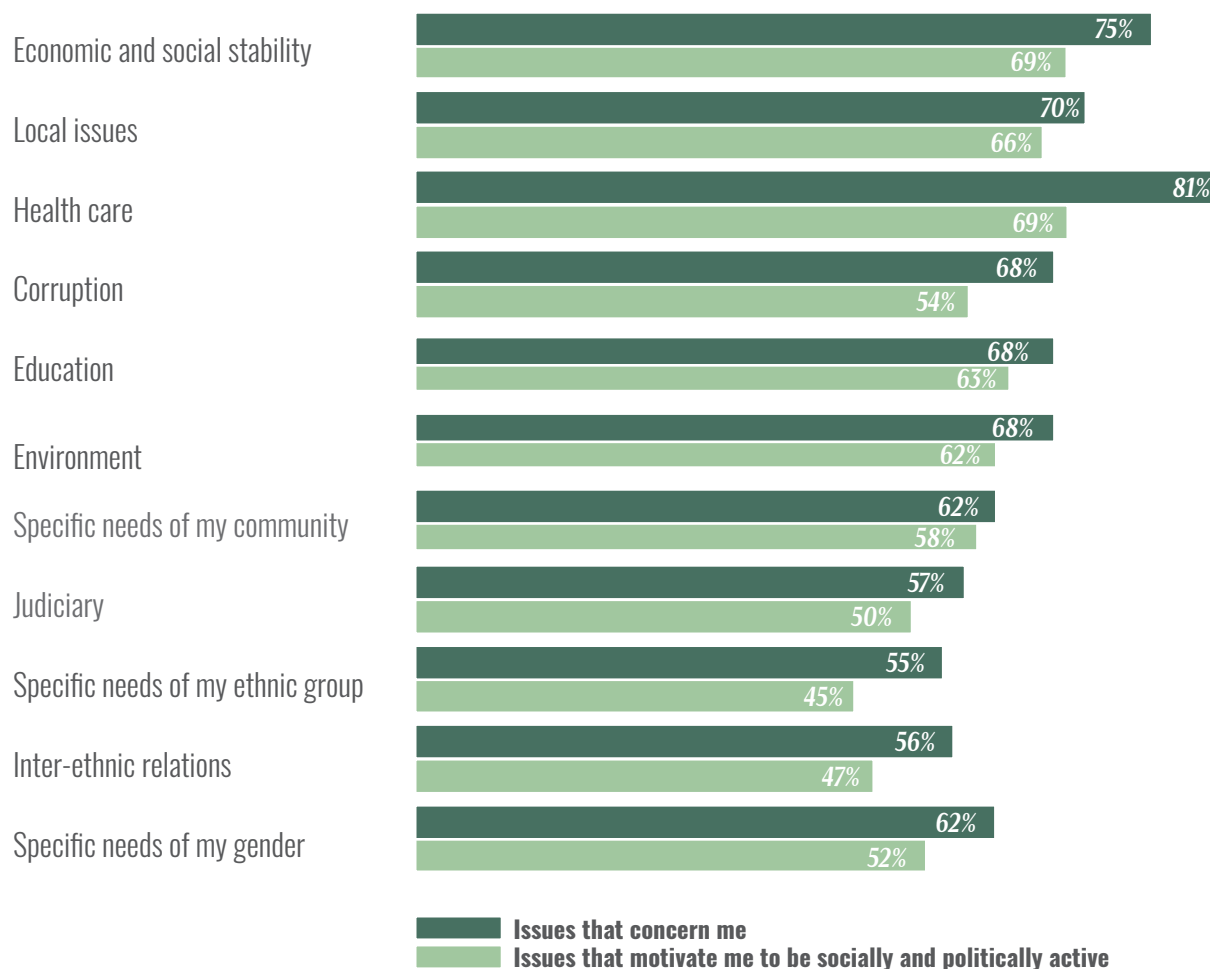
Similarly to other demographic groups, according to the focus group participants, the COVID-19 crisis, the economic situation in the country and employment rank the highest among the socio-political issues of relevance to the quality of life.

Disappointment in the political parties (mostly due to failure to keep promises), manipulations and pressures make this group less interested in national political issues.

Concerns

How much would you say the following information/issues/topics concern you?

How much would you say the following issues/topics motivate you to be socially and politically active?



Health care (indicated by 81%), economic and social stability (indicated by 75%), and local issues (indicated by 70%) are the three most important issues for this group of respondents.

The above issues, primarily at local level, are the key motivators for them to be more socially and politically active.

Poor people are mostly interested in tangible and specific issues that could improve their lives and those of family members and issues they can relate to. They are less interested in abstract and political issues, which is confirmed by a low interest in socio-political developments.

This group is the least concerned about the specific needs of their ethnic group, education, interethnic relations and the judiciary.

CHRONICALLY UNEMPLOYED

Interest in the socio-political developments in the country

How interested are you in the current socio-political developments in the country and in the world?



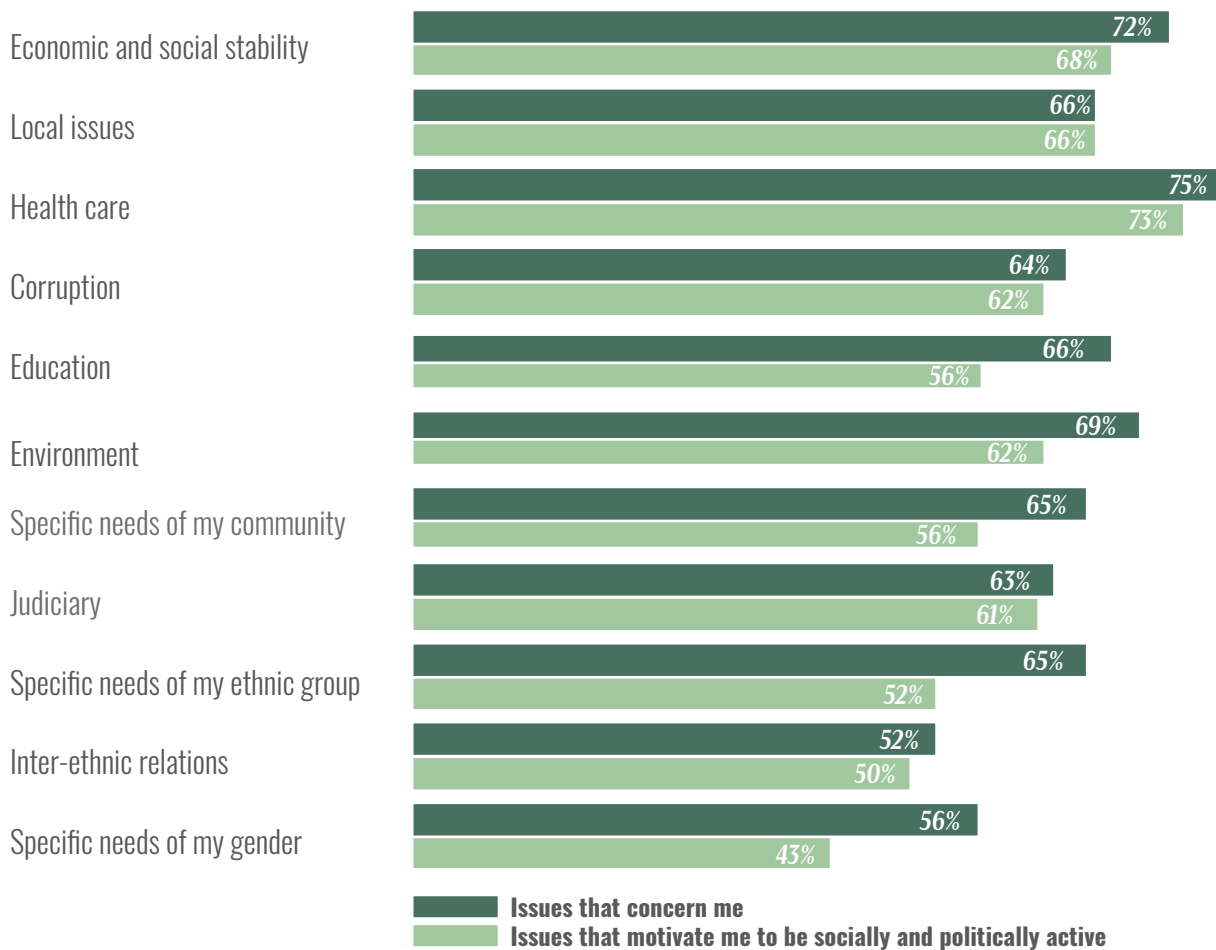
Compared to the general population, the chronically unemployed persons appear less interested in socio-political developments and less often discuss these issues with other people. The research shows that 43% of the survey respondents are “very” or “somewhat interested” in socio-political development issues, while 54% are “not at all” or “not very” interested. Similarly to other marginalized and vulnerable demographic groups, this is likely due to the “make-ends-meet” attitude embraced by the society which faces socio-economic challenges. Four out of ten respondents sometimes or often discuss these issues with other people, while six out of ten rarely or never do.

According to the focus group participants, the COVID-19 pandemic ranks the highest among the socio-political issues of relevance to the quality of life. They are also worried about the current economic situation in the country, unemployment, social stability, education, and the judiciary.

Concerns

How much would you say the following information/issues/topics concern you?

How much would you say the following issues/topics motivate you to be socially and politically active?



Health care and economic and social stability are the most important issues for chronically unemployed persons, as indicated by more than 70% of the respondents. In addition, these issues are key motivators for their social and political activation. This may be explained by the fact that the chronically unemployed persons, similarly to the poor population, are disproportionately more affected, and health care, economic and social stability is worsened.

This group does not have compensatory mechanisms such as savings, social capital and connections that will help them to accommodate to any new circumstances.

Similarly to the general population and other demographic groups, this group is the least concerned about the specific needs of their gender and the interethnic relations in general as they struggle to meet the basic existential needs.

OTHER ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

Interest in the socio-political developments in the country

How interested are you in the current socio-political developments in the country and in the world?

17%

Very

35%

Somewhat

31%

Not much

17%

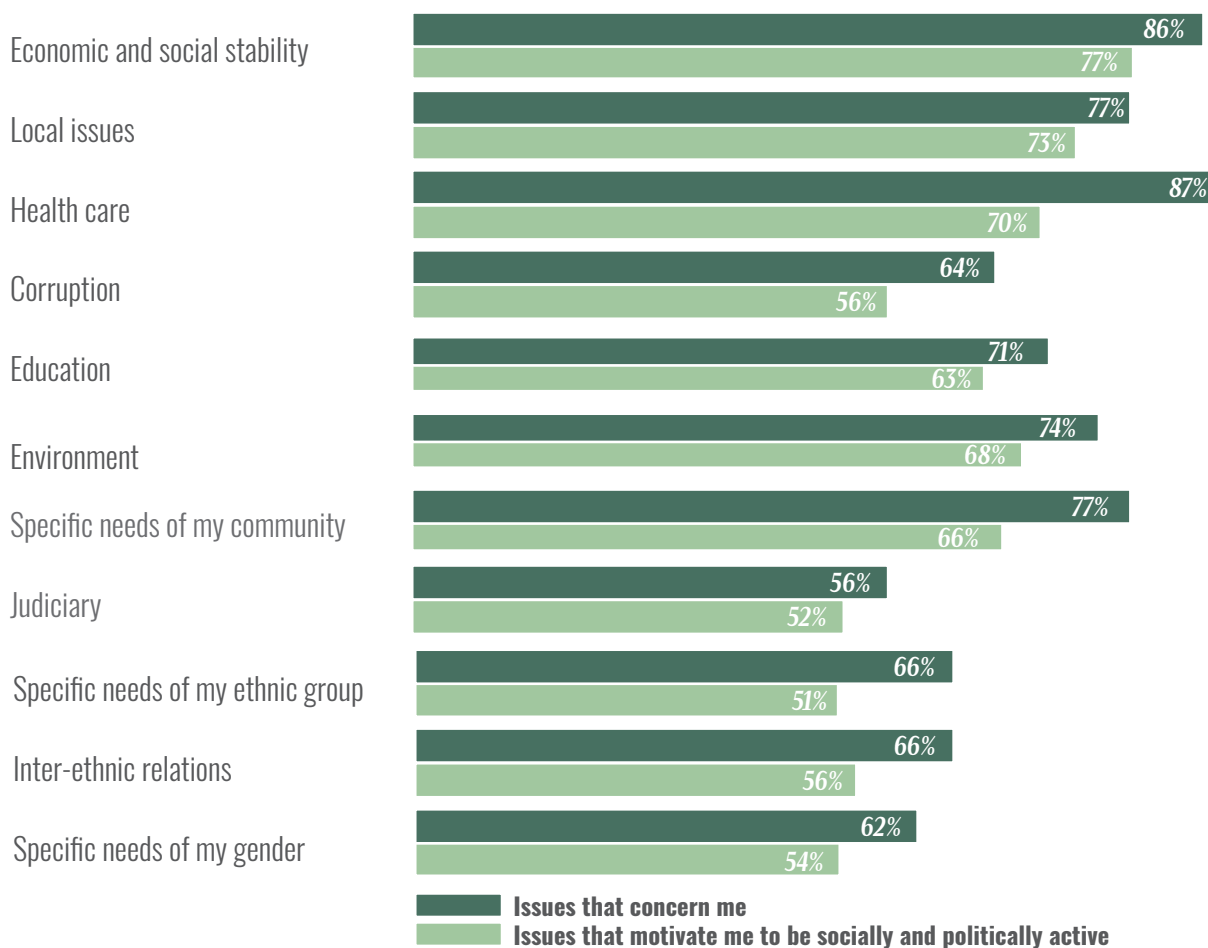
Not at all

Nearly half of the respondents (48%) are “not at all” or “not very interested” in the current socio-political developments in the country and in the world, while 52% are “very” or “somewhat interested”. The research shows that there is no significant departure in the interest for socio-political developments compared to the general population. Half of the survey participants rarely or never discuss these issues with other people, six per cent more compared to the general population (44%).

Concerns

How much would you say the following information/issues/topics concern you?

How much would you say the following issues/topics motivate you to be socially and politically active?



More than three quarters of the survey respondents indicated that health care (87%), economic and social stability (86%) and local issues (77%) are their primary issues of concern. The same issues are the key motivators for them to be more socially and politically active.

The survey participants are the least concerned with the judiciary, specific needs related to their gender and corruption.