





GOOD PRACTICE GUIDE FOR THE  
SOCIAL INCLUSION OF ROMA IN EUROPE

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GUIA DE BONES PRÀCTIQUES PER A LA  
INCLUSIÓ SOCIAL DEL POBLE GITANO A EUROPA

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GUÍA DE BUENAS PRÁCTICAS PARA LA  
INCLUSIÓN SOCIAL DEL PUEBLO GITANO EN EUROPA

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EUROPAN IJITO-HERRIA GIZARTERATZEKO  
JARDUNBIDE EGOKIEN GIDA

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SIKAVIPNASQO LIL-E LÁCHE BUTÉNQO PAL-O SOCIÀLO  
ANDRECHUDIPEN E RROMANE SELÀQO AND-I EVRÒPA

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*Catalunya*  
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# Presentation

This good practices guide is the result of two years' work by the ROMAin<sup>1</sup> Project, *Policies on the social inclusion of the Roma population in Europe: towards the success of social intervention* of 2005-2007, funded by the European Commission, from the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities of the European Commission. The project was based on the search for experiences that have been successful in their application and social intervention with the aim of being able to extract criteria for action and work methodologies that promote the success of the interventions aimed at the Romany population in different areas: health, education, employment, housing, social participation, gender, etc. Within the framework of the project, the partners carried out a three-day workshop with six different working groups in these areas, leading to great debate and coming up with specific conclusions for each area.

This Good Practices Guide for the Social Inclusion of the Romany Population presents the recommendations that arose from the work done in this project. The recommendations that are offered in this guide are aimed at general use: however, this does not reduce the importance of concentrating on the specific situation of each case and adapting the interven-

1. <http://ww.romainclusion.org>

tions when necessary to achieve greater success. All the interventions should be carried out with the collaboration of the Romany population, based on an exhaustive study of it, taking into account its needs and vindications. The participation of the Romany population, in our case, is a key factor to achieving success in any intervention which has this group as its target.

The project includes the participation of 10 partners at different transnational levels divided between four European countries, including public administrations, organisations, universities and networks. The leader of the partnership is the coordinator of the project, the Department of Governance and Public Administrations (Generalitat of Catalonia), specifically the Secretariat of Citizen Action.

The project team is made up of the following partners: in Spain, in the Autonomous Community of Catalonia, Barcelona Town Council (the Municipal Council of the Romany Population), the Consortium of the Mina District (Sant Adrià del Besòs), Prat de Llobregat Town Council, Girona Town Council and the University of Barcelona; the Directorate of Social Welfare - Department of Housing and Social Affairs of the Government of the Basque Country in the Autonomous Community of the Basque Country and, in the Autonomous Community of Andalusia, the Secretariat for the Romany Community of the Ministry for Equality and Social Welfare of the Andalusian Government.

With regard to the rest of the European countries that are participating, there is the National Romany Agency of the Government of Romania, the International Romani Women's Network (IRWN) with its head office in Finland and finally, the European Roma Information Office (ERIO), with its head office in Belgium. This network of partners in the project and the experience of the organisations with regard to the social inclusion of the Romany population has enabled the project to compile a great variety of interventions on a European scale on which to base the analysis of the good practices, to be able to extract criteria on which to base future interventions. In this way, the interventions will always be designed based on successful criteria.

The project also includes the participation of an Advisory Council. This Council consists of Romany people of different profiles, ages and academic levels. It is made up of three members from different countries and three

members from Spain. It is a work instrument whose objective is to ensure the participation of the Romany people in the entire development of the project, in its different phases, evaluation and assessment. This Council is only made up of Romany people and is equally weighted with regard to gender. Its main functions are:

- To provide knowledge.
- To check documents.
- To control that the project is developed taking into account all the voices.
- To evaluate the entire research process and its conclusions.

And to guarantee that the results obtained through the project have a social use and contribute to the transformation of the reality of the Romany population and not to reproducing the social inequalities to which this group is subject.



# Introduction

The Romany population is found all over Europe and makes up the largest minority group on the continent. It is also one of the most stigmatised groups, suffering from high levels of social exclusion and poverty that affect it in all areas: education, employment, health, social and political participation, housing, etc. In recent years, the European Commission has insisted on the need to overcome the situations of social exclusion suffered by all minority groups and in the specific case of the Romany population, the need to recognize it as a minority group and to commit itself to actions and programmes to combat its exclusion. The National Action Plans for Social Inclusion of many European countries also reflect this need<sup>1</sup>, as they looked at the negative social and economic situation of its Romany population.

This guide hopes to serve as an aid for people working for the social inclusion of the Romany population. The recommendations that are given below are taken from some experiences that have been carried out or that are being carried out with the Romany population in Europe and are considered to be examples of good practices. By good practices we understand experiences which, on the one hand, have had success in the social inclusion of the Romany population, promoting equality and respect to other citizens, and on the other

1. [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/employment\\_strategy/national\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/employment_strategy/national_en.htm)

hand, include the participation of members of this community in the organisation, decision making and the development of the projects and experiences that are understood to be good practices. This guide presents the nine components that are considered to be necessary to achieve success, and that are also useful for meeting the objectives of the different National Action Plans for the social inclusion of the Romany population.

After commenting on the components that favour the success of the project, some experiences that are considered to be good practices are presented, divided into six areas of action. Finally, conclusions are reached which include recommendations, proposals and results of the work carried out during the course of the ROMAin project, with the aim that they should serve as a guide for the introduction of social inclusion projects for the Romany population. Under the general premise that social inclusion means developing the capacity and opportunity to take a full role in society, not just in economic terms but also in social, psychological and political terms, following the definition of the Directorate General for Employment and Social Affairs of the European Commission<sup>2</sup>.

2. [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/index\\_es.html](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/index_es.html)

## Objectives

The objectives of this Good Practice Guide for the Social Integration of the Romany Population in Europe are the following:

- Promoting the social inclusion of the Romany population in Europe based on successful experiences.
- Disseminating the good practices with the Romany population that are of European impact.
- Identifying successful components with the Romany population and the suitable methodologies for intervention in multicultural and intercultural societies.
- Promoting inclusion policies for and with the Romany population based on successful experiences, in any area and any kind of intervention.



## **Components to be taken into account on designing policies and interventions for the Romany population: methodological recommendations**

The objective of bringing together and analysing different kinds of projects and interventions in Europe of the ROMAin project is to be able to identify methodological criteria for the social intervention and the design of policies that promote the social inclusion of the Romany population. In accordance with the general objectives of the ROMAin project, special importance has been given to successful practices and initiatives gathered and analysed through transnational cooperation and taking into account the multicultural and intercultural context of our societies.

Therefore, the analysis that has been done followed a common methodology of critical communicative research in social sciences <sup>3</sup> which includes

3. Flecha, R; Gómez, J.; M. Sanchez; and Latorre, A. *La metodología comunicativa crítica*. 2006. Barcelona: El Roure; Centre of Research in Theories and Practices that Overcome Inequalities (CREA) University of Barcelona.

the identification of the dimensions of exclusion and transformation. In this sense, it refers to different kinds of elements whether they are objective and external to people (actions, regulations, procedures, social dynamics, etc.) or elements that are specific to individuals (age, social class, level of education), that can be assimilated and interpreted in a different way for each individual. The components of exclusion are the barriers which some people or groups come up against when they try to participate in a social practice or benefit. If these barriers did not exist, the practices, as well as the benefits, would be for everyone. In addition, the transformation components are in fact all those elements that contribute to overcoming these kinds of barriers that create obstacles and complicate the access and incorporation of individuals and of groups to a social practice or benefit.

In the analysis of the experiences brought together in the ROMAin project, the attention was concentrated on the dimensions of transformation, in other words, on showing the components which, more than being a mere description, indicate or show forms of organisation in which the decision-making and the functions contribute to the social inclusion of minority collectives, in this case the Romany population. This association of the components of transformation with the “ways of proceeding” or postures that favour inclusion facilitate the success of the inclusive practices.

When one designs any kind of intervention and is after the social inclusion of the Romany population, it is important to consider the elements that exclude it and the elements that include it that should be reinforced. By elements that exclude it, we understand all those which contribute to reinforcing the barriers that the Romany population find with regard to their social inclusion, elements that perpetuate the disadvantages and the inequalities, that can be motivated by many different lines of action, for example when the direct participation of the Romany population is not included in the design, development and assessment of them: these are actions which are based on existing prejudices without preliminary research into the real situation, actions which seek one-off minimum solutions without considering the long-term question, etc.

On the other hand, the transformation elements of any action are of an opposing character, they include the participation of the Romany population in all their design, development and assessment, in which it plays an

**Components to be taken into account**

active, committed role in all the stages, not just being consulted for occasional study. There is a firm base of research into the real necessities of the population, not just the ones that are assumed to be problematic. The objective is to go for the maximum, not just improving the existing situation but situating it on a par with that of mainstream society; the experiences of previous actions and their results must be taken into account to be able to extract their successful features and apply them to new situations and actions, etc.

The components that have been analysed the following:

## **Active social agents**

This component refers to the mobilisation of social agents. This is based on the fact that the greater the work and joint coordination between the different kinds of social agents that intervene in a society, the greater the influence they may have. Therefore, a transforming component will be the fact of promoting or developing synergies between the different social agents in obtaining the social interventions that promote overcoming social inequalities. Also included in these transforming components are the strategies for giving a particularly active role to the social agents.

## **Romany involvement**

This component includes all the methodological aspects concerned with promoting the involvement of the Romany people themselves in the policies and in the practices for the Romany population. In different methodological lines, it is considered to be a quality criteria that the people to benefit from the project should carry out an active, participant role in the development of the projects that are aimed at their own collective. The best way to ensure that the project is responding to the needs of the users is that they themselves should say what their demands are and at the same time, participate in the management of the response to their own needs.

## **Dialogue processes**

In this case, it consists of all the processes and formulas that favour dialogue, whether within the organisation itself, among the population that benefit from it or in the process of elaboration and decision making. Therefore, you will find transforming components concerning the dialogue processes when there is an increase in the diversity of voices or interlocutors, an increase in the debate and the processes for forming agreements and more horizontal relationships.

## **Guidance for multicultural aspects**

This component refers to the way in which the harmonious existence in current multicultural societies is taken on and promoted. It will be understood to be a transforming component when cultural diversity is conceived as a richness and at the same time there is equality concerning the differences maintaining, at the same time, the same expectations of results. Guidance for multicultural aspects is reflected in the objectives, the professional team, the beneficiary group or the processes set up.

## **Social use**

This component refers to the social use perceived in each project; in which aspects and to what degree the policies or the experiences are leading to social transformations in reality and improving the social inclusion of the Romany population. In this sense, we highlight the specific aspect of the projects and practices analysed that is contributing to having a key social use. The methodological aspects are strictly connected to the results themselves or to the impact of the project.

## **Guidance for success**

With regard to expectations, purposes and methodological elements, which in addition to improving the life conditions and mitigating social and economic

Components to be taken into account

difficulties, reflect a clear guidance to a continued improvement in the social conditions of the Romany population and to achieving successful results. With regard to underprivileged groups, care policies have traditionally promoted a tendency to compensation and achieving minimum challenges. In this case, the emphasis has been on analysing the transforming elements that have high expectations of improvement and from which good results are obtained.

## **Affirmative action**

This is defined as the type of action or policy that promotes the compensation of historic inequalities from which, for example, some ethnic minorities have suffered, for the collective improvement of their situation as fast as possible.



## **Application of recommended components: examples of successful good practices**

In the European states, a large part of the Romany population is found in a situation of social exclusion in aspects concerning quality of life due, to a large degree, to its socio-economic situation and to its exclusion and historic discrimination. Therefore the ROMAin project suggests the importance of examining each social area with great care with the aim of extracting specific successful experiences, to use them as positive examples and to help to design future interventions.

These specific areas include education, employment, gender, health, housing and participation.

To be able to foresee and design successful interventions in these areas, below we give some examples of successful good practices which we have analysed in each case and which include the recommendations presented in this Guide.

## Education

In the education area, three successful experiences have been selected and analysed: The Siklavipen Savorença project - Education for Everyone, of the Pere Closa Foundation <sup>4</sup>, the Meetings of Romany Students of Catalonia, of the Drom Kotar Mestipen Romany Women's Association <sup>5</sup> and the experience of the Learning Communities, of the Special Research Centre into Theories and Practices to Overcome Inequalities (CREA) of the University of Barcelona <sup>6</sup>.

### Siklavipen Savorença

The first of these experiences, the Siklavipen Savorença project, included the participation of families, schools and boys and girls to ensure regularity in education and attending school, optimising school performance, contributing to the creation of positive personal experiences for the boys and girls and creating awareness in the families of the educational needs of their children. The project also includes collaboration with primary schools, secondary schools as well as non-profit-making associations in various areas and other institutions.

The involvement of the Romany population in this project is ensured through the entity that manages it, as the Pere Closa Foundation is a Romany Association and the beneficiaries of the project are mainly Romany children. Gender equality is guaranteed by the fact that these beneficiaries are 50%

4. The Pere Closa Foundation was constituted thanks to an initiative from the Romany population itself in view of the socio-educational situation of the population. The need to train Romany boys and girls was considered to be urgent. The Education for Everyone– Siklavipen Savorença project is aimed at Romany children and young people of primary and secondary school age, parents and all tutors and teaching professionals and professionals from the socio-educational area in El Barcelonés region, with the aim of following up and supporting the children and young people in school, to improve their performance and participation. The project has a triangular structure between the family, the student and school and the involvement of the entire community.
5. The Drom Kotar Mestipen Association was constituted in 1999 with the main objective of **the equality and non-discrimination between men and women in the Romany community, as well as fostering solidarity work between women of different cultures**. Other objectives include the creation of spaces from the dialogue of Romany women, overcoming inequality and the use of information society tools. <http://www.dromkotar.org/>
6. The Special Research Centre into Theories and Practices to Overcome Inequalities (CREA) of the University of Barcelona is made up of university staff, research staff and professionals from different academic disciplines. Some of its central objectives, among others, include study in today's society and its structures and processes that create and reproduce social inequalities and social practices that contribute to overcoming them and the analysis of different kinds of discrimination that exist in societies. <http://www.pcb.ub.es/crea/>

#### Application of recommended components

girls and the 50% boys. Therefore, the project ensures gender equality in its results. In the project, in addition to the educators from the Pere Closa Foundation, tutors from the schools and members of the Romany population participate, as well as representatives from other associations and members of the general community. In this way, it includes a mixture of professionals and non-experts and groups, paid or on a voluntary basis, to guarantee dialogue and the technical quality of the project and its results.

The main impact of the project is to promote studies among the Romany population, as this increases the interest in study of its beneficiaries (students of school age) and motivates parents to support their children in their studies. Among the main aspects that are reinforced with this project, there are social attitudes and capacities to study. The project also facilitates the interaction between Romany and non-Romany parents and students, promoting dialogue and the exchange of perceptions of culture, thus contributing to relations and multicultural learning. One of the most important things learned in this project, is the need that, in today's society, all educational projects function on a base of values of solidarity, dialogue and comprehension of different cultures.

In a parallel way to the work with the students, the project works in the area of condemning exclusion, defending rights and transforming, in that it participates, for example, in all the community actions that are carried out in La Mina, Sant Adrià del Besòs, district (a metropolitan district in the province of Barcelona with a significant Romany population, among others, and with high levels of social exclusion) with the aim of alleviating the social and cultural deficit and through the promotion and dissemination of the rights of children.

## **Meetings of Romany Students of Catalonia**

The Drom Kotar Mestipen Romany Women's Association organises the Women's Meetings<sup>7</sup> creating an area for reflection and dialogue so that Romany women can speak about and determine their needs and in what way they want to improve their current situation overcoming the triple discrimination from which they suffer: that of being women, that of being Romany and that of not having the possibility to access higher education. At one of the first workdays, held in 2001, in which Romany and non-Romany people participated, it was

7. <http://www.dromkotar.org/> (22/03/07)

decided to form for working groups concerning different subjects: health, work, education and participation. Currently, these meetings bring together some 200 and 300 women on a Saturday afternoon, twice a year.

The involvement of the Romany community is very high, due in part to the participatory methodology adopted in the analysis and resolution of the main problems. The project fully reflects inclusion from a gender point of view, and is the result of work and collaboration of the Romany women themselves who are victims of the social and educational exclusion. Sharing experiences enables them to become aware of their own situation and to reflect upon the tools necessary to overcome their triple discrimination situation in the society in which they are found.

One of the main objectives of the courses is to overcome school absenteeism in Romany girls and young women. Being aware of the causes of early leaving or giving up school makes it easy to find alternatives and proposals for action to overcome this. In the same way, the meetings enable Romany girls and young women to reflect on their experiences in the different schools and institutions they have been at, exchanging ideas and reinforcing positive reference points. The meetings also represent a form of support to young Romany women where they can talk about the problems that affect them at school, at secondary school, at university, at adult education centres, with the aim of reducing the level of school failure which is particularly high in the transition from primary to secondary school.

In addition, social agents, institutions and Romany and non-Romany associations participate at the meetings. They are also destined at social agents who have a social and educational relationship with Romany women and who wish to acquire knowledge, information and assessment about this reality.

The meetings promote the projection of a positive image of the Romany woman. The dialogue between women of different education levels enables positive references to be created for young Romany women. The high number of meetings carried out shows the desire of the Romany population to transform and this transmits a positive image of Romany women in current society. The meetings promote dialogue between generations, a key element, as Romany little girls, young women and adult women of different ages and education levels who are in some process of training have a common area for debate and reflection and for constructing solutions.

#### **Application of recommended components**

The network of Romany women that has been created as a result of this project was born from the desire to condemn the exclusion from which Romany young women and adult women suffer, and therefore has the common objective of defending the educational rights and the right to equality of social opportunities. The transformation of the situation of inequality of Romany women in current society is the long-term objective of the project. In this way, they create and make visible positive references of academic success and they reinforce high expectations for education and for life, as another very important result is that the meetings foster educational promotion.

## **Learning Communities**

The Special Research Centre into Theories and Practices to Overcome Inequalities (CREA) of the University of Barcelona led to the development of the Learning Communities, which are based on the social and cultural transformation of a school and its setting, and which currently count on the support of different autonomous communities governments and advisory teams. Through dialogical learning, the learning communities seek a double objective: overcoming school failure and problems of harmonious living. For this, and in accordance with the current dialogical turn of society, the transformation of education centres in learning communities is necessary, where in a participatory process the education community and particularly families are involved in the centres, from the management to the classroom. Far from segregated educational practices based on reproduction and theories, these centres do not adapt teaching to the socio-cultural context, but they start by transforming the centre and end up by transforming the setting. All children have the right to quality education and to the correct development of capacities to achieve it. For this, neither equality understood as being homogenising, nor diversity that obviates equality are valid perspectives for achieving the objectives mentioned. Only by equalising the differences do we advance in overcoming educational inequalities.

The project of transforming Learning Community originates in the Verneda Sant Martí Adult Education Centre in Barcelona, founded in 1978. Therefore, it could be said that it is not an experience that has just appeared, but one that has a very solid scientific foundation<sup>8</sup>. The great amount of research into the experiences that effectively shows that they promote academic success and

8. <http://www.edaverneda.org/>

harmonious living (more than 6,000 throughout the world) and the reference to the theories and international research that is currently most relevant, back up its scientific nature. These practices and the social and educational theories show that only through interaction of the families and the community in general (the teaching staff, the district, non-teaching staff, volunteers, etc.) can a useful educational project to be built.

The education sectors that have decided to go ahead with this transformation have started the progressive incorporation of different actions. The most significant ones are the democratic management of the centre through fixed work commissioners, the transformation of the classroom through interactive groups into which families and other adult people enter and the training of families in the centre itself. Learning communities make it possible for centres to open up to the community and to be genuine areas of participation.

On the other hand, the interactive groups are a form of concreting dialogical learning within the classroom. They are based on equality or universality, in which they never separate any student outside the class with curricula adaptations or any kind of route. Assuming that the teaching staff alone cannot deal with all the boys and girls, people come in to help the teacher, not just teachers, but the families of the children themselves, volunteers, non-teaching staff, etc.

Training families is one of the most relevant actions. In the information society, the training that the different adults who live with the children (family members) receive fosters their learning much more than the training that is given by the teaching staff. With special emphasis on the coordination with families, as well as on their participation in all the spaces of the centre, the training of families is an essential priority in learning communities. Some examples could be the dialogical literary chats, in which families without professional qualifications enjoy the joint reading of authors of classical literature, such as García Lorca, Franz Kafka and James Joyce. The impact of this experience means that it is currently being taught as a subject at the University of Harvard.

As we can see, in all the areas of participation, including those of instrumental learning, there are families, social agents, volunteers who offer children increasingly diverse and rich interactions, an aspect of what can be achieved by trying to make sure that all the voices in the school are included to achieve real diversity.

#### **Application of recommended components**

## Employment

In the employment area, the projects selected and analysed include the “ACCEDER” Programme<sup>9</sup>, co-ordinated by the Romany General Secretariat Foundation in Spain and the Educators Courses of the Drom Kotar Mestipen Romany Women’s Association in Catalonia.

### “ACCEDER” Programme

The “ACCEDER” Programme, which started in 2000 and continues to be developed, is centred on the social inclusion of the Romany population who are outside the work market by offering assessment and guidelines to help them in their search for a job. This programme includes the collaboration of 13 Autonomous Communities in Spain and 44 different municipalities; it is a programme coordinated between different institutions and social associations, as well as the administrations that work in the field of training and employment. The different participating entities also operate as a network, linking the social area with the economic one, taking into account the specific situation and needs of the Romany community as well as the needs and requirements of the current labour market.

The participation of the Romany population in the programme is approximately 80%, not just as students on the training courses that are offered, but also through the participation of educators, thus collaborating in improving the work opportunities of the population. As this programme is coordinated by the General Romany Secretariat Foundation, the participation of the Romany population in the design and the introduction of the programme is guaranteed. In the same way, the programme ensures a specific gender perspective, as the training of women is one of the programme’s priorities, taking into account that in the Romany community women are even more discriminated against on the work market than men. 65% of the beneficiaries of the programme are women, for many of whom it is their first job in the formal work market. Throughout Spain, the programme includes the participation of many Romany and non-Romany professionals and non-professionals, to guarantee quality training and the insertion of each of the members of the programme. It also

9. The “ACCEDER” Programme is part of the Multi-Regional Operational Programme “ Fight Against Discrimination” of the European Social Fund. <http://www.fsgg.org/acceder/>

includes a follow-up to ensure the success of the contract thus facilitating the process for the workers, as well as the companies that contract them.

One of the main principles of the “ACCEDER” programme is to create awareness and to improve the social image of the Romany collective. This is achieved thanks to dialogue with the companies to change their stereotypes about Romany workers and to encourage them to contract Romany people. Through the integration of the Romany population into the work market, the programme also contributes to giving visibility to the Romany population in different areas, adding an extra element to its social inclusion in society as a whole. As far as intercultural dialogue is concerned, the programme fosters spaces of the dialogue between Romany and non-Romany people through the integration of the Romany population in the formal labour market, encouraging the harmonious existence of cultures and creating workspaces with members of different traditions and cultures that work together on a basis of equality.

Unfortunately, sometimes this programme has come up against situations of indirect exclusion and racism towards the Romany population, which it has condemned as Labour discrimination based on the directives 2000/43/EC and 2000/78/EC of the European Union against ethnic discrimination in the work market. One of the highlighted elements of the programme is the promotion of quality opportunities for the Romany population in the work market. In addition, one of the novelties of this programme is fostering new areas of employment for the Romany population that respond to the demands of today's work market.

As you can see from this brief description of the “ACCEDER” programme, it has successfully managed to include features that contribute to the authentic social integration of the Romany population based on its needs and demands combined with those of the formal labour market, contributing to its social integration into mainstream society through the creation of situations of equality and overcoming stereotypes and prejudices.

### **Outdoor support worker training for roma women**

The Drom Kotar Mestipen Romany Women's Association educators' courses are part of the activities of which the Romí pa o Chalavipén Training Plan is

made up<sup>10</sup>. The objective of the course is to give Romany women who have no academic qualifications the possibility to train and to facilitate their work and social insertion. Converting Romany women into social and education agents in their own community through their inclusion in institutions and schools has diverse implications. The presence within a school, civic centre or leisure activity centre for young people of a reference education figure involving Romany women fosters new expectations within the Romany population, helping to overcome problems such as school failure and the lack of participation of Romany children and young people, as well as transmitting a positive view of education.

The qualification is authorised and recognized by the Government of Catalonia. It is supported by the Department of Education and the Social Fund of the Caixa Terrassa. The course lasts for 305 hours, including teaching hours and practical work in school dining rooms and leisure centres.

The involvement of the Romany community is high due to the fact that the project is the result of the work carried out by an organisation of Romany women very close to the reality and the needs of Romany women. In addition, the central objective of the project is to give them the chance to train to be able to participate in the social and labour world. The perspective of gender is fully justified, as the main idea is to offer the chance to Romany women to train and to strengthen their integration, overcoming the risk of exclusion and the double discrimination for gender and ethnic origin. This programme provides the necessary tools, theoretically and practically, to be able to have an overall training, which guarantees the construction of a professionalism that helps correct insertion into the labour market. It is also based on the voluntary participation of the users which, in addition to meaning that the female Romany presence in the social and labour world increases, also represents the initial basis for future training.

Through training, the project helps good labour and social integration. By working in their own environment there is a greater contact between the Romany community and the rest of the community. This favours reciprocal knowledge and the projection of a positive image of the Romany population: The desire to

10. This project is part of the Training Plan of Drom Kotar Mestipen financed by the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs of the Spanish Government. <http://www.dromkotar.org/quien.htm>

train and to become social, actively employed agents helps them overcome the negative stereotypes and the discrimination from which the Romany population suffers. It represents the projection of a positive image towards the Romany community itself that sees a positive reference point reinforced in the figures of the Romany educators. The beneficiaries of the course are Romany women, but the final objective is their labour and social integration into a multicultural context. This facilitates intercultural dialogue and increases the risk of social exclusion fostering solidarity type work between women of different cultures.

## Gender

In the area of experiences that deal with gender, we find two positive examples of the training of Romany women; the radio programme *Voces Gitanas* (Romany Voices) which is broadcast in Catalonia and the project *Gitanas Abriendo Camino* (Romany Women Opening the Way), co-ordinated by SURT <sup>11</sup>.

### Rromane Glausura - Voces Gitanas

The radio programme, Voces Gitanas was first broadcast on April 8<sup>th</sup> 2006 thanks to the collaboration of various associations and Romany women from different municipalities and districts in the province of Barcelona: L'Hospitalet, Gràcia, (in the city of Barcelona), La Mina (Sant Adrià del Besòs) and Sabadell. The network of associations that form part of the radio is made up of ALIA (a cultural association of women for research and political action), La Mina Cultural Centre, the Romany Union of Gràcia, Lachó Bají Cali, the Romany Secretariat of Sabadell, RavalNet and FAGIC (Federation of Romany Associations of Catalonia).

The project includes the participation of various Romany associations, as well as other local radio stations, the Association of Women Journalists and other people and associations interested in the project. The cooperation between these groups enables the participation of Romany girls and women in different areas. The programme is promoted and made entirely by Romany women, who are the conductors and the protagonists of the entire project. The radio facili-

11. Gitanas Abriendo Camino is one of the projects carried out by SURT: Association of Women for Labour Integration. <http://surt.org/cast/index.html>

tates the participation of professionals who help the young Romany women to do the programme. They do interviews with different groups and people who are of interest to the Romany population or who work for the benefit of the community. The objective of the project is to create a space in which tradition and modernity coincide with the appearance of new models of representation and visibility of the Romany culture, thus contributing to the transformation of the society and to the social inclusion of the Romany population.

The Voces Gitanas project promotes positive action with Romany women, as it fosters visibility and presence in this traditional means of communication, which on many occasions has stereotyped Romany women. Its objective is to promote women in the mass media and, in this sense, it tries to reach the general population and specifically Romany and non-Romany women of different ages and families, through matters that may be of interest to them.

The programme tries to reach Romany and non-Romany women offering a varied programme: up-to-date information, retransmission of related events and interviews with people in different areas (politics, art, associations, etc). In this way, the project promotes a positive image of the Romany population to those listening to the programme and to the people interviewed. It is also an interesting area for disseminating other interventions, projects and activities in the area of the social inclusion of the Romany population.

The project promotes quality, equality and the fight against poverty as it offers young Romany women and girls the chance to have their voices heard. It encourages them to continue their education and go ahead with their professional careers, offering positive models for young women and promoting and recognizing the role of women as motors of dialogue between different cultures.

## **Gitanas Abriendo Camino**

The Gitanas Abriendo Camino project has as its main objective the social and economic promotion of young Romany women, through educational actions. The participative methodologies involve the women in constructing their own professional project. The methodology used for preparing the training courses contemplates the gender perspective, which facilitates the work integration of the women. The training methodology is based on several transversal hubs: interculturality, gender identity, mediation, transversal skills, individualised iti-

neraries and tutorial follow-up. The design starts by taking a look at the needs of young Romany women and takes into account their opinions concerning training, the labour market and their cultural identity. The objective comes from the demand of the women themselves without imposing exported models. The programme is divided into three phases: the first which brings them in and guides them; the second which offers professional training and the third which deals with labour integration.

The project is aimed at young Romany women and the involvement of the Romany community is very notable. The main factor for the success of the project lies in searching for the needs of the young Romany women. The novelty aspect is that it is based on the demands of the Romany women themselves, without imposing exported models. Knowing what the opinions of the young Romany women are concerning their education, past experience, problems in the world of work, relationship between work and Romany identity has enabled it to adapt the methodologies to their cultural characteristics and their capacities and transversal skills.

The methodologies are adopted to take into account the difference between the construction of gender by mainstream society and that of the Romany culture. The training process includes the cultural codes that make up the identity of the Romany women and considers their abilities, skills and aptitudes acquired through domestic work. These learning skills are perfectly transferable to the labour market (responsibility, order, versatility, communicative ability, ability to adapt).

The project is characterised by a high level of professionalism both from the Romany women and from the teaching staff. The students, who are given grants to do these courses, must know the course programme and to be accepted there must be compatibility between their expectations and the contents and objectives of the programme. In addition, the programme team seeks the support and involvement of the family. It has individual knowledge about the expectations, skills, competence, academic level and value of the young participants to ensure, at all times, that it is a common project between the trainers and the young Romany women.

One of the basic objectives of the project is to foster an intercultural nature to overcome the affirmation of the dominant cultural model which is done through a continuous exchange of opinions and suggestions between students,

#### **Application of recommended components**

the teaching staff, the specialists and companies. The programme has the following premises: so that intercultural relations can be established, we first need to affirm and make positive the Romany culture and its values. The premises on which the project is based condemn the inequality and exclusion suffered by members of the Romany community, affirming their diversity and heterogeneity, the fact that this continuity is also found in a process of transformation and finally, the awareness that Romany women are today, one of the main motors behind the change. The programme therefore represents the defence of the right to learning and to employment, as well as the transformation that the Romany community is experiencing internally and towards current society.

Beyond immediate training, the project favours an integral development in the women, enabling them to strengthen their role within their community and in mainstream society and to identify positive Romany references in the world of work.

## **Health**

In the health area, a large part of the Romany population in Europe suffers from a difficult situation of general social and economic exclusion. Two examples of good practices that have been collected for the ROMAin project are the Programme of Health Mediators in Romania, by the Romany NGO CRISS (Romany centre of studies and social intervention) and the Health Programme of Navarre of the Gaz Kalo Federation of Romany Associations of Navarre.

### **Programme of Health Mediators in Romania**

The programme of health mediations was designed to offer a response to the needs of the Romany population and their health. The programme includes collaboration between the National Government and the Ministry of Health, institutions, Romany and non-Romany NGOs, local and national authorities and regional public health directions. The Romany population has participated in all the design and development of the programmes providing the training of the mediators, who are respected members of the Romany community. The programme is also based on the fundamental principles of commitment and the involvement of the representatives of the Romany population in all the

planning, introduction and evaluation of the programme, both in the central as well as the local area, as well as the formal responsibility of the partners of the programme for respect to the culture and tradition of the Romany population.

The partners in the programme agreed on a specific gender perspective, as the mediator programme is specifically aimed at women and offers them employment in their community. Health mediators must be women as they are the main people responsible for the health of their families and to enable these women and undermine the governing perceptions on the appropriate role of women. The mediator facilitates communication between the patient and the doctor, helps the families with bureaucratic procedures and helps general practitioners or public health offices take measures in community services. In this way, the project contributes towards transmitting a positive image of Romany women and gives health staff a positive perception of the Romany community, of its health, of the organisations and communities. The assessor of the health of the Romany population in the Ministry of Health and the Family in Romania, Hanna Dobronauteanu, has observed that the anti-Roma feeling among health professionals has visibly dropped a year after the introduction of the programme. The project promotes intercultural dialogue, as the intercultural mediator facilitates communication and dialogue of the minority population with the public authorities and the health, social, legal and education services systems.

The project itself was developed to transform the situation of Romanian Romas, offering a response to their needs and health demands, defending the right of equality of access to quality medical care for the Romany population. In this way, it also aimed to help overcome the deficit in health care to which it has been historically subjected thus contributing to improving the general social status of the Romany population. With regard to the Romany population in general, the project aims to increase its level of knowledge concerning health, with a specific focus on the health of children and families. It also pays special attention to promoting education in general and to cooperation and the active involvement of Romany communities, as well as introducing national policies and programmes in the field of health care.

## **The Navarre Health Programme**

The Navarre Health Programme also offers a positive example of social intervention. Since 1987, the Government of Navarre, through the Institute of Public

Health (ISP), has fostered the extension of a network of health agents and mediators in groups of more than 20 families. Their presence has been joined with the spreading of the Gaz Kaló Federation of Romany Associations of Navarre, created in 1999, which has become a reference point and brings together 14 Romany associations in the community. The Romany population that has settled in Navarre, more than 7,000 people, lives scattered throughout urban and rural areas. The population lives in harmony with the *cigana-transmontana* population which originated from the North of Portugal and which emigrated to Navarre from 1950 on.

The programme is financed by the Public Health Institute and is carried out by Romany associations through yearly grants. The objective is to reduce inequalities in the area of the health of the Romany population in a Navarre, through accompaniment in education and family and individual guidance, making the most of the resources that exist in the districts

The figure of the mediator in the programme has been praised in each case by the Romany communities, and it brings together people of both sexes, aged between 20 and 50. The harmonious living and the agreement of the Romany community are so necessary that sometimes the selection of the mediator has taken up to six months. The mediator must be able to read and write and be able to work in a team and have initiative. The programme applies a perspective of gender in a transversal way in all its aspects. The objectives concerning women have been priority since the beginning of the experience.

Once they have been chosen, they receive continuous training and are paid up to 8,500 euros a year for their work. The programme tries in a transversal way, throughout the whole project, to recover, preserve and protect the Romany culture to contribute, amongst other things, to enriching and creating solidarity in a society that is increasingly more plural as well as minimising stereotypes and social prejudices, promoting a positive image of the Romany community. A dozen permanent committees coordinate the programme with representatives from health centres, local social services, schools and local Romany and non-Romany associations. Every year, they all set the objectives and follow the programme with the support of the mediator for the area.

The programme has been given an award by the European project *Health and Social Inclusion* which organises the EuroHealthnet initiative of the World Health Organisation (WHO), destined to promoting the social integration of the

member states of the European Union. The results have been spectacular. In 1987, fewer than 50% of the families had health cover, while currently this regular cover exceeds 90%. The programme has favoured schooling children up until the age of 12, passing from 62% in 1987, to 100% at present. As far as Romany women are concerned, currently 62% of Romany women of childbearing age attend family planning clinics, and 75% control their pregnancies through the public health network, 25% participate in prenatal courses and 80% of the areas with local Romany associations carry out education projects for health (tobacco, drugs, etc).

## Housing

Although it is difficult to find examples of good practices in the housing area that include all the aspects recommended by the ROMAin project to achieve greater success in the actions, some cases can be considered which, although they do not include all the recommendations, do however contain some of the important elements and therefore are examples to be taken into account. These cases would be the 7<sup>th</sup> phase of the remodelling of Sant Cosme district in El Prat de Llobregat<sup>12</sup>, the Can Calet Rehousing Plan for Romany Settlement Plan<sup>13</sup> and the rehousing of the caravan settlements of Romany families of Hungarian origin in El Vallès Occidental in the province of Barcelona<sup>14</sup>.

### Remodelling the Sant Cosme district

The 7<sup>th</sup> remodelling phase of the Sant Cosme district was carried out by El Prat de Llobregat Town Council in collaboration and coordination with different institutions, municipal departments, services and associations such as local water and gas companies, the local police, local associations, etc. The rehou-

12. Social and Community Programme of Accompaniment to Rehousing of the Sant Cosme Action Plan – Prat de Llobregat Town Council. <http://www.ajelprat.es/?go=e6598a7e63ddfde84fc729da0781953fca3d8ba6aed1df56693ff5d3462c497ad6b0cebef54e34bf9b94973bcb1358589268de9252950738>

13. Rehousing Plan for the Can Calet Romany Settlement Plan was approved by the Municipal Committee of Barcelona City Council in 2002 and drawn up by the Area of Social Welfare, Youth and Health of the City Council jointly with the Department of Welfare and the Family of the General Directorate of Community and Civic Actions of the Government of Catalonia. <http://www.lesfranqueses.cat/uploads/act-94-2.pdf>

14. Carried out by the Federation of the Romany Associations of Catalonia (FAGIC) together with the Department of Welfare and the Family of the General Directorate of Community and Civic Actions of the Government of Catalonia.

ing project has been developed in different phases and has affected the entire population of the district over a thirty-year period. The 7<sup>th</sup> phase of the project mainly deals with the rehousing of the Romany families in the district. The project maintains close contact with the families before they move to “standardise” the housing situation, in other words, it works closely with the families to solve situations concerning payments, documentation, debts, etc. The project aims to work at three levels: at an individual and family scale, specifically with housing and with the community considered as a whole. The rehousing programme works to improve the general situation of the community and its families at all levels, including relationships, health, domestic economy, employment/training, free time and legal documents.

The Romany families were consulted about whom they wish to live with in the new housing development and they participate directly in the discussions and community meetings concerning the project. To promote a process of rehousing without conflict, the project includes a methodology with an integral approach, in other words, the family is understood as a complete complex in which the areas are interrelated and affect each other. The family work plan includes aspects of everyday life, therefore the project also focuses on gender and on the important role of women in the family and their education with regard to health and different forms of living. To carry out this communication process and for the many aspects of the rehousing programme, the programme not only includes the participation of the various entities as explained above, but also of different individuals such as experts, carers or mediators. The entire process requires the participation of professionals and volunteers.

One of the objectives of the project is to work at a social and community level, encouraging responsibility, autonomy and harmonious existence with the members of the community. For this purpose, the project offers management, community support and socio-educational intervention. It thus promotes a positive image of the Romany population in the community as part of the process of imparting education in these areas and facilitating multicultural dialogue between the members of the community.

One of the most important aspects of the project on the improvement of the quality of life of the inhabitants of the community is its insistence on showing the members of the community how to improve their social and economic situation, incorporating all the aspects of the home that affect this area: domestic organisation, hygiene and health habits, the preservation and support of struc-

tural elements and prevention of accidents in the home. The project uses the family setting as an area for educational action, focusing on the home and on the street. The project believes that an effective and essential way of bringing home the contents it wishes to work on is that people should see the different parts of the project team accepting and working in the reality in which they live.

To defend the rights of the members of the community, the project works constantly analysing the interventions that are carried out, modifying the areas that have not worked and adapting them to the new demands and needs that are created. It has also taken on an external company to evaluate the process.

### **The Can Calet Rehousing Plan for the Romany Settlement Plan Rehousing of the Caravan Settlement of Romany Families of Hungarian Origin in El Vallès Occidental.**

The district of Romany families in Can Calet, San Fost de Campsentelles, Vallès Occidental région (a settlement of huts) is made up of local Romany families. In 1999, an analysis of the population present confirmed the presence of 30 families and some 150 people, all of whom were in precarious social and housing situations. Therefore the process for the Rehousing Plan of the Romany Settlement started in November 2000. The rehousing plan meant an integral way of dealing with an important social problem and was the first time that many of these families had access to dignified housing, having the same possibilities as the rest of society.

The second example of El Vallès Occidental is the rehousing of the settlement of caravan dwellers made up of Romany families of Hungarian origin in El Vallès Occidental in the province of Barcelona. The camp was made up of eight Romany families, 42 people in all.

In these two examples, the work was done on the basis of significant coordination between administrations and/or organisations involved in the rehousing processes and based on the importance of not entering into political objectives when establishing the lines of actions that make political and economic interests prevail over the social needs of families.

One of the reasons for the success of these two interventions was the involvement of the Romany community itself, the various administrations, the

Romany organisations and the technical body that works directly with the Romany community in question. There is a community projection and joint work with families to be able to offer responses to the problems detected, favouring a participative method between all the actors.

Following the same line, the first stage of the interventions was the diagnosis and proposal for community intervention based on the methodology of social investigation; followed by a presentation of the proposal to the organisations and neighbours of the settlement to collect their opinions and suggestions with regard to the proposal. The third stage was the visits to various people and organisations, experts in rehousing programmes. The main point during the entire rehousing process, from its planning to its final assessment, is the socio-educational area combined with investigation into housing, occupational training, etc. All the aspects that influenced the problems of social exclusion have to be included.

The objective of the two interventions was to give Romany families the opportunity to develop a personal and collective level in a standardised environment and in a dignified dwelling. To achieve this objective there was continuous follow-up on each of the families, as well as work on solving the educational, work, health and cultural needs.

The two interventions tried to maintain three levels of action: the individual as a subject able to generate change, the family as a system of relations of extreme importance in the development of its members of the community in which groups, collectives and institutions interact.

In conclusion, the five different phases that were introduced in these rehousing programmes included as the first phase the collection of information, analysis and diagnosis. This was immediately followed by the execution of the social and educational programme and then the rehousing. It is important that these phases are combined with a later follow-up and continuous evaluation of the follow-up process and consolidation of the housing.

## **Participation**

This Guide emphasises the importance of the participation of the Romany population in the interventions that have been developed for their social inclusion as

an essential element for ensuring the success of the intervention. As examples of good practices we analysed the Municipal Council of the Romany Population of Barcelona constituted by Barcelona City Council; the Council for the Integral Promotion and Social Participation of the Romany Population of the Department of Housing and Social Affairs of the Basque Country Government, the Advisory Council of the Romany Population of the Government of Catalonia; the State Council of the Romany Population of the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs of the Spanish Government and Espai Juvenil Joves.com

### **Municipal Council of the Romany Population - Barcelona City Council**<sup>15</sup>

The Municipal Council of the Romany Population of Barcelona was constituted with the aim of setting up a stable platform for participation in matters referring to the improvement of the well being and quality of life of this sector of the population. It was formed in 1998 and was the first of its kind in Spain, in accordance with the Municipal Action Plan that was current at the time (1995 to 1999), and is one of the mechanisms necessary to make Barcelona into a plural and integrating city with the Romany population and in general with all cultures.

The competencies of this Council include the promotion of actions and initiatives to fight against racism, discrimination and to defend the Romany culture, to watch over the recognition of the support to the development of cultures that are present in the city and to stimulate the participation of the Romany population promoting belonging to associations, providing information, assessment, support and relevant dissemination.

It actively cooperates with Barcelona City Council in developing, following up on and evaluating the municipal policy on matters of interest to the well-being and quality of life of this sector of the population and studies and issues reports on matters of interest to the Romany population.

The agreements, reports and demands of the Council have the rank of recommendations for the bodies of municipal government, but are not binding. The

15. The Municipal Council of the Romany Population of Barcelona City Council. The Regulatory Rules of the Municipal Council of the Romany Population of Barcelona, 17th July 1998.  
[http://www.bcn.es/participacio/docus/normas\\_cpg.pdf](http://www.bcn.es/participacio/docus/normas_cpg.pdf)  
[http://w3.bcn.es/V61/Home/V61HomeLinkPI/0,2687,200713899\\_200722465\\_2,00.html](http://w3.bcn.es/V61/Home/V61HomeLinkPI/0,2687,200713899_200722465_2,00.html)

Council works as a consulting and participative body and forms a stable platform that deals with questions referring to improving the well-being and quality life of the Romany community in the city. The proposals carried out by the Council, the action in defence and the promotion of the Romany culture is emphasised through the production of communication elements and audiovisual material, such as the “Gitanos de Barcelona hoy” (Romany People of Barcelona today) DVD of 2003. Its dissemination is done in strict collaboration with the districts of the city.

The active participation and commitment of the Council were emphasised in the process of drawing up the 2004-2007 Municipal Action Programme. The Council has significant influence on the local media and projects a positive, real image of the Romany population in the city.

### **Council for the Integral Promotion and Social Participation of the Romany Population, the Basque Country Government**

The Council for the Integral Promotion and Social Participation of the Romany Population of the Department of Housing and Social Affairs of the Basque Country Government<sup>16</sup> was created by the decree of November 25<sup>th</sup> 2003, as part of the 2006-2010 Romany Development Plan, it officially and directly gives a voice and participation to the interests and opinions of the Romany population.

The Council aims to be a space for reflection and coordination between the different social actors, associations and Romany and pro-Romany organisations, institutions and public administrations. The purpose is to achieve a more efficient work between all the parties committed to integral Romany promotion and the defence and promotion of this culture. This organisation was born with an operational character, so that it complies with the principle of efficiency and gives priority to the work of the commissions.

16. Council for the Integral Promotion and Social Participation of the Romany Population of the Department of Housing and Social Affairs of the Basque Country Government. Decree 289/2003, of 25th November, which created the Council of the integral promotion and social participation of the Romany Population in the Basque Country. [http://www.gizaetxe.ejgv.euskadi.net/r40-2175/es/contenidos/informacion/pueblo\\_gitano/es\\_7946/pueblo\\_gitano\\_c.html](http://www.gizaetxe.ejgv.euskadi.net/r40-2175/es/contenidos/informacion/pueblo_gitano/es_7946/pueblo_gitano_c.html)

The Council watches over equality of opportunities, equality of dealing with people, equality of gender and non-discrimination of the Romany population. In the composition of the Plenary of the Council, as far as possible, it is encouraged that the members who represent the Public Administrations as well as the Romany and pro-Romany associations should have an equal number of men and women. All of the people who are members are involved in the Romany associations movement. The Council works to favour the participation of Romany people in public and social life and at the same time to inform about the contributions of the Romany people to the rest of society with the aim of favouring the harmonious living between the various social and cultural groups.

The Council works on the basis that with the recognition of the identity of the Romany population and valuing its culture, as well as its contributions to general society and the co-ordinated confluence of all the efforts that can be advanced until achieving civil citizenship as responsible citizenship made up of citizens with rights and obligations, independently of their culture.

### **The Advisory Council of the Romany Population of the Government of Catalonia**

The Advisory Council of the Romany Population of the Government of Catalonia<sup>17</sup> was constituted on the 28<sup>th</sup> July 2005, within the framework of the Romany Development Plan. It is a consultative and participative organisation of Romany people and of associations that work with the Romany population in all matters that are of its interest, and specifically, in the follow-up on the agreements made by the Government of Catalonia which directly affect them.

The main functions the organisation carries out are to apply for, propose and/or draw up studies and reports on matters of interest for the Romany population, to assess the various departments of the Generalitat of Catalonia when they request it, to formulate recommendations to the Administration on matters concerning the situation of the Romany population, to promote studies, initiatives and events for the integration of the Romany population,

17. The Advisory Council of the Romany Population of the Government of Catalonia. Decree 102/2005, of May 31st, on the Creation of the Interdepartmental Committee of the Integral Plan of the Romany Population and the Advisory Council of the Romany Population. <http://www.gencat.net/diari/4397/05146034.htm>

the defence of its culture and to combat racism and discrimination. Other functions include studying and issuing proposals to strengthen harmonious living between the various cultures that live in Catalonia, maintaining contact with other similar bodies of a national, state and international area. In the general framework of the integral plan of the Romany population, the Advisory Council creates working groups for themes of specific interest to the Romany population. In particular, it advises and makes recommendations to the administration to combat the inequality and discrimination of Romany women.

One of the main objectives of the Council is to achieve harmonious living between the groups and cultures of society, proposing measures of action that permit attitudes to be developed that enrich their diversity. The Council watches over equality of opportunities, equality of dealing with people, equality of gender and non-discrimination of the Romany population.

The work of the Council is based on two priority lines: on the one hand that the Romany people can manage to even out their possibilities of access and promotion in the labour market, access to housing, educational promotion and access to university and the promotion of women and young people, transversal actions that enable the Romany population to be seen in all the areas of our society. On the other hand the possibility for the Romany population in Catalonia to develop, maintain, study and disseminate its culture and its language.

## **State Council of the Romany Population**

On July 29<sup>th</sup> 2005, a Royal Decree was published on the Creation and Standardisation of the State Council of the Romany Population by the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs of the Spanish Government<sup>18</sup>, as part of the 2006-2010 Romany Development Plan. This council officially and directly grants voice and participation to the interests and opinions of the Romany population. It is a council with an official, consultative College that formalises the participation and collaboration of the organisations related to the Romany population in the elaboration and development of policies of social welfare that affect this collective.

<sup>18</sup> Royal Decree 891/2005, of 22nd of July, which creates and regulates the State Council of the Romany Population. <http://www.tt.mtas.es/periodico/serviciosociales/200606/SES20060629.htm>

The main functions that this organisation develops include proposing measures for the integral promotion of the Romany population and offering assessment, within the framework of the responsibilities of the General State Administration, including the principle of transversality, to assess on the design, elaboration, evaluation and follow-up of the Romany development plans, to present initiatives with regard to the funds for programmes destined to the Romany population and the criteria for distributing and issuing sentences and reports on the regulatory projects and other initiatives related to the purposes of the Council. It also promotes communication and the exchange of opinions and information between the Romany population and society in general; encouraging studies into projects and programmes related to the integral promotion of the Romany community and initiatives of creating awareness and collaborating and is cooperating with other similar councils and institutions of an international, autonomous, local or similar nature. Another task includes carrying out the opportune proposals on the policies, funds and programmes of the European Union and other international bodies.

One of the challenges of the Advisory Council of the Romany Population is trying to recover Romany values that in some cases have been lost, to foster Romany culture from general culture. The very structure of the organisation and the objectives of the Council contemplate taking into account a multicultural society as an objective to work for, as well as a principle on which to develop its projects. The Council tries to promote communication and the exchange of opinions and information between the Romany population and society in general. The objective of the Council's actions are to combat, from an overall perspective, the situation of inequality from which the Romany population in Spain suffers, so that it can be on an equal social, cultural and economic level as general Spanish society.

The work of the Council is based on two priority lines: that Romany people can have the same life conditions as general Spanish society and can develop, maintain, study and disseminate the culture and the language of the Romany population. A very important feature for partly doing away with marginalisation is education and training, particularly for young people, as it is the way of accessing a better job. It is important to continue creating awareness among the Romany people about the importance of education of their children so that they can have a better future.

## **El Espai Juvenil Joves.com**

*El Espai Juvenil Joves.com* started in 2001 and promotes the social and labour integration of young people in the underprivileged district of Font de la Polvora in Girona, Catalonia, Spain. The project was developed by the AASS Association (Association for the Attention of Services and Solidarity Acts). This group, Joves.com, is formed by and is organised by young Romany people and it has helped Girona City Council to understand and respond to the needs and demands of the young Romany population. It has also helped other NGOs to carry out exchanges between young people to break away from existing stereotypes. It also participates in all the activities that are carried out in the sector by associations or NGOs. The members of Joves.com actively participate in all the community activities and the project helps young people in their full integration into mainstream society.

Most of the young people who participate in and organise this project are of Romany ethnic origin. The young people attend the project activities and are fully dedicated to the organisation, management and development of some of its activities. Although the association that promotes this project is not made up of people from a Romany ethnic group, the involvement and mobilisation of the Romany volunteers that participate in Joves.com is the main explanation for its success. This is why, at the moment, measures are being adopted to make Joves.com into an independent association.

The project works on the basis that the group can manage themselves and develop their objectives, when this happens the professionals adopt a secondary role. The project aims to maintain the balance between the contributions of professionals and participants without the need for professional requirements, as there is a rigour which they learn through example. The project offers an area of personal development and the promotion of the Romany culture for both Romany boys and girls, it also provides instruments, strategies and abilities that help the young people in their personal development and social and work integration. In addition, it emphasises the motivation of the young people in their own mobilisation to break the barriers of social exclusion, thus fostering equal opportunities.

Joves.com is known in the area where it acts as a positive experience for the young people. Many of the activities in which they have participated have

been successful, not only in their own district, but also in some cases when they have covered a large area. These activities have served to transmit positive images of the young Romany people in the community and also to show the reality in which they live and to offer the young people a space in which to project their frustrations and their dreams to the rest of the city and beyond it. The community in which Joves.com has been developed has a numerous Romany population, but it also includes people of diverse nationalities: the project encourages dialogue between these different groups in their various activities.

The Joves.com group includes a commission for disseminating Romany culture and a commission for young people's affairs. The young people are an active and dynamic part of the project, they identify the problems that concern them and they decide the priority to give to them and they are involved in seeking solutions and are thus aware of the necessary process to find solutions. They promote quality and equality as personal promotion of young people and their mobilisation is one of the main objectives of the project, with which they aspire to their complete integration in society. The young person is the protagonist of his own process; the main person responsible for his mobilisation to break down barriers of social exclusion and to overcome the situation of marginalisation.

Many of the young people who have participated in this project have found employment. The relationship that has been established with them in this project stimulates their training in areas in which they are interested to facilitate their integration into the world of work in highly qualified positions. The project offers a space for personal development and carries out training and motivation activities to facilitate the process of social and labour integration.

The Joves.com project shows us an example of the importance of the participation of the Romany population in all stages of the intervention: in its design, development and follow up. The interventions aimed at the Romany population should include, as a basic principle, the population in all the aspects and processes of decision-making, in such a way that the results of the intervention achieve their greatest potential and success.

## **General recommendations to facilitate the integration of the Romany population**

The analysis that has been carried out on the experiences gathered by the ROMAin project concluded with nine recommendations which should be considered in all interventions of social inclusion of the Romany population, adapting them to every field and specific action. After studying more than 200 projects and successful experiences over the two years throughout Europe, the conclusion has been reached that the components that are detailed below are a way of ensuring the possible success of the actions that take them into account and include them to some degree in all their phases. Thus, depending on the application or inclusion of these components in policies and interventions, we can measure their results with regards to the social inclusion of the Romany population.

The success of the project or line of action will depend, in an objective, measurable way, on the ability to include these aspects in a conscious and programmed way into the projects, policies or actions. Greater or lesser success will be achieved depending on our ability to combine the different components of success, which involve co-ordinated, horizontal and completely transversal work.

The basic recommendations applicable to any kind of practice of social and political intervention with the Romany population are the following:

## **Collaboration between different associations, local authorities, Romany associations, NGOs and universities**

The principle of cooperation is fundamental in any area of social intervention with disadvantaged collectives. In the case of the Romany population, due to the highly plural nature of the institutions involved, it is important to insist on this collaboration that concentrates efforts and achieves greater results than in the case of partial intervention. The coordination between different departments and organisations of public institutions is not enough, there is also a need for collaboration between different kinds of institutions: non-governmental Romany associations, universities and research centres, etc.

## **Involvement of the Romany community**

One of the basic conclusions of our work is the effort of the Romany people themselves to commit themselves to measures to overcome their situation of exclusion. Many projects are directed by them or include the active involvement of the target group, which offers relevant added value. The effort to overcome the inequality has to come from both sides, from the Romany population and the non-Romany population. One of the first steps necessary to work on this inequality is to recognize the Romany population, its history, its culture and its role in the mainstream society.

Therefore, we confirm the need to involve the population in the design, management, development and assessment of the projects, as well as in carrying out activities (for example: projects in which the people who give training and those who receive it are members of the Romany population). In other words, that they should hold roles of responsibility and actively participate in the decision-making processes in all these stages.

## **Inclusion of a specific gender perspective**

Many Romany women are affected by triple discrimination: their ethnic origin, their gender and their low socio-economic level. However, Romany women have always been the motor of change and are currently leading authentic processes of transformation for their communities. The gender perspective should be taken into account transversely in all interventions or policies with the Romany population. Women cannot be kept to one side of this movement and of this transformation, as if this were the case the changes and the improvement of the situation of Romany women would not be real in the community. To promote this improvement, it is important that there are feminine reference points and that the recognition of Romany women in the community is taken into account for her career and Romany experience, as well as for her work in the participation and development of the Romany community.

The administrations have an important role to play in promoting the visibility of Romany women and overcoming their situation of exclusion; therefore they should promote their active participation and foster responsibility in matters that concern them as Romany women, therefore they should be directly employed in the management and decision-making bodies. It is important that the need to take on this form of working should be recognized by both parts (Romany women and Administration) and that these objectives should, in fact, be achieved.

## **Professionalism and voluntary participation**

The intervention with the Romany population should be based, both on principles of quality and professionalism, as well as on citizen participation and the involvement of non-experts. Romany associations and organisations and people who work with the Romany population should have sufficient support and develop a high-quality technical function. However, a restricted concept of professionalism could lead one to undervalue the role of the target group and other interested parties (for example, volunteers) in the projects developed. It is important to understand the significance of open, fair dialogue between professionals and users, between experts and the target group.

## **Fighting against image and prejudices**

One of the main challenges in the intervention with the Romany population lies in avoiding methods based on negative social images and deficits associated with this group. The best practices with the Romany population are based on positive conceptions of it, as one is projecting a positive image to society.

In this way, the interventions should take care of contributing to the notable increase that has already occurred with the presence of Romany voices and faces in the mass media and in public spaces, as well as making Romany values and culture reach the rest of the public, avoiding stereotypes.

The mass media has an important role to play in the projection of this image, the governments (local, autonomous and state) must involve themselves and regulate information to promote the dissemination of programmes that include the Romany culture.

An important aspect would be revising the deontological code of the Official College of Journalists and creating an observatory that supervises the use of images, ethnic origin, culture, religion, etc. with regard to the Romany population. The observatory should not just observe, but also act in the face of the mass media.

## **Promoting intercultural dialogue**

Policies and social interventions with the Romany population should promote the standardisation of harmonious living between cultures and, within this framework, cultural dialogue, understanding that such dialogue is living and multiple, in the same way that each culture is not in itself univocal.

Intercultural dialogue is especially fostered in meeting places and when people of different cultural traditions come together in a forum with a commitment to respect and equality.

## **Condemning exclusion, defending rights, social transformation**

A great deal still needs doing with regard to the situation of the Romany population. This minority group suffers from many violations of human rights, discrimination and racism. The interventions and policies that aim to foster social inclusion cannot keep silent about these offences.

Therefore, the best practices must never give up - while centred on promoting health, education or employment - the function of protection or defence, together with condemning discrimination and violation of human rights. They must also support matters concerning the inclusion of the Romany population and fostering its presence in formal political spaces.

## **Fighting against poverty, promoting quality and equal opportunities**

The idea of deficit that has so greatly affected the Romany population, has limited the actions to compensate and reduced levels of poverty, isolation, etc. for a long time. Currently, the objectives of the practices are no longer limited to compensation, but are defined on the basis of real equality and equal conditions of life and educational results between the Romany community and mainstream society. Therefore interventions with and for the Romany population must take into account the historic discrimination of this group and ensure that the objectives are met, whilst ensuring quality and promoting equal opportunities, taking into account the additional support necessary due to this historic discrimination.

## **Promoting quality education**

In today's Information Society, education is, more than ever, an individual and collective necessity. Interventions with the Romany population must actively support achieving school success and fostering all educational

levels for the Romany population. There are many informal, but nevertheless present, barriers that make immersing Romany students in the education system difficult, although the reasons they are not present on some occasions derive from little individual or group interest in studies. However, as we have seen in the analysis of activities, Romany organisations defend fostering education during youth. Therefore the number of Romany individuals who can access university studies and post-compulsory school studies should increase and therefore, we should overcome the existing association between the Romany population and low academic levels.

In this way, promoting Labour integration should be accompanied by measures of support to professional and academic training, preventing the persistence of low qualified employment.

## **Conclusions reached during the ROMAin project working groups**

As a result of all the investigation carried out in the ROMAin project, the conclusions and proposals extracted from the working groups are presented.

Throughout the analysis of the experiences compiled, in combination with the working groups that were carried out within the framework of the ROMAin project, as well as with the invited speakers for each of the six key areas for the social integration of the Romany population (education, employment, gender, health, housing and participation), some general conclusions and proposals have been extracted for each of these areas.

There is the need for an organised presence of the Romany population in the form of delegations of specific organisations formed by both Romany and non-Romany people, which should be present in the local and national public administrations, and these administrations should work together with NGOs and local, national and international associations creating a network of joint collaboration.

In the same way, it is necessary to introduce measures in all the areas in a transversal and integral way, in other words, we need to work for the social

integration of the Romany population from all the areas: employment, education, culture, etc. Although actions may be carried out at a specific level, it is important that there is also an overall vision of the situation

There is a need for measures of positive action in almost all the areas to be able to promote the social integration of the Romany population, as without these actions it will be extremely difficult to initiate a programme of real integration which takes into account the specific circumstances of the historic discrimination of the Romany population. One way of achieving this is to create social benefits specifically aimed at these groups with the objective of normalising situations of inequality or under representation, creating standard results. In this way, it is also important that the measures are carried out at a local level, so that the work is more specific and direct.

The participation of people and groups from the Romany communities should be a fundamental element of all the measures. However, it can be difficult to implement a positive action as very often it is negatively received by society in general, therefore it is necessary to pay special attention to this area. In the European Directive 2000/43, affirmative action is not understood as favourable treatment, but a series of measures applicable to reduce shortcomings that affect certain people with regard to their race or ethnic origin. For example the main educational sectors throughout the world apply diversity in education through measures of positive action, because diversity contributes to academic success and prepares students for working with a diverse population. In addition to the quotas, there are other ways of reserving spaces in universities for students from specific districts (with an immigrant population, Romany population, people suffering from social exclusion, etc., in other words, people and groups with less possibilities to access university).

We need to establish criteria for accessing the educational institutions that are not based just on academic grades but which include comprehensive systems that take into account other factors such as personal career, family, employment situation, etc. Reserving a given number of places in universities should be accompanied by specific actions. To avoid the reservation of places without the possibility of accessing them due to a lack of previous education, additional measures need to be applied, such as lowering the entry grade or offering grants and support and follow-up programmes.

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Other complications include the need to offer projects with longer working periods when they are involved with social inclusion. It is difficult to deal with situations of exclusion that have been consolidated over long periods of time with the short-term interventions. A considerably longer period of time is needed when the intervention proposes evaluating, not only the development of project, but also its impact and transfer of the results onto the target group. The needs of the Romany communities need to be taken into consideration to be able to ensure real results of the measures that have been adopted. Along the same lines, qualitative indicators of success should be established to measure the impact of the policies that are being applied on the Romany communities.

There is the need for a unified policy at a European scale of the social integration of the Romany population that includes a unitary figure responsible for Romany affairs that should also be present at a national level. There should be an organised presence of the Romany population in the public administrations in the form of delegations of specific organisations that participate in the design and the introduction of policies, or through the advisory Councils or the people who work in the area of social integration of the Romany population and support to the groups and policies that already exist. In addition, from civil society, there should be an assessment and follow-up of the use and the results of the investment of funds and/or projects and assurance that the policies are strategic and include the Romany population in all their phases of design, implementation and evaluation.

In conclusion, at all levels (education, health, employment, etc.) there is the need for campaigns to create awareness and integral plans between different administrations and NGOs that are carried out in combination with specific measures, so that society in general is aware of the real situation of the Romany population and of the measures that are being adopted to improve the situation and to achieve their social inclusion. At the same time, it is important to take into account at all times all the practices and experiences that have been successfully carried out in the past in the area of the social inclusion of the Romany population to ensure that they are transferred to the general policies of the public administrations. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the Romany population should participate in the design, implementation and the evaluation of all the measures, policies and projects that are adopted in an active and responsible way.

## **Education – proposals to facilitate social inclusion with regard to education and the Romany population**

- The initial objective should be that of quality education for the Romany population, without reducing the content, and establishing indicators of success in the actions concerning education, for example through the level of school success achieved or the level of access and satisfactory completion of secondary education (as shown by prospective data from the European Union, in 2010, 75% of the population should have secondary education; this indicator should also be applied to Romany students).
- There is the need for a strategy and a development plan for the specific education of Romany students, including the development of the processes of implementation, follow-up and assessment.
- Efficient programmes should be introduced for the integration of Romany children. These programmes should provide Romany children and young people with the abilities necessary to re-integrate in normal schools.
- A more intensive orientation should be provided to students in countries where they must choose secondary academic/vocational training.
- To promote educational policies that fight against and prevent the school segregation of the Romany population.
- The study plan should include fundamental content and information with regard to the history, culture and the values of the Romany population, as well as making educational and training material, and accompanied by the participation of the Romany population or experts, in other words, that the inclusion of culture should not only be through content but also with the Romany population in the school context.
- To recognize and include the figure of Romany mediators or school helpers in the area of education as well as recognised professionals. Their contribution to the success of the education of the Romany population should be reflected in their salaries, contracts, working day, work timetable, etc. With

regard to their professional development, there needs to be an improvement in their professional skills, possibilities of professional promotion, etc.

- The special characteristics of the Romany culture should be taken into consideration and how it affects school attendance.
- A second educational opportunity should be given to people who, during their schooldays, did not achieve their objectives.
- The national study should be carried out in each country to define the needs of its Romany community.
- Romany parents should be given support, providing them with assessment and suggestions on education techniques for their children.
- To foster work in networks that not only involves governments and NGOs, but also town councils, regional councils, the autonomous communities (or equivalent governments), etc.
- Learning Communities. Participation of the entire community in the learning process. Transformation of learning at school: the learning involves everyone (parents, environment, students, teaching staff, etc.). Guidance for schools success in all students.
- Doing away with semi-absenteeism and achieving universal education during the period defined as compulsory education.
- Coordinating the different territory plans that exist from the educational point of view.
- Coordinating all the resources existing in the territory.
- Involving the teaching staff of the centres and offering continuous training to the teaching staff (in community work, for example), as well as taking measures from the Administration with a real evaluation of these students' school successes.
- Involving all the professionals of informal education.

- Giving importance to communication and communication channels.
- Involving parents, as well as training them at school, making them feel they are a fundamental part of the educational community.
- Using participative techniques and ones that are agreed upon among the education community.
- Working for maximums and not for minimums.
- Working from the link in the education process, taking into account individual effort in the work and tutorial follow-up.
- Getting families and children to become aware of the value of education, that it is fundamental for their training and their professional possibilities.
- Offering social help with considerations so that children go to school, redesigning the existing considerations in terms of help and resources that are more suitable to social needs.

## **Employment - proposals to facilitate social inclusion with regard to employment and the Romany population**

- The design of the intervention should take into account other fields directly related to employment: education, culture, etc.
- Professional qualifications are key elements in being successful in employment.
- The actions should include an individualised method and take into account the general characteristics of the group.
- Positive action policies are necessary in the employment area; through, for example, the application of tax incentives or the legal obligation of quotas

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(as in some cases they are applied with regard to women and in other areas). These quotas should be demanded by groups that defend the Romany population, to promote the proportional participation in employment of minority groups and members of mainstream society. The public sector should take on a leadership role in establishing the employment quotas for the Romany population.

- To promote multicultural working groups made up of Romany and non-Romany people, both in interventions as well as in institutions and companies.
- Protected employment and actions of labour integration should be temporary and never permanent or long-term as the objective of these actions is standardised employment and not perpetuating this exclusion.
- Contracting people from the Romany population who are well-qualified and with the necessary studies in permanent positions contributes to giving them visibility and overcoming prejudices.
- Considering the training experience of preparation in school dining rooms aimed at Romany women. This training has interesting professional possibilities for schools with Romany students. The presence of Romany women in this occupation favours the participation of Romany families in the school.
- Possibility of self-employment. Formalising travelling sales, although there is a difficulty in that they are jobs that are not very sustainable long-term.
- Fighting against entrenching Romany people in social aid (Basic income in each country).
- Generating a direct link of the associations with companies likely to incorporate this profile of worker.
- Offering incentives to companies to hire Romany people, although it would seem to be difficult to hire foreign Romany people due to the difficulty in regularising their papers.
- Giving importance and value to the new generations of the Romany community, to create positive reference points within it.
- Understanding the specific needs of the Romany population when working

on labour reintegration

## **Gender - proposals to facilitate social inclusion with regard to gender and the Romany population**

- There must be shared and individual spaces available for reflection and debate on the indications of gender, ethnic origin and the Romany population. The main premise of this diverse, plural movement is that Romany women occupy the spaces they wanted to occupy, a premise that does away with the paternalism that influences the movements of Romany women in society. The search for equality without losing their own identity is the main objective of this movement.
- Active, real participation of Romany women should be a transversal element in all the actions, projects and policies.
- On the whole, women are the motor of cultural exchange and dialogue between cultures. Therefore, this role needs to be recognized for Romany women as well as non-Romany women, without this meaning more responsibilities with regard to the role of the Romany woman in her community.
- The specific action with Romany women should take into account their situation of triple discrimination: for being women who live in a patriarchal society, for being Romany and for being members of a population which is discriminated against and historically persecuted, and for a lack of academic qualification or the knowledge necessary to be able to influence the different areas of decision-making and power in society.
- The projects aimed at Romany women should be based on quality and equality. These actions should also include and increase quality education and be aimed at the current employment needs for all participants, without omitting the question of culture (for example the Romany language, Romani). The women participating in these actions can act as a role model for other Romany women.
- We need to promote areas of dialogue between Romany women and non-Romany women to be able to debate about different themes that concern

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women and then transfer them to the men (whether Romany or non-Romany), to the administrations, to the mass media, etc. These spaces foster an equality of the differences, based on which each woman chooses, on an equal footing, how to develop her own differences and values, without being discriminated against in any area of society.

- Romany feminism does not involve a fight against Romany men, but a fight against the inequality of Romany women. In such a way that in their vindications they also include Romany men, as it is a gender clan and a population clan, otherwise it would have no sense from a cultural point of view; on the other hand, men and women need to work on the gender aspect.
- It is the Romany women themselves who should project and decide on what they need in the design of projects and actions, how to intervene, or what options they have, etc., considering that their transformation ability as social subjects and agents of change should be recognized.
- We need to work on the social awareness of Romany women to fight against prejudices and stereotypes and emphasise their importance in public and institutional organisations.
- We need positive action policies with regard to gender and the Romany population, specifically in projects for Romany women that facilitate transformation and break away from the existing inequalities.
- It is important to support the initiatives that arise directly from the Romany women's movement, without them having to go through the consent of the rest of the Romany organisations.
- We need to research into Romany women from different sectors: education, employment, identity, etc. to be able to intervene in their development on the base of a profound analysis of the needs and to be able to later evaluate how and to what degree the project covers these necessities.
- The calls for local, regional, state and European projects should foresee a way of giving points to assess the qualitative and effective participation of Romany women in projects, their attitude in the various phases and the level of power they hold.

- We need to carry out work from the territory so that the projects are more effective, with a deep knowledge of the context in which they will take place and based on specific projects that adjust to the community. In this way, Romany women must be a conscious and active part of all the processes, both in the strategy and in the design, as well as in the implementation, execution, assessment and follow-up. The participation should include decision making to be able to manage their own change.
- To promote the status of Romany women and to foster their participation, there should be a special non-official international or European group founded by members of governmental offices and duly trained Romany activists.
- To give importance to training and formal education to strengthen cultural and gender identity, as the *standardisation* of the Romany people in these fields leads to their fear of losing their cultural features.
- To consider the specificity of gender and of cultural identity in a joint way in different areas (education, work, health, etc.).
- To strengthen cultural reinforcement from the various policies and social interventions.
- To strengthen and foster female Romany reference figures in the various projects that are carried out.
- To check the projects and programmes periodically to improve and adapt them to changes. The different projects must adapt to the family needs of the women.
- To work in a formal way, with objectives, but adapting to the context.
- Making the methods flexible at different education levels, taking into account that each person has their own learning methods.
- Recognizing traditional and experiential learning and knowledge, those which are not academic.
- Considering the enormous social and communicative skills that women

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have in all areas in general.

## **Health - proposals to facilitate social inclusion with regard to health and the Romany population**

- Health staff should be trained in matters concerning culture and idiosyncrasies of the Romany people and in intercultural health, particularly in the current multicultural societies to be able to suitably deal with different minority groups. A specific guide should be written up for health professionals and other people working in this area.
- We need to consider that, when designing policies and projects on health and the Romany population, there are many social factors which are involved in health: housing, the setting, economic level, etc. When designing policies and projects on health and the Romany people, the involvement of the Romany people in these projects is an indicator of their success.
- There should be a Romany person appointed in the administrations to promote the health of the Romany people. The functions of this person would include mediation, creating awareness and channelling the information, taking into account all the social and economic factors that affect the Romany population, such as their diet, their housing conditions, their economic means, etc.
- We need to design studies to establish qualitative indicators of success that measure the impact of the health policies on the Romany communities, as well as different reports that show the worrying inequality of the health services, particularly with regard to Romany women.
- We need to create organisations/structures in the administrations that are in charge of promoting health with the involvement of the NGOs of the Romany population.
- A suitable infrastructure of health services should be guaranteed, for example, ensuring that there are health services near the Romany communities.

## **Housing - proposals to facilitate social inclusion with regard to housing and the Romany population**

- Housing policies should be introduced in consultation or cooperation with the Romany communities affected.
- Actions concerning housing should be managed with campaigns of creating awareness and integral plans that influence areas such as education and training, health, employment, leisure time activities, etc. In this way, we will be able to appreciate that the basis for any action concerning housing (moving, rehousing, urban transformation) in a district or an area suffering from social exclusion is quality education and measures to be able to access dignified employment.
- When urban policies are designed or policies for the social integration of the Romany people through actions related to housing, it is very important to transmit previous successful experiences and to transfer the practices and experiences that have worked for general policies of public administrations.
- One way of providing centrality to zones, areas and districts with social exclusion and social and territorial marginalisation is building and/or transferring public services, resources, equipment and installations of general interest to attract people from different areas and to give the district or area in question greater importance
- To initiate positive action for housing for the Romany population in countries where it does not yet exist: by drawing lots and adjudicating housing protected by the state, but also taking into account families, cultures, etc. to be able to respond to the urgent housing needs of the Romany population.
- When planning projects and their execution, it is important to offer the option of being able to choose the place of the relocation in the territory

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(districts, municipal areas, etc.).

## **Participation - proposals to facilitate social inclusion with regard to participation and the Romany community**

- Participation includes contributions, obligations and responsibilities; as well as rights. Active, visible participation requires successful integration and inclusion. These are the principles of awareness that should be taken into consideration.
- Education and information are essential and the basis of equal participation.
- An indicator of success in any participation process is the social integration of the Romany people at an individual or group level.
- To participate, ideal conditions need to be created (suitable spaces) to be able to participate. There must be dialogue under equal conditions, in which what a professor says has the same value as what a Romany person with basic education says. To create real areas of participation, which do away with the power relations that exist in society.
- There needs to be a basis of participation; that everyone has the opportunity to participate.
- To fight against the difficulty of Romany mothers participating at school, as this tends to strengthen the defects of Romany children, which makes the participation of their mothers difficult, when instead, their virtues should be praised.
- To base things on successful experiences, for example on encouraging Romany women to become literate and to pass their driving test.
- To foster the participation of the security forces in all the debates, meetings, workshops, etc., with the Romany population.
- To improve the function of the State Council of the Romany Population, finding out which elements do not work and seeking better alternatives.

- Looking for solutions in the transformation of the environment and of the context in which the Romany population is found and not promoting adaptation to it.
- Offering a participation that is of good quality, in which people are motivated and without any kind of difficulties in being able to participate. The Romany population wants to participate because it has never been given this space.
- To consider the matter of proximity and of the search of connection to promote participation.
- Paying special attention not to fall into integration and assimilation when the Romany population participates.
- Fostering the participation of the Romany population in associations and encouraging the creation of associations by Romany people.
- Promoting community participation, in other words, quality participation.
- Fostering the participation of Romany people with the aim of transforming, of resolving specific problems, with the ability to make decisions.
- Giving importance to meetings and promoting volunteer Romany interlocutors.
- Fostering the participation of the Romany community in political areas, in which decision-making is highly present.
- Encouraging the virtues of the Romany community rather than looking at

its deficiencies.

- Respecting the questions of identity of the Romany community in the participation processes.

# Websites and Bibliography

## Interesting websites

European Commission - Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities  
[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/employment\\_social/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/employment_social/index_en.htm)

Council of Europe (COE)  
<http://www.coe.int>

National Minorities  
[http://www.coe.int/T/E/human\\_rights/minorities](http://www.coe.int/T/E/human_rights/minorities)

Activities related to Roma  
[http://www.coe.int/T/DG3/RomaTravellers/Default\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/T/DG3/RomaTravellers/Default_en.asp)

European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI)  
[http://www.coe.int/T/E/human\\_rights/Ecri/1-ECRI](http://www.coe.int/T/E/human_rights/Ecri/1-ECRI)

European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC)  
<http://eumc.europa.eu/eumc/index.php>

United Nations (UN)  
<http://www.un.org>

Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD)  
<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/6/cerd.htm>

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)  
<http://europeandcis.undp.org>

International Labour Organization (ILO)

<http://www.ilo.org>

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)  
[http://www.unhchr.ch/hchr\\_un.htm](http://www.unhchr.ch/hchr_un.htm)

UNESCO  
<http://www.unesco.org>

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)  
<http://www.unicef.it>

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)  
<http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home>

World Health Organization (WHO)  
<http://www.who.int>

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)  
<http://www.osce.org>

Office of the High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM)  
<http://www.osce.org/hcnm>

Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)  
<http://www.osce.org/odihr>

World Bank - Including the Roma  
<http://web.worldbank.org>

European Roma Rights Center  
<http://www.errc.org>

EUMAP, a program of the Open Society Institute (OSI),  
[www.eumap.org](http://www.eumap.org)

Romanian website  
[www.divers.ro](http://www.divers.ro)

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Ethno cultural Diversity Resource Center  
[www.edrc.ro](http://www.edrc.ro)

Website in Romanian  
[www.romacenter.ro](http://www.romacenter.ro)

United Nations Development Programme  
[www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org)

Open Society Institute & Sores Foundation Network  
[www.osi.hu](http://www.osi.hu)

Roma Center for Social Intervention and Studies  
[www.romanicriss.org](http://www.romanicriss.org)

## Other resources

Fundación Secretariado Gitano. Informe Anual 2005. *Discriminación y Comunidad Gitana*. A. D. I. Colección de Cuadernos Técnicos, n.º 34. Madrid 2005.

European Dialogue; East Anglian Gypsy Council. *Promoting Roma Integration at the Local Level*. Practical guidance for NGOs and public authorities. April 2005.

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*Putting Equality into Practice: What role for positive action?* European Commission. Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Unit G. 4. March 2007. Luxembourg. Belgium.

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*Action to Improve Romani Access to Social Protection, Health Care, and Housing*, Open Society Institute, New York, 2001, xx + 234 pp. (see also: [www.soros.org/romaandpublicservices](http://www.soros.org/romaandpublicservices)).

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## Links and contact information

### Project Coordinator

The Catalan Government - Department of Governance and Public Administrations  
<http://www.gencat.net/governacio-ap>

<http://www.romainclusion.org>

### Project partners

The Basque Government  
<http://www.euskadi.net/r33-2219/es>

The Andalusian Government  
<http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/SP/JDA/CDA/Secciones/Portada/JDA-Portada>

Barcelona City Council  
<http://www.bcn.cat>

La Mina District Consortium  
<http://www.barrimina.org/cat>  
Prat de Llobregat Town Council  
<http://www.aj-elprat.es>

Girona Town Council  
<http://www.ajuntament.gi/web>

University of Barcelona - CREA  
<http://www.pcb.ub.es/crea>

The National Agency for Roma - Romanian Government

Successful social interventions projects

[www.anr.gov.ro](http://www.anr.gov.ro)

European Roma Information Office  
<http://www.erionet.org>

