

# CIVIC PARTICIPATION

# URBAN POPULATION

People living in urban areas tend to be more involved in meaningful community events or activities in comparison to the other demographic groups (37%), however the likelihood for increased civic engagement is lower (only 23% show interest for more active involvement).

*Have you been involved in any event, activity, or process that could have effected change in the community or the place where you live?*



*Are you interested in a more active civic involvement?*



The focus group findings indicate the reasons for the low interest to engage in civic activities. Namely, the interest of the respondents dissipates with time due to the lack of effective impact of their civic efforts. The impression of the respondents is that the institutions are very passive in that they transfer their responsibility to other bodies and institutions, make promises, do not keep them and fail to take action to provide answers to the citizens.

Fifty-five per cent (55%) of the survey participants do not believe they can make a positive change either by individual or through NGO engagement, while 29% lack interest in civic activities, which explains the low motivation for civic participation.

Similarly to the other profile groups, this group classifies the local government units as the most responsive institutions that they would address to solve an issue of concern. Furthermore, this group is mostly interested to engage in civic activities concerning improvement of the responsiveness of the system.

The factors that negatively influence the civic involvement are summarized below:

- ♦ The system does not stimulate self-initiative and proactivity.
- ♦ People are disappointed and lack trust in the state and the institutions.
- ♦ Lack of awareness of the instances where to report local problems.
- ♦ Pronounced politicisation of the institutions.
- ♦ Lack of competence and motivation among the employees in public institutions.
- ♦ Fear of retaliation against civic involvement.

**“ Throughout history people have been reluctant to state their personal opinion. This, along with the ineffective and corrupt authorities produce a sense of disappointment, apathy and despair as the ultimate stage. ”**

**Male, 26, Tetovo**

## Factors that promote involvement

Responsiveness of the institutional system is a key motivator for this group to be more involved in activities that could effectuate change in the community, which is cited by a quarter of the respondents. Other factors are related to obtaining personal or family benefits (indicated by 15%), representation of their interests (indicated by 19%) and transparency and accountability of the authorities (indicated by 13%). The first three factors are common for all demographic profiles and the general population.

While half of the respondents do not believe they can make an impact as a citizen, 29% believe they can make a meaningful impact in their municipality and 6% believe they can impact the Parliament.

## Willingness and ability to participate in civic activities

To the question whether they would be willing to participate in civic activities, 43% of the respondents indicated they would respond to a questionnaire, 48% would meet colleagues, friends, or family to discuss an issue of concern and 45% would read brochures or leaflets. On the other hand, 77% would not attend a political party gathering; 77% would not attend a public debate, and 80% an online meeting.

***In which of the civic activities are you willing to participate?***

**43%**

Respond a questionnaire



**45%**

Read a brochure or a leaflet



**48%**

Meet colleagues, friends to discuss



# RURAL POPULATION

The interest in civic involvement is more pronounced among men, ethnic Macedonians and respondents with higher education.

The research shows that 61% of this demographic group does not believe in making positive change by individual engagement or engagement in NGOs, whereas 20% lack interest in politics, which explains the low motivation for civic participation.

Seven out of ten people living in rural settlements have never been involved in an event, activity, or process that could impact the community or their local surroundings, nor are they interested in a more active civic involvement.

*Have you been involved in any event, activity, or process that could have effected change in the community or the place where you live?*



*Are you interested in greater civic involvement?*



Below is an overview of other factors that contribute to the low level of civic participation:

- People fear they will lose their jobs/incomes if they openly express dissatisfaction;
- Institutions are perceived as not responsive to citizens' demands;
- Institutions are believed to be under strong political influence;
- Perception of the judiciary as a dysfunctional system that fails to protect the citizens and of the law as not applicable equally to everyone.

*“ I see that most young people are silent. They think - I will hold still, otherwise I will get fired. People are afraid of being punished. ”*

*Female, 23, Tearce*

*“ People do not believe that they can change anything. It is obvious that the system is made for the politicians to steal and never get punished. The political parties are not fond of people who think independently of party views; they do not support or encourage proactivity or self-initiative. Only obedience. ”*

*Male, 44, Miletino*

## Factors that promote involvement

Responsiveness of the institutional system, cited by 32% of the respondents, is the key motivator for this group to be more involved in activities that could effectuate change in the community. Other motivating factors pertain to the representation of their interests (cited by 14%) and prospects for obtaining personal or family-related benefits (cited by 12%).

Whereas slightly over half of the respondents (56%) do not believe they can make an impact as a citizen, 26% believe they can make a meaningful impact in their municipality and less than 5% believe they can influence the Prime Minister (4%), the Parliament (3%), ministers (3%) and the President of the country (1%).

## Willingness and ability to participate in civic activities

To the question whether they would be willing to participate in civic activities, 45% of the respondents cited a preference for participation in polling, 42% preferred meetings with colleagues/friends on personal or family issues, and 41% cited a preference for brochures or leaflets as information means.

The percentage of actions they would avoid is more prominent: 78% would not attend a political party meeting, 78% would not participate in a public debate, and 74% would not participate in online meetings.

*In which of the civic activities are you willing to participate?*

**45%**

Respond a questionnaire



**41%**

Read a brochure or a leaflet



**42%**

Meet colleagues, friends to discuss



# YOUTH

Seventy-five per cent (75%) of the young people in general have never been involved in any event, activity or process that could have an impact in the community or their local surroundings and 73% have no interest in becoming more civically engaged.

Compared to the rural youth, the percentage is similar (25%), but younger generation (first time voters) are less involved in events or activities in the community (10%) showing that when entering adulthood, young people become more interested to be involved in the civic life.

*Have you been involved in any event, activity, or process that could have effected change in the community or the place where you live?*



*Are you interested in greater civic involvement?*



Young men and youth with higher education tend to indicate involvement and interest to become more civically engaged.

Interestingly, half of the young people who were previously involved in civic activities indicate an interest in more active civic involvement. Only 14% of young people who have never been involved in any civic activity before are interested in more active civic involvement.

The research shows that more than half of the survey respondents indicate disbelief in positive change (both by individual engagement and by NGO engagement), while almost a third point out the lack of interest in politics as the main reason for abstention from civic activities.

In addition, the young people in the focus group discussion indicate the following factors that contribute to insufficient civic involvement and low level of civic participation:

- ♦ Indifferent and passive youth.
- ♦ Young people focus on personal interests and benefits, instead of collective interests.
- ♦ Political parties attribute civic activities to opponent parties and most of the civic activities are labeled as being politically biased/motivated.
- ♦ Perception that civic initiatives are a waste of time and effort, since most of them are unsuccessful.
- ♦ Lack of positive examples/role models and lack of influential public figures showing support to civic initiatives.

**“ Unfortunately, in a heavily politicized society, the fear of standing up for your beliefs is strong. The last student attempt to gather to protest was immediately politicized. Everyone present there was labeled as opposition ”**  
**Male, 21, Kumanovo**

## Factors that promote involvement

Responsiveness of the institutional system is a key motivator for the survey participants to be more involved in activities that could effect change in the community, as cited by one third of the respondents. Other important motivating factors are related to their representation (indicated by 23%), and transparency and accountability of the authorities (indicated by 9%).

In addition, young people emphasise the need for positive examples showing that civic involvement can have an impact while at the same time calling for unity and solidarity in the civic activities.

**“ Young people do not have a voice in the institutions. They could achieve something only if they are a big group. They should be encouraged to unite. ”**  
**Woman, 27, Tetovo**

More than half of the survey participants do not believe they can make a positive impact as a citizen (55%), whereas more than one quarter (27%) believe they can make a meaningful impact in their municipalities. Less than 5% believe they can influence the Prime Minister, the Parliament, ministers and the President of the country.

## Willingness and ability to participate in civic activities

With regards to participation in public life, young people prefer opinion polling (38%), meetings with colleagues/friends to discuss personal or family issues (35%) and brochures or leaflets (34%).

*In which of the civic activities are you willing to participate?*

**38%**

Respond a  
questionnaire



**34%**

Read a brochure  
or a leaflet



**35%**

Meet colleagues,  
friends to discuss





# FIRST TIME VOTERS

Majority of the survey respondents have never been involved in any event, activity or process that could impact the community or their immediate surroundings, nor are interested in more active participation.

Compared with other demographic profiles, first time voters have the lowest civic involvement or interest in more effective participation in the community.

*Have you been involved in any event, activity that could have affected any change in the community?*



*Do you have a desire for greater civic involvement?*



The findings of the research show that absence of belief in positive change and lack of interest in civic engagement (both in NGOs or as an individual) are the main reasons for the continued low level of civic participation in socio-political life in the country.

The focus group participants state the following factors that contribute to the low levels of civic involvement and participation:

- ♦ Lack of will and perseverance among young people.
- ♦ Education system that does not stimulate students' civic participation.
- ♦ Family that does not nurture children to show proactive behavior.
- ♦ Lack of social acknowledgement, stimulation, and merit for youth activism.

***“The problem is rooted in the society itself, starting with the parents. They don't teach their children how to approach the society. On another hand, good action should be rewarded by the society.”***  
***Female, 19, Prilep***

## Factors that promote involvement

Responsiveness of the institutional system is the key motivator for first time voters to be more involved in activities that could effectuate change in the community. This was cited by every fourth respondent in the quantitative survey. Other motivating factors are related to representation of their interests (cited by 18%) and personal or family benefits (cited by 15%).

First time voters urge the NGO sector to be more visible, involved, transparent, and active. NGOs can rely upon different media channels, primarily social media, to inform young people about current initiatives and activities and incentivise them to participate.

***“I think the NGOs should have more visible online presence or a more extensive network of organizations. Their initiatives should be more transparent. Facebook isn't enough. They should use more portals or Instagram.”***  
***Female, 18, Skopje***

Whereas two thirds of the citizens do not believe they can make any civic impact, 13% believe they can make a meaningful impact in their municipality, 8% in the parliament, 5% with regards to the decisions of the Prime Minister and 3% of the ministers.

## Willingness and ability to participate in civic activities

With regards to participation in public life, 41% cited preference for opinion polling, 31% prefer brochures and leaflets as a source of information, 26% prefer direct meetings with colleagues and friends to discuss personal or family concerns, and 21% prefer online meetings or discussions.

*In which of the civic activities are you willing to participate?*

**41%**

Respond a  
questionnaire



**31%**

Read a brochure  
or a leaflet



**26%**

Meet colleagues,  
friends to discuss



# RURAL YOUTH

Seventy-three per cent (73%) of the rural youth have never been involved in an event, activity or process that could impact the community or their immediate surroundings, nor are interested in becoming more civically engaged. Interestingly, this demographic group shows the highest motivation for civic engagement in their communities in comparison to first time voters and youth in general.

*Have you been involved in any activity that could have affected any change in the community?*



*Are you interested in more active civic involvement?*



Survey respondents with higher education tend to have a pronounced interest in civic involvement.

Fifty-eight per cent (58%) of the survey participants do not believe in making a positive change by individual or NGO engagement, while 25% lack interest in civic engagement, which explains the low motivation for civic participation.

The focus group findings show that young people from rural areas tend to have individualistic approach and become politically active for personal gains (e.g. obtain employment). With regards to political party participation, rural youth view the economic stability (the party as an employment agency) as the highest priority. However, their party membership does not appear to be very effective in policy making and addressing local issues of concern.

The factors that contribute to low civic involvement and participation can be summarized as follows:

- Young people lack unity and collective action to achieve goals due to strong division along political lines;
- Young people focus on personal interests and benefits, particularly employment;
- The family system does not stimulate young people to show proactive behavior.

*“ The voice of young people is not heard here. You can have any university degree, but if you aren't a member of a political party, you are nothing. ”*

*Male, 21, Kosturino*

*“ I think the problem is that we are all convinced that we have to be party members in order to achieve something and change something. ”*

*Female, 18, Mogila*

## Factors that promote involvement

Responsiveness of the institutional system is a key motivator for this group to be more involved in activities that could effectuate change in the community, which is cited by four out of ten respondents. Other important motivating factors are related to their representation interests (indicated by 19%) and prospects for personal or family benefits (indicated by 10%).

Whereas almost half of the respondents (48%) do not believe they can make an impact as a citizen, 29% believe they can make a meaningful impact in their municipality and 7% believe they can impact the ministers (the central government).

# Willingness and ability to participate in civic activities

On the question whether they would be willing to participate in civic activities, 44% of the rural youth indicated they would rather prefer to respond to a questionnaire, 38% would meet colleagues and/or friends to discuss local personal or family concerns and 37% would prefer to seek information via brochures or leaflets. The percentage of rural youth that do not prefer to be more active is higher: 82% would not attend a political party meeting, 72% would not attend a public debate and/or an online/zoom meeting, 65% would not participate in civic activities, and 61% would not read an online brochure or leaflet.

## *In which of the civic activities are you willing to participate?*

**44%**

Respond a questionnaire



**37%**

Read a brochure or a leaflet



**38%**

Meet colleagues, friends to discuss



# WOMEN

Eight out of ten survey respondents are not interested in increasing their civic activity.

*Have you been involved in any event, activity, or process that could have effected change in the community or the place where you live?*



*Are you interested in a more active civic involvement?*



There are less civically engaged respondents among women (26%) than among men (40%).

Also, more men (30%) compared to women (17%) are interested in more active civic involvement.

Women respondents indicated the following factors that contribute to the low level of civic participation:

- ♦ Lack of transparency, responsiveness, and accountability of the institutions.
- ♦ Lack of professionalism, competence, and motivation among public employees.
- ♦ Insufficient motivation to persevere in pursuing initiatives and their perception as “already lost battles”.

- ♦ Persistence of stereotypes and prejudices against women.
- ♦ Low self-confidence and human rights awareness among women.
- ♦ Excessive workload with households responsibilities and child and elderly care.

The above outline of factors shows that female civic participation is affected by challenges in complex ways. In addition to the challenges faced by both genders, women have been traditionally expected to provide family-related caregiving services which in turn diminish their leisure time and opportunities to engage in civic activities.

*“ I believe that we distrust the institutions because they are playing ping-pong with us. Whenever we complain, they say that it is not in their domain. So you are referred to another institution, and there again they say they are not in charge. This continues until you get tired of playing ping-pong, you withdraw and give up. ”*

*Woman, 45, Shtip*

## Factors that promote involvement

Responsiveness of the system is the key motivator for the women respondents to participate in activities that could effectuate change in the community, as noted by 26% of the respondents. Other important factors pertain to prospects for obtaining personal or family-related benefits (15%) and representation of their interests (11%).

More than half of the respondents (57%) believe that they cannot make an impact as a citizen, whereas, similarly to other demographic groups, 26% believe they can make a meaningful impact in their municipality. Less than 5% believe they can influence the Prime Minister, the Parliament, ministers and the President of the country.

More women (57%) than men (48%) believe that they cannot make an impact as a citizen. This is not surprising given that women are less active than men and have lower awareness of their citizen rights.

Further breakdown of the survey data suggests that disbelief in own impact is most pronounced among women in the following categories:

- ♦ Women - members of ethnic Albanian or other ethnic: non-majority ethnic community
- ♦ Women with lower education
- ♦ Women - housewives
- ♦ Women in rural areas



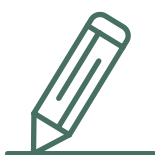
## Willingness and ability to participate in civic activities

Concerning participation in civic activities, 39% of the respondents cited a preference for brochures or leaflets as information means, 37% preferred meetings with colleagues/friends to discuss personal or family issues, and 36% cited a preference for participation in polling. A significantly smaller percentage of the respondents is willing to participate in civic activities, notably party gatherings (12%), online meetings (13%), and public debates (14%).

*In which of the civic activities are you willing to participate?*

**36%**

Respond a questionnaire



**39%**

Read a brochure or a leaflet



**37%**

Meet colleagues, friends to discuss



In general, women tend to participate less in the above civic activities compared to men.

The research shows that 56% of the respondents do not believe in making positive change by individual engagement (34%) or engagement in NGOs (22%), while 31% lack interest in politics, presumably due to low motivation resulting from excessive household workload and caregiving activities. Women tend to indicate a increased lack of interest in politics (31%) compared to men (19%).

Female participants in the focus group discussions share the perception that this is a “men’s world” where the voices of women are not seriously considered. They believe female initiatives are less effective compared to male or mixed-gender initiatives. The respondents underline that the effectiveness of female initiatives is contingent upon a variety of factors including cooperation with other people, teamwork, mutual support, persistence and willpower, which compensate for the lack of institutional support and fend off persistent systemic barriers that disadvantage women.

Another issue emphasized by the respondents is the education of girls, stimulation of their self-confidence, assertiveness and persistence, as well as raising gender equality awareness. They also stressed that boys should be brought up to respect women and promote gender equality instead of patriarchal gender roles at home and in the society.

**“ In fact, I believe women are more active. Unfortunately in this chauvinistic and patriarchal society, when women take initiative, we get very little attention. Our initiatives may even be ridiculed, unlike the mixed initiatives or male initiatives. I get the impression that we are perceived as being always dissatisfied; always looking for something we don’t have... so I think that although women take initiatives, there is no serious consideration. ”**

**Woman, 28, Kumanovo**

# RURAL WOMEN

Eight out of ten survey respondents have never been involved nor do they intend to engage in civic activities.

*Have you been involved in any event, activity, or process that could effect change in the community or the place where you live?*



*Do you have a desire for greater civic involvement?*



The discussion within the focus groups indicate several factors that contribute to low civic involvement and participation of the rural women:

- Stereotypes and prejudices against women.
- Lack of self-confidence and low awareness of their rights.
- Discrimination of women in terms of age, physical appearance, and political orientation.
- Excessive workload with households responsibilities, childcare and elderly care.

It should be noted that the factors mentioned are specific to rural women and are not typical for the general population.

*“ I agree that women today are much more emancipated, educated and aware of their qualities. But, to be honest, women have more responsibilities at home than men. This is one of the reasons why we are prevented from attending gatherings and events as much as we want to. We are much more attached to our home than to what happens outside ”*

*Female, 66, Ilinden*

Rural women perceive gender inequality as a factor of exclusion due to household, child and elderly care responsibilities which limits their opportunities for civic involvement and participation.

*“ I think women have power, but the time has not yet come the world to acknowledge how powerful we are. Although it is said that women are equal with men, and they have rights and abilities, it is still very difficult. I say this because there are several grounds for discrimination. We are not discriminated only as women, but also by political party affiliation, whether we are beautiful or not, whether we are older or younger. ”*

*Female, 31, Livada*

Rural women cite limited time and assistance with day-to-day responsibilities to get more involved in civic activities. In addition, gender prejudices and stereotypes, including low awareness, were mentioned as a demotivating factor. These are contextualized primarily within the limited conditions (for example, the infrastructure) rather than within the concept of gender equality.

## Factors that promote involvement

Responsiveness of the system is the key motivator for the women respondents to become more involved in activities that could effect change in the community, as noted by 30% of the respondents. Other important motivating factors relate to the representation of their interests (15%) and prospects for obtaining personal or family-related benefits (14%).

Below is an outline of recommendations that may help increase civic involvement and participation of rural women:

- ♦ Fair division of household chores and spousal or other family members support.
- ♦ Raising awareness about women rights through organized forums and informal meetings on municipal level.
- ♦ Building self-confidence, exercising public speech and speech in front of the media, in particular for the younger population of women.
- ♦ Stimulating persistence, assertiveness and gender equality when raising and educating young girls.

Sixty-three per cent (63%) of the women respondents living in rural settlements do not believe they can make a civic impact, 14 % more than women respondents living in urban settlements.

Twenty-three per cent (23%) per cent of the rural women respondents believe they can make a meaningful impact in their municipality. Less than 5% believe they can influence the Prime Minister, the Parliament, ministers and the President of the country.

## Willingness and ability to participate in civic activities

Concerning participation in public life, rural women cited a preference to polling (38%), brochures or leaflets as information means (36%), and meetings with colleagues/friends to discuss personal or family issues (34%). A significantly lower percentage of the respondents are willing to participate in political party gatherings (8%), online meetings (12%), and public debates (14%).

The research shows that 63% of the respondents do not believe in making positive change (both by individual engagement (43%) and by engagement in NGOs (20%)), whereas 25% lack interest in politics, which explain the low motivation for civic participation.

Among the polled group of rural women, the percentage of those who do not believe in making positive change by individual engagement (43%) is higher compared to urban women (27%).

### *In which of the civic activities are you willing to participate?*

**38%**

Respond a questionnaire



**36%**

Read a brochure or a leaflet



**34%**

Meet colleagues, friends to discuss



Another issue emphasized by the respondents is the education of girls, stimulation of their self-confidence, assertiveness and persistence, as well as raising their gender equality awareness. They also stressed that boys should be brought up to respect women and promote gender equality instead of patriarchal gender roles at home and in the society.

# PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Two out of ten respondents have been involved in civic activity and express interest to be more civically engaged.

*Have you been involved in any event, activity, or process that could have effected any change in the community or the place where you live?*



*Are you interested in a more active civic involvement?*



The focus group participants indicated the following factors that contribute to their low civic involvement and civic participation, which are very similar to the factors emphasized by other demographic groups:

- ♦ Most people are passive and wait for others to take responsibility i.e. wait for “someone else to do the job”.
- ♦ People are disappointed and distrust the institutions.
- ♦ The institutions are dysfunctional, indifferent, and strongly politically influenced. “They are not aware that they are a service to the people. They act like gods”.

However, a number of factors are specific only to this demographic group:

- ♦ The institutions are not familiar with the needs of the persons with disabilities.
- ♦ Institutions lack access points and elevators.
- ♦ A number of associations represent the interests of the persons with disabilities, however there is a lack of coordination of activities, while the presidents of those associations “manipulate us because they take money from the state”.
- ♦ Discrimination against persons with disabilities: “mental barrier among people with regards to persons with disabilities”; stereotyping their behavior that they avoid work and are reluctant to engage in civic activities.
- ♦ No institution in the country takes the lead in the protection of the rights of the persons with disabilities.

**“ I think that the biggest problems are the stereotypes and prejudices about persons with disabilities. The society still does not perceive us as people with equal abilities, opportunities and capacities. ”**  
**Female, 44, Skopje**

## Factors that promote involvement

Personal or family benefits (24%) are the key motivators for most survey respondents to become more involved in activities that could effect change in the community. Other important motivating factors are related to their representation (18%) and responsiveness of the system (14%).

This group tends to be more motivated to participate in social and political life when there are tangible benefits to the quality of their life. Conversely, only 4% of the respondents believe that improving democracy is a factor that promotes involvement. There is an apparent tendency to generalize the efforts for “improving democracy” and to perceive them as an abstraction that does not resonate with the respondents.

Slightly over half of the respondents (51%) do not believe that they can have an impact as a citizen, while more than one quarter (27%) believe they can make a meaningful impact in their municipality.

The survey shows that the Parliament is perceived as a place where they can have the least impact as citizens, despite the direct election of their representatives.

## Willingness and ability to participate in civic activities

With regards to participation in public life, the survey respondents are most willing to meet colleagues/friends to discuss an issue of personal or family concern (46%), read a brochure or a leaflet (44%) and respond to a questionnaire (42%). The interest for participation in a public debate (14%), political party gathering (13%), and online meeting (7%) is significantly lower among this group of respondents.

### *In which of the civic activities are you willing to participate?*

**42%**

Respond a  
questionnaire



**44%**

Read a brochure  
or a leaflet



**46%**

Meet colleagues,  
friends to discuss



# ROMA

The majority of Roma survey participants are not interested in more active civic engagement.

*Have you been involved in any event, activity, or process that could have effected change in the community or the place where you live?*



*Are you interested in more active civic involvement?*



Participants with higher education and public sector employees indicated a higher interest in more active civic engagement.

Respondents indicated that health care, economic and social stability as well as local concerns are the primary issues that spark their interest for social and political activity.



The research shows that they are not very interested in politics (25%) and they don't believe that their civic engagement can effectuate change (41%), which is likely the reason for their lack of interest in active civic life.

Similarly to other population groups on the lower spectrum of income, many members of the Roma community are primarily focused on survival, with excessive energy and efforts directed towards addressing basic, existential problems. According to VOA<sup>17</sup> News, poverty is considered a major factor of voter discouragement. Nevertheless, poverty may also comprise grounds for civic mobilization and activism.

The survey participants indicated the following factors that inform their low civic involvement and civic participation:

- ♦ The non-governmental organizations dealing with problems of the Roma population are politically biased and divided.
- ♦ The Roma population is not united and organized.
- ♦ There are too many political parties representing the ethnic Roma population.
- ♦ Roma people are typically not educated, are very poor, and deal with persistent existential problems due to which they don't usually have time and resources for civic involvement.
- ♦ Roma population is not united and not organized.
- ♦ There are too many political parties representing the ethnic Roma population.

***“ When I talk about the Roma population, there are several political parties and NGOs in each city. For example in Bitola, there are three presidents of political parties and 3 non-governmental organizations. So a total of 6 relevant people appear as ‘leaders’ of the Roma population. So who will point out the problems Roma people have? We need good management and focus on the current and priority problems of the Roma population. Female, 37, Bitola ”***

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<sup>17</sup> “Election Brings No Hope to Macedonia's Roma-run ‘Ghetto,’ say Voters”, Voice of America (December 9, 2016), available at: <https://www.voanews.com/europe/election-brings-no-hope-macedonias-roma-run-ghetto-say-voters>, accessed on October 21, 2020.

## Factors that promote involvement

Personal or family benefits are the key motivators to become more involved in activities that could effectuate change in the community, as noted by one quarter of the respondents of this group. Other important motivating factors are related to the responsiveness of the system and the institutions (13%) and the representation of their interests (13%). In other words, issues perceived as abstract and political, outside of the remit of their quality of life – such as high-level corruption, EU reforms – are generally not the primary reasons for Roma community members to become active voters or active citizens. Seven out of ten respondents (68%) do not believe that they can make an impact as a citizen, while two out of ten (21%) believe they can make a meaningful impact in their municipality. Less than 5% believe they can influence the Prime Minister, the Parliament, ministers and the President of the country.

## Willingness and ability to participate in civic activities

With regards to participation in public life, Roma community members are most willing to respond to a questionnaire (43%), read a brochure or a leaflet (29%) and meet colleagues/friends to discuss personal or family issues (27%). Based on the focus group discussion, which confirms the findings of the field survey, the reasons for the low socio-political engagement are rooted in the overall marginalization of the Roma community, their existential problems, social divisions within their demographic group or polarization of the wider society, low level of education, excessive poverty, as well as general disappointment in politics and scepticism in their ability to effectuate change.

*In which of the civic activities are you willing to participate?*

**43%**

Respond a  
questionnaire



**29%**

Read a brochure  
or a leaflet



**27%**

Meet colleagues,  
friends to discuss



# REMOTE COMMUNITIES

Seventy per cent (70%) of people living in remote communities have never been involved in any event, activity, or process that could impact the community or the place they live, nor do they want to become more civically engaged.

*Have you been involved in any event, activity, or process that could have effected any change in the community or the place where you live?*



*Are you interested in a more active civic involvement?*



Sixty-six per cent (66%) of the survey participants do not believe in making a positive change (both by individual engagement and by NGO engagement), while 18% lack interest in civic engagement, which explains the low motivation for civic participation.

Focus group findings show that the participants perceive the civic activism as necessary, since they face many difficulties in their everyday life and “something must be done in this regard”. Nevertheless, they indicate that civic involvement is insufficient in the remote communities.

The factors that contribute to minimal civic involvement and low levels of civic participation, among others, can be summarized as follows:

- Citizens lack persistence and proactiveness to resolve problems.
- Citizens feel helpless and do not believe their efforts will have results.
- Citizens are disappointed in the political parties.
- Public sector employees are demotivated; something can be achieved only through “connections”, i.e. if you know somebody.

**“ I work in an institution and for me it is easy to get things done, but for someone else, especially for those who live in remote villages, things are not the same. Nobody in the institutions will talk to them and nobody will try to help them with their problem.”**

**Female, 49, Kriva Palanka**

## Factors that promote involvement

Personal or family benefits are the key motivators for the majority of the survey participants to become more involved in activities that could effectuate change in the community, as noted by 22% of the respondents. Other important motivating factors are related to the representation of their interests (20%) and responsiveness of the system (16%).

Even though more than half of the respondents (56%) do not believe that they can make an impact as citizens, 23% consider that they can make a meaningful impact in their municipality and only 5% believe they can impact the parliament.

## Willingness and ability to participate in civic activities

When asked whether they would be willing to participate in civic activities, 48% of the respondents indicated they would respond to a questionnaire, 41% would meet colleagues and friends to discuss a personal or family issue and 39% would source information from a brochure or leaflet. This group is reluctant to join online communication, i.e 80% would not like to participate in online meetings. Furthermore, 76% would not attend a political party meeting and 74% would not participate in a public debate.

***In which of the civic activities are you willing to participate?***

**48%**

Respond a questionnaire



**39%**

Read a brochure or a leaflet



**41%**

Meet colleagues, friends to discuss



# VERY POOR

More than three-quarters of the respondents have never been involved in any event, activity, or process that could impact the community or the place they live, nor do they want to become more civically engaged.

*Have you been involved in any event, activity, or process that could have effected change in the community or the place where you live?*



*Are you interested in a more active civic involvement?*



Sixty-two per cent (62%) of the survey participants do not believe in making a positive change either by individual or NGO engagement, while 25% lack interest in civic engagement, which explains the low motivation for civic participation.

Due to their difficult socio-economic situation, they do not contemplate civic activism and are primarily focused on survival.

*“ Our basic existential needs are at stake, so we can't think about anything else. If a person has a normal life and income, maybe he would be an active citizen. If a person doesn't have that, then his only focus would be how to survive. ”*

*Female, 42, Kumanovo*

The factors that contribute to minimal civic involvement and low levels of civic participation can be summarized as follows:

- ♦ Focus on survival - the energy is directed towards finding a solution to the basic existential problems.
- ♦ Lost trust in the system and institutions.
- ♦ Citizens feel helpless and powerless.
- ♦ Fear and pressure from the governing political parties.
- ♦ Lack of freedom of speech.

## Factors that promote involvement

The prospects for personal or family benefits are the key motivators for most survey participants to become more involved in activities that could effectuate change in the community, as noted by 18% of the respondents. Other important motivating factors are related to their representation (17%) and the responsiveness of the institutions (16%).

Seven out of ten respondents (69%) do not believe they can make an impact as a citizen (17% more compared to the general population), whereas more than one fifth (21%) believe that they could make a meaningful impact in the municipality, but not in other public institutions.

## Willingness and ability to participate in civic activities

To the question whether they would be willing to participate in civic activities, 47% of the respondents indicated they would respond to a questionnaire, 47% would meet colleagues/friends to discuss a personal or a family issue and 32% would prefer reading a brochure or a leaflet. More notable are the percentages of the actions they would avoid. Namely, 86% would not like to participate in an online meeting, 81% would not attend a political party meeting and 81% would not attend a public debate.

*In which of the civic activities are you willing to participate?*

**47%**

Respond a questionnaire



**32%**

Read a brochure or a leaflet



**47%**

Meet colleagues, friends to discuss



# CHRONICALLY UNEMPLOYED

Eighty per cent of the respondents are interested in a more active civic engagement.

*Have you been involved in any event, activity, or process that could have effected change in the community or the place where you live?*



*Are you interested in a more active civic involvement?*



Sixty-one per cent (61%) of the survey participants do not believe in making a positive change by individual engagement and by NGO engagement, while 25% lack interest in civic engagement, which explains the low motivation for civic participation.

The factors that contribute to minimal civic involvement and low levels of civic participation, among others, can be summarized as follows:

- ♦ Strong political influence in all state institutions and the private sector.
- ♦ Concentration of power in political parties.
- ♦ Citizens fear being labeled (political parties are attributing civic activities to opponent parties) and fear to openly express dissatisfaction.

- ♦ Weak rule of law and lack of good governance.
- ♦ Freedom of speech limitations.

**“ I think that people are too scared, so they cannot get organized. They are afraid of losing their jobs, their incomes. When they talk to each other, they say: come on, let’s go, let’s show some strength, the strength and power are with the people. But when the time comes to go out, to say things loud and clear, the story changes. People start saying: but why should I go, let the others go and say that... ”**  
**Female, 59, Stip**

## Factors that promote involvement

Responsiveness of the institutional system is the key motivator for this group to be more involved in activities that could effectuate change in the community, which is cited by a quarter of the respondents (25%). Other important motivating factors relate to representation of their interests (indicated by 15%) and obtaining personal or family benefits (indicated by 14%).

Despite that almost half of the respondents i.e. parliament, ministries, prime - minister (54%) do not believe that they can make an impact as a citizen, 30% believe they can make a meaningful impact in their municipality. Other institutions were mentioned by less than 3% of the respondents.

## Willingness and ability to participate in civic activities

To the question of whether they would be willing to participate in civic activities, 46% of the respondents indicated they would respond to a questionnaire, 42% would meet colleagues/friends to discuss a personal or family issue and 46% would read a brochure or a leaflet.

Similarly to the general population and the other demographic groups, the percentage of actions they would avoid is more pronounced: 83% would not attend a political party meeting, 76% would not attend a public debate and 79% would not participate in an online meeting.

***In which of the civic activities are you willing to participate?***

**46%**

Respond a questionnaire



**46%**

Read a brochure or a leaflet



**42%**

Meet colleagues, friends to discuss





# OTHER ETHNIC COMMUNITIES

Seventy-seven per cent (77%) of the respondents are not interested to be more civically engaged.

*Have you been involved in any event, activity, or process that could have effected change in the community or the place where you live?*



*Are you interested in a more active civic involvement?*



Furthermore, the survey participants outlined the following factors that contribute to their low civic participation:

- ♦ Passive and indifferent mindset, culture, and education which does not recognize, stimulate or award active behavior.
- ♦ Division of the people, lack of solidarity.
- ♦ Strong political influence in the civic society sector.
- ♦ Fear from sanctions.

*“ Bring the people to the verge of existence, intimidate them and their mindset will no longer be a problem. ”*

*Male, 46, ethnic Turk, Bitola*

## Factors that promote involvement

Responsiveness of the system (24%) and personal or family benefits (23%) are the key motivators for the majority of the respondents to become more civically engaged and to effectuate change in the community, as noted by a quarter of the respondents. Other motivating factors concern representation of their interests (14%).

Six out of ten respondents (57%) do not believe they can make a civic impact, comprising a 5% increase compared to the general population (52%). More than one quarter (27%) believe they can make a meaningful impact in their municipality.

The bulk of the respondents believe that they cannot impact the work of the parliament despite the direct representation model. In line with the trend across all demographic groups, the respondents believe they cannot make a meaningful impact to any other institution except to their municipality.

## Willingness and ability to participate in civic activities

Concerning participation in public life, the survey respondents are most willing to respond to a questionnaire (52%), meet colleagues or friends to discuss an issue of personal or family concern (46%), and read brochures or leaflets (40%).

*In which of the civic activities are you willing to participate?*

**52%**

Respond a questionnaire



**40%**

Read a brochure or a leaflet



**46%**

Meet colleagues, friends to discuss

