

# Education

In 2006, the Fundación Secretariado Gitano continued to promote actions designed to foster the educational advancement of the Roma community at all levels and targeting all age groups, with particular emphasis on stages which are proving to be the most difficult, i.e. Secondary Education.

A large proportion of the programmes implemented focus on the needs detected at compulsory levels of education. On the one hand, it has been observed, that Roma families are becoming increasingly involved in the incorporation of their sons and daughters in pre-school and primary education. The same cannot be said, however, of attendance at the compulsory secondary-school levels, an area which continues to present difficulties.

At the secondary school level we find that much work remains to be done in terms of access to school as well as permanence and academic success among the Roma community. According to survey data published by the FSG and financed by CIDE (Spanish Educational Research and Documentation Centre) and the Women's Institute entitled *Incorporation and pathways of Roma girls in the ESO* (compulsory secondary education), 80% of the Roma student body initially enrolling



in the first year of the ESO become school-leavers before finishing the last year.

However, the percentage of students successfully completing compulsory secondary education and enrolling in middle-level or advanced vocational training courses is gradually improving year by year, resulting in a slow but progressive increase in the number of students who manage to complete the said training.

Based on the academic level of Roma adults, there is no doubt about the need



TWO ROMA STUDENTS AT THE LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE DE MADRID

to obtain basic training focusing on the acquisition of fundamental instrumental skills such as reading, writing and maths, as well as general culture and the honing of skills facilitating access to employment. The programmes carried out in this connection target both young and adult school-leavers and those who were never properly enrolled in school and who now want to make up for this deficit.

The following are the FSG's **main lines** of action in the area of education in 2006, some of which are within the framework of the Collaboration Agreement concluded between the FSG and the Ministry of Education and Science:

» Foster the **mainstreaming of Roma students at the primary level of education**, paying particular attention

to regular attendance at school and the development of suitable teaching and learning strategies. The aim is to support access to and permanence in school and academic achievement at compulsory levels as well as advancement to higher levels of education.

In this connection, a number of actions have been implemented to facilitate the processes Roma students are undergoing on an equal footing with the rest of the students, remaining ever conscious of the intercultural educational framework, the involvement and support of the family, follow-up and support of students' educational processes and educational compensation in situations where social disadvantage is causing particular difficulties. Accompaniment has been stressed in gaining access to and remaining

enrolled in compulsory secondary education as has promotion of awareness and the spread of Roma culture in formal and informal educational settings. Approximately 9,500 Roma students and school personnel have taken part in these actions.

› To bring to a close the diagnosis and evaluation process concerning the educational situation of Roma students at the compulsory level of secondary education (ESO) initiated in 2004, a report has been published entitled *Incorporation and pathways of Roma girls in the ESO*, funded by CIDE (Spanish Educational Research and Documentation Centre) and the Women's Institute, including quantitative and qualitative information on permanency in the educational system, academic achievement, attendance, expectations, motivation, etc. of the Roma student body in comparison with non-Roma students.

› One of the principal resources used by schools and educational professionals is the **teaching exhibit entitled *Culturas para compartir. Gitanos hoy (Sharing cultures. Roma Today)***, complete with a classroom teaching guide, which has been visited by a great many persons of all ages, especially school children. In addition to the permanent exhibit located at the Adalí Calí centre in Vallecas (Madrid), we have two mobile exhibits which we have loaned out 15



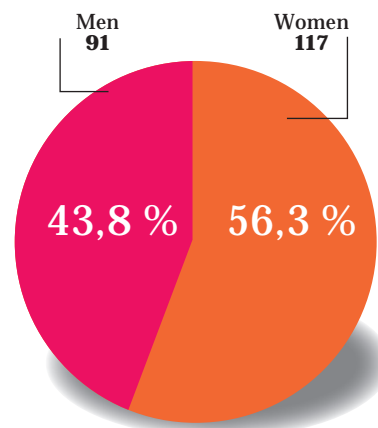
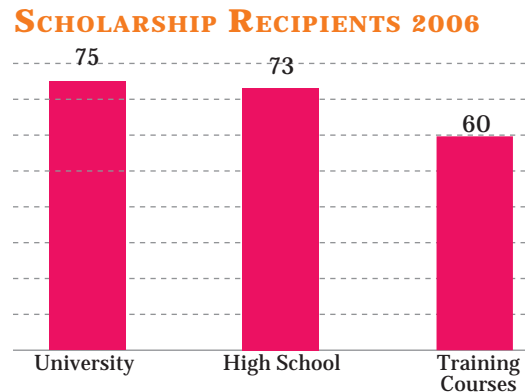
WOMAN TAKING PART IN THE ADULT EDUCATION GROUP

times to schools, cultural centres, social services, NGOs and other FSG-related organisations with a total of approximately 1,500 visitors.

› In respect of the actions which we have been implementing nationally for several years now in the area of **advancement to higher education** and which

focus mainly on giving Roma students enrolled at these

levels a small stipend as well as socio-personal support, in 2006 student and family meetings were held in: Salamanca, Murcia, Loja (Granada), Oviedo, Zaragoza and Ciudad Real with a total of 579



participants. Actions implemented in this area include the awarding of scholarships (a total of 208 students have received economic support), tutoring and the organisation of meetings with the participation of Roma students and their families along with professionals working in the educational and social fields.

› Basic training for adult Roma is another of our lines of action in the field of education. In this case, the FSG's objective is to provide the means, using our own resources or in collaboration with other entities, for adults to acquire basic training for their personal development and to gain access to employment. This line of work includes literacy and basic training activities as well as preparation for academic diplomas or access to higher studies.

› Another of our lines of action focuses on providing support for educational professionals through the development of strategies, materials and resources in order to facilitate educational processes in

“Only 20% of the Roma student body enrolling in year one of secondary compulsory education manages to persevere until completion.”

the Roma community. Thus, within the framework of the Collaboration Agreement concluded with the Ministry of Education and Science, we have compiled digital material for the *Basic training of Adult Roma, Nebó Dikhel (New Perspectives)*, targeting professionals working with adults. This material is organised into sections such as: learning in the case of Roma adults, Roma history and culture and didactic units with methodological sections for use by teachers and classroom material designed for direct use with students. The didactic units also include interactive activities to familiarise adult Roma with the use of new technologies.

Also in 2006, we responded to 164 requests from schools, universities, teaching centres and other entities for technical assistance, training, consultation and/or the provision of materials or information.

› Lastly, as part of the European actions in which the FSG's education area is involved, we took part in the Socrates-Grundtvig 2 Project entitled “A new approach to relations between students, teachers and parents” through which a didactic



STORY TELLING AND BOOK SIGNING IN SEVILLE

application of the “Forum Theatre” method has been developed as a methodological strategy to work on communication and dispute settlement in group settings. This experience was carried out in collaboration with two entities from Turkey and Romania.

Regular attendance and academic performance during the compulsory stages of education are some of the challenges facing the Roma community today.



CASA DE LOS CHAVORRILLOS, PANBENDITO-MADRID