




**15** YEARS OF **acceder**  
 promoting Roma  
 social inclusion





Acceder: a **historic opportunity** for the social inclusion of the Roma community

Social programmes run by governments and NGO at that time were weighed down by a welfarist approach and European Structural Funds resources were not reaching society's most excluded groups.

It was then that the Spanish Government and the European Commission gave a small group of NGO the opportunity to demonstrate our management capacity and show that we could achieve results. We had the advantage of proximity and knowledge of the specific needs of these groups of people: the Roma community, immigrants, inmates, people with disabilities, and others).

The *European Social Fund's 2000-2006 Multi-Regional Operational Programme Fight Against Discrimination* was born and introduced for implementation by public administrations and, for the first time in Europe, by five social organisations: Cáritas, the Spanish Red Cross, the ONCE Foundation, the Luis Vives Foundation and the Fundación Secretariado Gitano.

In the year 2000, the Fundación Secretariado Gitano took advantage of a historic opportunity to give an important boost to the social inclusion process of the Roma population in Spain.

Democracy and the Welfare State had helped in making important progresses in areas such as universal education and social housing but there was an essential area, salaried employment - key to social inclusion, that still needed to be activated.

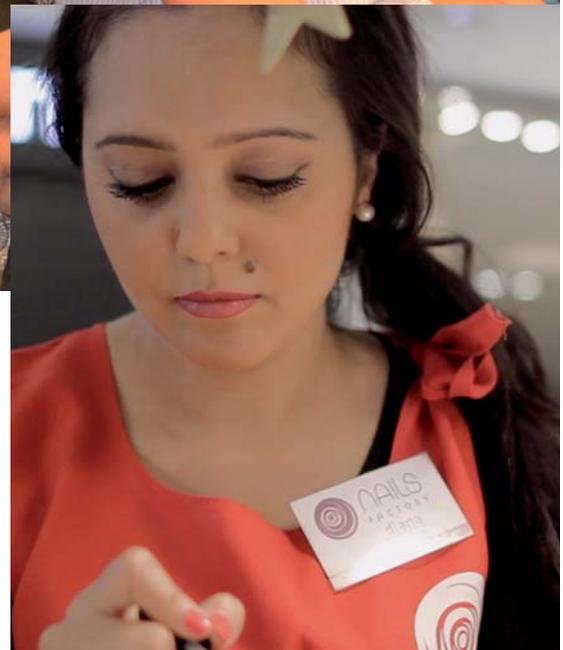


There were a great many needs and major imbalances regarding issues such as gender. Also, expectations were low given that we intended to work with groups of people with whom scant progress had been made in the past. These groups included the Roma population that has faced discrimination throughout history and was far below the average social welfare standards.

These circumstances marked the launch of the Operational Programme whose specific actions initiatives targeting the Roma population were entrusted to the FSG which adopted the term **Acceder** for its programme.

This programme was developed with a 7-year horizon which was unheard of at the time. And from the very outset, it set its sights on employment as the main key to social inclusion.

Time went by and in the second period (2007-2013) the programme was broadened to incorporate the other essential key for inclusion and full-fledged citizenship, education, with the launch of the **Promociona** programme.



**Cáritas**



**Cruz Roja**

**LUIS VIVES**  
CENTRO DE ESTUDIOS SOCIALES  
ACCION CONTRA EL HAMBRE



Fundación ONCE





A programme with **impact and results**: over 22,000 people found **jobs** during these 15 years



The Roma population in Spain faced a major structural disadvantage in its access to the labour market. Most employment activities were off the grid such as mobile trading and a series of traditional activities which were declining rapidly or on the verge of completely disappearing.

Reducing the extremely high unemployment rate, promoting salaried employment of the Roma population and helping Roma women to make their way into the mainstream labour market were the major challenges that the *Acceder* programme was facing.

At the origin of the *Acceder* programme was the firm belief that the Roma population needed to move forward, with tangible results in terms of salaried employment, with a special focus on women and young people.

From the beginning, the programme was conceived to bring about major change and impact on the living standard of those participating and to include top level companies as key partners throughout the entire process..

## Improving employability

*Acceder* is a labour market intermediation programme pursuing the effective incorporation of the Roma population into the labour market as the gateway to full social inclusion.

*Acceder* provides personalised attention and accompaniment and also intervenes in the family and community context while working closely with the labour market seeking possible employment opportunities and partnerships with companies.

Enhancement of basic skills and professional qualifications is one of the programme's most important tools, the aim being to give Roma persons a better chance in the labour market and therefore having a direct impact on the equal opportunities for the population as a whole.



## Keys to success

These are some of the programme's key points since its launch in the year 2000:

- > Personalised pathways for inclusion into working life: solutions tailored to each person and context.
- > Qualification enhancement as the key to equal opportunity.
- > Intervention in the market through intermediation with companies in order to match labour supply with demand for workers.
- > Goal-oriented objectives, continuous assessment and innovation.
- > Comprehensive approach.
- > Activation and mobilisation of young Roma and women towards the labour market.
- > Encourage a change in mindset: the value of having a job.
- > Social awareness-raising and advocacy.
- > A specific focus on the Roma population in general but also on those members of the community who are more disadvantaged: Roma women and Roma from Eastern Europe.

## Social Inclusion companies

Protected employment initiatives created under the *Acceder* umbrella, give the most excluded segment of the Roma population access to employment through an accompaniment process and the opportunity to work in a transitional adapted work environment allowing these individuals to overcome all conditioning factors and personal and social barriers.

- > **Nabut** – cleaning, laundry services and trade.
- > **Vedelar** – Gardening and forestry work.
- > **Ecotur** – Auxiliary services (hostesses) for congresses.
- > **Uzipen** – Remodelling, maintenance and cleaning.



## New initiatives

> **Learning by Doing.** This is an initiative developed in partnership with the Spanish Red Cross targeting young people (18-30) through a complete theoretical and practical training pathway in real work environments during several months. Participants are able to learn more than one occupation in a company thus ensuring greater versatility in the labour market. Partnership with companies is key and they are involved in the entire training process.

> **Mercaemprende.** This initiative seeks to make mobile trading a viable, high-quality and sustainable work option by professionalising Roma mobile traders and modernising street markets.

## Results that transform lives

The quantitative success of the *Acceder* programme is borne out by its significant figures: over 22,000 persons have found a job since its launch (a total of 57,916 labour contracts signed) and always with a balance between men and women, the latter accounting for 53% of the total participants.

During the lifetime of the programme, over 2,800 training courses have been given, we have worked with 19,694 companies and a total of 82,402 people have participated (32,788 under age 30).



### RESULTS ACCEDER 2000 - 2014

SEX	MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
 PARTICIPANTS	43.797	38.605	82.402
 PERSONS TRAINED	15.575	11.484	27.059
 EMPLOYED PERSONS	11.923	10.574	22.497

AGE	UNDER 25	25-54	OVER 55	TOTAL
 PARTICIPANTS	14.832	64.274	3.296	82.402
 PERSONS TRAINED	4.870	21.107	1.082	27.059
 EMPLOYED PERSONS	1.800	20.022	675	22.497

### ACCEDER PROGRAMME 2000 - 2014

TOTAL NO. OF CONTRACTS  
 **57.916**

53% WOMEN | 47% MEN

18.170 / UNDER 30  
 30.534 / AGE 30 - 45  
 9.212 / OVER 45

TOTAL NO. OF PARTICIPANTS  
 **82.402**

53,15% WOMEN | 46,85% MEN

32.788 / UNDER 30  
 35.560 / AGE 30 - 45  
 14.054 / OVER 45

TOTAL NO. OF COLLABORATING COMPANIES

 **19.694**



*“The Roma community is the largest minority in the European Union, after enlargement in 2004. Of the projects funded with Structural Funds, the Acceder Programme is an example of a best practice. It has been a great success in integrating the Roma population into the labour market. It is important to use best practices with a view to replicating the same positive effects in other Member States.”*



Declarations by Vladimir Spidla, European Commissioner for Employment, during the celebration in Spain of the 50th anniversary of the European Social Fund (June 2007).



**DIANA CERREDUELA**  
Acceder Programme participant, Valladolid

*“I’m a normal person, very normal. I get up in the morning, help my mother with the housework, go to church... and go to work. I have not abandoned my traditions. My father is a typical Roma father. It was hard for him to get used to the idea in the beginning. My daughter with a job? What will people think? But he saw that I was happy and that I was fulfilling myself as a member of the Roma community and as a person. And I think that is what fathers want. I believe that my father is satisfied and proud.”*

**RAMÓN GIMÉNEZ**  
Acceder Programme participant, Valencia

*“Roma are brave. They are survivors. We Roma strive to be more, to make something of ourselves. You have to give it your all. As a Roma man, as a Roma woman. You have to prove yourself. And always going a little further in all aspects. Trust... you have to prove that they can trust in you. Effort... you have to prove that you can do it. Roma are not lazy. You are worth it.”*



**SANTA CERREDUELA**  
Acceder Programme participant, Valladolid

*“Thanks to the Fundación Secretariado Gitano I made something of myself... I got my compulsory secondary education diploma. I have several training certificates and I’ve worked. My first job at C&A was the best experience of my life. People were really nice to me... It was a huge challenge but I achieved it, with high expectations and very motivated to work”.*



To see these micro-videos, scan the QR codes with you smart phone.

Scan the following QR code to see the complete video “15 years of Acceder” →





Five years of Promociona, a tutoring and **educational counselling** programme at the heart of social change



The enrolment of Roma children in school in Spain started just over 30 years now. And while educational mainstreaming in primary school is practically 100%, a serious deficit still exists in compulsory secondary education and post compulsory studies.

Currently, 64% of Roma students between the ages of 16 and 24 fail to complete their compulsory studies, compared with 13% of the overall student body in that age bracket. The situation is even more dire in the case of girls who drop out at an even earlier age than boys.

This reflects a clear lack of attention on the part of public authorities and is discriminatory with regard to a fundamental right. It compromises the life of these young people perpetuating the cycle of poverty and exclusion in which they and many Roma families still live.

### Education, indispensable for social inclusion

While the first seven years of the Programme Fight against Discrimination focused on vocational training and employment, the second period (2007-2013) saw the clear need to take action at the pre-employment stage as well.

This meant broadening the concept and further developing our work through personalised pathways and incorporating education into this programme which initially focused on employment.

With this more comprehensive approach, we sought to come up with a more complex and effective response given the complexity and



**Promociona**  
To the academic success of the Roma community

multi-dimensional nature of the problem. It was decided to put the focus on the main problem and get an increasing number of young Roma to complete their compulsory secondary school studies and earn their diploma.

### The Promociona Programme

*Promociona*, "focusing on academic achievement and keeping young Roma in school", is the name and slogan of the programme added in 2009 to the repertoire of initiatives carried out by the FSG in the sphere of education.

This is a tutoring and counselling programme targeting the different people involved in the educational process, i.e. Roma students themselves and their families, schools and other educational and social professionals, focusing on 3 main pillars:

- > Educational counselling,
- > Promociona classrooms (academic support and quality tutoring),
- > Support with campaigns and other awareness-raising actions.

## PROMOCIONA RESULTS 2014 - 2015

PROMOCIONA PARTICIPANTS EARNING THEIR SECONDARY SCHOOL

PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS CONTINUING IN POST-COMPULSORY STUDIES



**75,0%**  
OF THE BOYS



**89,5%**  
OF THE GIRLS



**87,8%**  
OF THE BOYS



**75,3%**  
OF THE GIRLS



**TOTAL 82,1%**



**TOTAL 81,1%**

## PROMOCIONA SCHOOL YEAR 2014 - 2015 NATIONAL FIGURES



**1.067** BENEFITED FAMILIES



**1.276** STUDENTS



**373** SCHOOLS

## Towards academic achievement

*Promociona* is based on an intercultural model and encourages the use of the general services at the disposal of the population at large. Its methodology includes the involvement of families and tries to change their mindset. It aims at improving the academic achievement of students and decreasing early school leaving.

## Promising results

In the 2014-2015 school year, 77.5% of the students in their last year of secondary school who participated in the *Promociona Programme* successfully completed secondary school and continued studying. These figures are similar to those of previous years during which an average of over 1,000 families and students from over 300 schools from all of Spain took part.



**SONIA CORTÉS**  
Educational counsellor FSG-Malaga

*"In my view, education is the biggest challenge facing the Roma community. What amazes me the most about the students we work with is that they do not feel capable of completing secondary school and continuing on with post-compulsory studies. They see that as something alien. We therefore need positive role models that they can relate to and who believe in their ability to complete their studies."*

**FERNANDO MORIÓN**  
FSG Education Department

*"Young Roma are undergoing a transition, they are at a crossroads. The academic situation of Roma students is gradually improving although it must not be forgotten that 6 out of 10 Roma students still fail to complete their compulsory studies which makes it difficult for them to find a job and forge a profession which is motivating and helps them to persevere. The FSG has been combating early school leaving for years through the educational counselling programme and by improving academic success rates and motivating students to stay in school."*





PENSAMIENTO Y CULTURA

# Gitanos

Nº 63  
Octubre 2012  
Revista Trimestral  
de la Fundación  
Secretariado Gitano  
3,75 Euros

**Perfiles:**  
Engracia Hidalgo Tena,  
Secretaria de Estado  
de Empleo

**Acceder:**  
Programa *Acceder*.  
Balance de 12 años

**Dossier:**  
Gitanos y Empleo, nº 8  
Población gitana, empleo  
e inclusión social.  
Principales resultados y  
conclusiones del Estudio  
comparado 2011

## *The Roma community is making major changes that society has difficulty perceiving*

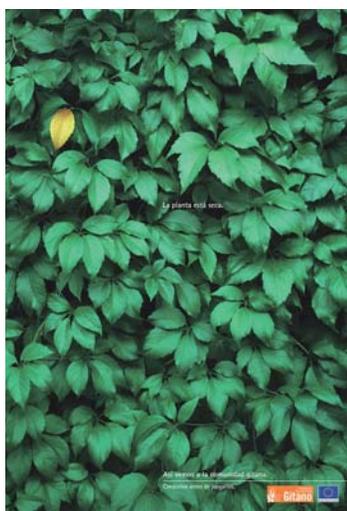
From the very beginning, the Programme Fighting against Discrimination envisaged the promotion of equal treatment for Roma. This means changing the poor social image that stigmatises them and combating attitudes of rejection and discriminatory and racist behaviours which hold Roma back and are based on their ethnic background and not on their individual acts.

Negative social image has discriminatory effects in key areas such as employment, education, housing and access to certain goods and services. Therefore, a cross-cutting aspect of the Programme has been to raise the awareness of society and of the main people involved in these processes and providing assistance to victims, even in the courts.

Moreover, the programmes themselves help generate important progress and social change and have served to displace stereotypes of Roma and replace them with a new and more accurate 21st century image of Roma who work in a wide range of professions and families clearly supporting education.

Together with social awareness-raising, efforts are also made to exert an impact on systems, structures and policies with a view to eliminating the obstacles and structural causes hindering the social inclusion of the Roma population and hence the full exercise of their citizenship.

To that end, a series of materials have been drafted and studies and research conducted to better familiarise people with the Roma population. Permanent communication tools are in place such as the web page, the magazine entitled *Gitanos*, e-bulletins, social networks, merchandising, press office, etc., and an endless list of fora, seminars and meetings.



## Awareness raising campaigns

High-impact campaigns dating back to 2004 have been launched focusing on three key areas: social image, employment and education:

- > "Get to know them before judging them"
- > "Prejudice means letting others put words in our mouths"
- > "Employment makes us equal"
- > "When I grow up I want to be..."
- > "Roma with an education, Roma with a future"
- > "Fulfil your dreams"



## Studies and research

Following are some of the most relevant:

- > Employment and the Roma population (comparative studies with Labour Force Survey indicators, at national and regional employment level) and Employment Observatories (national and regional)
- > Studies on the educational mainstreaming of Roma students (primary and secondary school)
- > National Mapping on the housing conditions of the Roma in Spain (2007)
- > Annual "Discrimination and the Roma Community" reports (from 2005 forward)



## Networking in **Europe** with new approaches and strategies



Over 6 million Roma live in the European Union. In some countries they face extreme situations of poverty and exclusion. There has been significant migration from East to West for at least the last decade.

European institutions have recognised the need to foster a political framework of investment to promote improvement in living standards and achieve greater social cohesion.

In Spain, this framework has taken the form of the 2012-2020 *National Strategy for the inclusion of the Roma population*. The actions implemented by the FSG over these last 15 years have been vital in helping to achieve the objectives of this National Strategy.

The Acceder programme has the European component in its very DNA, both in terms of its origin and main line of funding, the European Social Fund, and its projection outside of Spain

with the transfer of the model to countries such as Bosnia, Romania and now, Southern Italy.

The programme has been broadly disseminated and recognised with many mentions as a “best practice” and praised from different fora and institutions (the United Nations, the European Commission and Parliament, the Council of Europe, the European Economic and Social Committee, the World Bank, etc.) thanks to its novel and efficient management of European funds.

Over the years there have been a great number of study visits to the programme, presentations to key agents, publications and constant consulting and promotion work for the exchange of experiences.

### The EUroma network

Promoted by the FSG and the Spanish Ministry of Employment, this network is devoted to promoting the use of Structural Funds for the social inclusion of the Roma population in the EU.

12 Member States take part in the network -having therefore an impact on the lives of millions of Roma, and both the European Commission and the Parliament have urged governments to follow its example for the exchange of best practices.



## A social investment with high returns and **impact**

Over the last 15 years the Acceder programme has become a force of transformation achieving tangible results taking advantage of the simultaneous impact in approximately 50 cities and towns benefiting Roma throughout all of Spain.

As shown by the study entitled *El empleo de las personas vulnerables (Employing the vulnerable)* (2013), the Programme Fighting against Discrimination is an investment with high returns: each euro invested has generated an economic return of €1.39 (through taxes and social security payments from the jobs created and savings in benefits, etc.).

Moreover, the entire society benefits insofar as it "curtails spending" with a programme that produces results not only for end beneficiaries (that receive training, find a job or get educational support) but also in terms of public policies and the work approaches of other organisations. In short, it produces clear benefits in terms of social cohesion.

### Qualitative impact and lessons learned

In addition to the relevant quantitative impact of *Acceder* (22,497 jobs) and *Promociona* (82% secondary school graduation rate), there are other very relevant qualitative effects such as:

- > A change in the mindset of many Roma families, at individual and group level, regarding the importance of employment and education in their lives.
- > A change of attitude on the part of public administrations, companies and social agents towards the Roma community with respect to their expectations, prejudices and social reality.

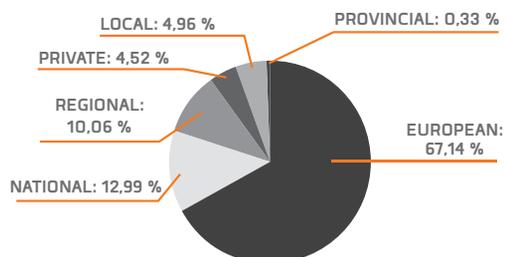
In terms of lessons learned from the programme, the following can be cited:

- > A shared methodology has been used by all FSG territorial offices, thus facilitating its potential transfer to other areas or general policies.



- > Specific and adapted (but not segregated) services are provided to the Roma population. They are also adapted to the specificities of Roma women.
- > The programme's human resources are inter-cultural, motivated, committed and professional and are working in a professional, ethical, efficient and innovative organisation.
- > Long-term planning (periods of 7 years or longer) has provided greater freedom of movement than traditional programming periods which tend to be shorter.
- > A comprehensive and integrated approach has been adopted which is supported by powerful IT tools and intervention at local, regional, national and European level.
- > Focus on objectives and results (measurable and comparable with the mainstream population).

### FUNDING • 2014





## The FSG: several decades of work and a future with important challenges

The Fundación Secretariado General was formed in the 1960s to those who nobody responded to. A community, the Roma community, that had suffered many centuries of discrimination.

It was constituted as an Association in 1982 and then as a Foundation in 2001. During this long period of time, the FSG has proven itself to be a pioneer, professional, transparent and efficient organisation. It adheres to an inter-cultural model with Roma (25%) and non-Roma personnel and makes its programmes available to all people, Roma and non-Roma alike, in similar socio-economic conditions.

The FSG currently has 56 offices and works in 76 cities in 14 different Autonomous Communities, and also in European projects and initiatives.

### Future challenges

While great progress has been made during these past 15 years, we are still facing important challenges such as:

- Maintaining the employment levels achieved and improving the quality of employment of the Roma population to offset the very high unemployment rate.

- Preventing early school leaving and reinforcing learning at early stages to increase the number of Roma youth who earn their compulsory secondary school diploma.
- Combating poverty and social exclusion and tackling growing inequality, discrimination and anti-gypsyism. In short, to achieve the complete mainstreaming of Roma as full-fledged citizens.
- Contributing to achieve the objectives of the National Roma Integration Strategy (2012-2020).
- Extending actions at international level reinforcing networking and advocacy through the EURoma initiative.
- Becoming more effective and having a greater impact which will, in turn, have a multiplying effect.

In terms of opportunities, we are looking to the new 2014-2020 Structural and European Investment Funds with the imminent implementation of the Operational Programme Social Inclusion and Social Economy which is replacing the Programme to Fight against Discrimination.



## OFFICES OF the FUNDACIÓN SECRETARIADO GITANO



## A FEW MILESTONES

### 2000

- > Commencement of the first period of the Operational Programme Fight against Discrimination (2000–2006). Implementation of *Acceder* in 30 cities.

### 2001

- > The National Action Plan for Employment in Spain selects *Acceder* as an example of a Best Practice.

### 2003

- > Publication of the “Observatorio de Empleo y Comunidad gitana” (Employment and Roma community Observatory).
- > Enlargement of *Acceder* to a further 12 cities.

### 2004

- > *Acceder* selected as BEST in the international Dubai Award for best practices in improving standard of living. United Nations – HABITAT.
- > Seville seminar entitled “In employment we are all equal”.
- > Awareness-raising Campaign: “Get to know them before judging them”.

### 2005

- > First Annual Report *Discrimination and the Roma Community*.
- > Campaign “Prejudice means letting others put words in our mouths”.

### 2006

- > Study entitled “Población gitana y empleo” (Roma population and employment).
- > *Acceder* designated as a best practice in the 2006–2008 National Social Inclusion Plan, together with Cáritas, the Red Cross and the ONCE Foundation.

### 2007

- > Creation of the European EURoma network.
- > Second period (2007–2013) of the Operational Programme Fight against Discrimination.
- > *Acceder* selected as a best practice in European Social Inclusion Plans, together with Cáritas, the Red Cross and the ONCE Foundation.
- > Campaign “Employment makes us equal”.
- > *Acceder* reports 2000–2006 (national and regional).

### 2008

- > *Acceder* is implemented in Romania.
- > First national seminar on Roma from Eastern Europe.

### 2009

- > The Promociona Programme is launched.
- > Educational campaign “When I grow up I want to be...”

### 2011

- > II Study entitled “Población gitana y empleo” (Roma population and employment).

### 2012

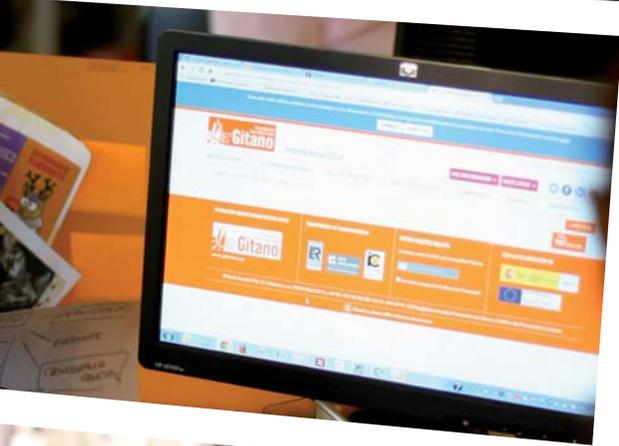
- > Enlargement of *Acceder* to a further 6 cities.
- > Campaign “Roma with an Education, Roma with a Future.”

### 2013

- > Launch of the “Learning by Doing” Programme.
- > Study conducted by the four private operators (Cáritas, Red Cross, ONCE and the FSG) ‘El empleo de las personas vulnerables: una inversión social rentable’ (Employment of vulnerable persons: a social investment with high returns).
- > Educational campaign “Fulfil your dreams”.
- > EURoma+, new network on structural funds and Roma population.

### 2014

- > Experimental kickoff of Mercaemprende in 2 cities in Andalusia.
- > Implementation of the *Acceder* programme in Italy.



# 15 YEARS OF **acceder**

15 years working with the European Social Fund for the employment and social promotion of the Roma community in Spain and in Europe

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