

# Framework Document

## ACCEDER Programme



*STRUCTURAL FUNDS: INVESTING IN ROMA*

**Working Group on Employment**

**Study visit (11-13 March 2009)**

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## 1. Summary

The aim of this document is to serve as a base for the debates that will be developed by the EURoma Working Group on Employment during the study visit that will be held in Spain on the 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> March 2009. This meeting will be focused on the access of the Roma population to the labour market and will take the ACCEDER programme as a study case.

This report is divided into four parts. **The first part** is focused on the **European Union (EU) framework** and those policies related to Roma, basically employment, social inclusion and anti-discrimination. It is important to remark how the Roma issue has been gaining weight, not only in the political agenda of the European Parliament, that in January 2008 adopted a Resolution calling on the Commission to pursue an overall strategy for social inclusion of the Roma, but also in the different actions and programs developed by the Commission. The Roma Summit held last September in Brussels, together with the decision of creating a EU Roma Platform, is a new stage in the process of placing Roma issues at the EU Agenda. A key element in this process is how to tackle this subject in a coherent manner within the existing policies and working instruments to provide appropriate guidelines to Member States.

As literature shows, employment, together with education, housing and health, is one of the pillars for the inclusion of Roma. It is well known that unfortunately the Roma community suffers all around Europe high levels of exclusion from the labour market. These difficulties arise basically from the early drop out of school, the poor qualifications, the discrimination when searching for employment and other barriers related to the environment where many Roma people live, as well as traditions and historical reasons.

The Structural Funds, mainly the European Social Fund (ESF), are the main tool that the European Union has for supporting Member States to modernize the labour market, improve the rates of employment, activate and support the capacity of human resources in the challenge of improving their productivity. In its Regulations the ESF pays special attention to unskilled groups that find more difficulties for accessing the labour market. Consequently, the Structural Funds are a unique opportunity for tackling the disadvantages that the Roma community finds in its training and access to employment.

**The second part** of the report presents the situation of the **Roma community in Spain**, starting by some historical notes, followed by the demographic situation and highlighting the most recent relevant changes. Spain is the country with highest Roma population in Western Europe. Nevertheless the percentage of Roma living in Spain, except in Andalusia, is not so high as in most Central and Eastern European countries.

Roma people suffer in Spain from poverty, exclusion and discrimination as it happens, unfortunately, all around Europe. But what is important to remark is that they have made more progress in the last four decades than they made in the previous five and a half centuries. This is basically due to five reasons: (1) the process of democratization

since 1978 has given the Roma for the first time the opportunity to be full citizens; (2) with the adhesion to the European Union in 1986, Spain has drastically increased its living standards and Roma have profited from this economic growth; (3) Spain, as other Mediterranean countries, has a young welfare system, nonetheless its social protection system has been very inclusive with the Roma community, not because they are Roma but because they have more needs than other groups -in terms of social housing, education, social incomes, etc.; (4) at the same time and with different levels of development, regional governments have implemented specific target programs and actions addressed to Roma people suffering special disadvantages; (5) since 1960 Spain has had an important mobilization of civil society in favor of the Roma community.

All these factors have led the Spanish Roma community to an important change, not only in terms of living standards, but also in relation to their culture, traditions, integration in neighborhoods, etc. Spanish Roma are currently as diverse as the Spanish society is, and although some of them still suffer extreme exclusion and discrimination, it is worth underlining that many others are totally integrated into society.

Concerning employment, the Roma community has traditionally been self-employed; Roma generally worked in family businesses and their jobs were related, before emigrating to the cities, to the agriculture sector, such as gathering of scrap and solid residues, and more recently to the mobile trading. What is happening more and more is that some of these jobs do not have a chance in the labour market and others are difficult to develop without a proper entrepreneurship qualification. In this situation many of the Roma adults are expelled from the labour market and the new Roma generations have no opportunities in the former family businesses.

In its **third part**, the report explains how the **ACCEDER project** has been conceived to tackle this situation. In the year 2000, the youth Roma community had poor opportunities in their traditional jobs, the Spanish economy growth was 4% annually and the labour market drastically reduced the former rates of unemployment creating intensively low qualified jobs in the sector of the construction and in services. Many indicators showed that new generations, born in the democratic period, were facing a cultural change related to their expectations and their understanding that they are living among the *gadjes* (non Roma), they now go to school with the *gadjes* and sometimes they even marry them; therefore they should have the same opportunities as them. In brief, they understand that *“you can continue to be a Roma despite working in a gadje business”*.

ACCEDER is the answer from Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG) to this situation. It started from a previous 2-year pilot experience developed in the city of Madrid that was later spread around Spain with the support of the new period of Structural Funds 2000-2006. The idea was to support Roma youth in their access to normalized employment as an alternative to self-employment or family business. The assumptions were:

- There is a momentum to provide many young Roma people with the opportunity to enter the labour market with the aim of closing the circle of normalization (living among the others, going to the same schools, having same social benefits and working with the others).

- If this approach works, the project will be able to change the mutual understanding and perceptions between Roma and non Roma reducing prejudices and stereotypes. Roma, entrepreneurs, politicians and citizens will understand that Roma want to work and are able to do it as anyone else if they have an opportunity. This will improve their expectations related to the employment and their self-perception.
- Launching a national-wide programme would not only be able to cover the entire country, but would also allow the articulation and strengthening of Roma policies, creation of synergies, scale economies and, therefore, complement bottom-up with top-down approaches.
- The programme would provide with know-how, better understanding of the Roma phenomenon, information and data, working tools and skilled workers, Roma and non-Roma, specialized in this issue.

In terms of fields of action, the ACCEDER programme had from the very beginning two complementary levels: (1) a grass-root approach with 48 teams currently working all around Spain, mostly in the biggest cities providing integrated insertion itineraries (guidance, training and labour insertion, search for employment, etc.) (2) a policy approach complementary to the others: awareness-raising, campaigning, research, creation of working tools, data collection, influencing policies, etc.

The ACCEDER programme works under some principles that respond to the corporative culture of Fundación Secretariado Gitano (which are indeed its identity distinctiveness) and include: the intercultural approach involving Roma and non Roma at all levels of the organization (board, workers, volunteers and beneficiaries); the idea under this approach is that the Foundation reflects what the society is. Another key principle is the culture of partnership, which means that the project involves around 200 effective partners from different levels of public administrations, business sector and civil society. The third one is combining the mainstream approach with the target approach based on normalization.

In terms of results, as it is well known, the ACCEDER programme has been able to go beyond the objectives foreseen in 2000. During the course of the Programme a total of 35,304 people were served at the integrated centres and approximately 70% of these were Roma. These figures are well above the original forecast of 20,000 people. More than 26,000 work contracts have been signed and 13,902 people have taken part in training activities. It is important to highlight that in term of beneficiaries the project has had a gender approach with more women (53%) than men (47%) benefiting from its services.

Besides the factual results, it is worth drawing the attention to the impacts that the programme has been able to achieve. Some of these impacts concern the improvement of expectations from the Roma and non Roma community, creating permanent networks and structures of cooperation, working methods, systems of data collection and monitoring, human capital at grass-root level, etc.

**The fourth part** of the document is focused on the **lessons learned** from ACCEDER up to now. As it is well known, this project has been recognized, not only at Spanish level but also at European level, as an example of good practice and has received several awards and prizes, not only for being a relevant experience in Spain but because there are many things to learn from this project that can be transferable to other experiences:

- In terms of policies, the stronger value of ACCEDER is probably the ability to articulate a national Roma employment policy based on the Structural Funds; the ability to use the Structural Funds as a springboard for the Roma labour market inclusion. We can add some other relevant policy elements as the combination of both the grass-roots and policy level (national dimension for local actions), mobilizing all local and national resources, creating synergies, the leading role of a civil society entity in the articulation of the policies, long-term planning, integrated approach from the employment to the inclusion, etc.
- The ACCEDER project tackles the Roma issue in a particular manner. From its approaches we can highlight the top down-bottom up perspective, good coordination and management system, individualized integration pathways within an integral and community approach, tailored but not segregated services, innovation and permanent improvement, and a win-win approach face to the companies.
- Concerning the strategies and tactics there are also things to learn from this project: for example, the global strategy adapted to the local situations and circumstances, the ability to act with flexibility and to adapt to the individual situations and rhythms, the capacity to create working tools and monitoring systems, to collect data, and the visibility, transparency and accountability as an action criteria.

The report ends with some thoughts and final questions for further discussion: Has the ACCEDER worked so well just because of the positive context of the labour market? Will it continue achieving (the same) positive results in the new recession period or must change the strategy? To what extent is sustainable or has gained sustainability the ACCEDER project? What is useful from ACCEDER when the options are self-employment, family business...? To what extent has the ACCEDER worked just because it has been led by FSG? Would it have worked if it had been managed by a public body or by a Roma association?

## 2. The European Framework

### 2. 1. General Context

It is widely agreed upon that one of the main obstacles to develop effective social inclusion measures for Roma has been the failure to establish a comprehensive vision and a coherent approach for Roma integration. The European Commission, in many cases urged by the European Parliament as one of the main driving forces at European level, has been, and still is, trying to incorporate in a coherent manner, **the Roma issue** within already existing policies, while giving such issue a specific targeted treatment, namely, the development of specific guidelines, recommendations that will allow Member States to tackle Roma issues specifically due to its special characteristics and situation. While *mainstreaming* should remain the main aim and goal, the development of targeted measures/policies combined with other mainstreamed ones, will most certainly lead us to better solve certain circumstances that Roma people suffer around Europe. Specific circumstances requires of specific measures, if not as a permanent approach, at least in a given period of time. In a summarised way **the most important challenges** are:

- To combat widespread discrimination practices against Roma, not only at the level of individual practices but also at the level of institutional discrimination;
- To overcome the disadvantages Romani children are confronted with in the educational sector;
- To find ways for integration into the formal labour market;
- To provide with social housing solutions avoiding *ghettoisation* effects.

It is also widely acknowledged that all this should be accompanied by effective awareness-raising actions to challenge the stigmatization that individuals perceived as Roma are victims of throughout Europe.

The **European Parliament** has been a pioneer in promoting Roma rights issues (its first Resolution goes back to 1984). In the last years it has adopted specific Resolutions on the situation of Roma (in 2005 and on Roma women in 2006), following a debate in plenary on January 31<sup>st</sup> 2008, when adopted a Resolution calling on the Commission to pursue an overall strategy for social inclusion of the Roma.

Following the request from the Council, the **European Commission** issued in July a Staff Working Document<sup>2</sup> accompanying the Communication from the Commission on

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<sup>2</sup> Commission Staff Working Document accompanying the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions. Non-discrimination and equal opportunities: A renewed commitment, COM(2008) 420.

Non-Discrimination and Equal Opportunities on the same day when the new Social Agenda was also made public. The Staff Working Document gives a comprehensive inventory of the EC instruments which have addressed Roma issues, includes some good practice examples, lessons learned and future challenges. The Communication from the Commission also remarks the urgency of 'Applying better tools to advancing the social inclusion of the Roma' from a non-discrimination and equal-opportunities perspective.

Although the discussion on the scope of role of the European Union and the obligation of the Member States (MS) regarding Roma issues (as many others) remains, the EU has made several efforts to include the Roma communities more actively within the European mechanisms as target group of its policies. As the Staff Working Document summarises, in the last years the EU has been creating several instruments in order to tackle persistent failure, inefficacy or just inexistence of EU or/and national policies in reducing discrimination against Roma and promoting social and economic inclusion.

These efforts have mainly concentrated on:

- Expansion of **Anti-Discrimination legal measures** in Europe by adopting a series of anti-discrimination directives, notably, (i) Directive 2000/43/EC "implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin; (ii) Directive 2000/78/EC "establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation" (iii) Directive 2002/73/EC "on the implementation of the principle of equal treatment for men and women as regards access to employment, vocational training and promotion and working conditions".
- The **EU Social Inclusion Policy Framework**. "Through the EU Social Protection and Social Inclusion Process, the European Union coordinates and encourages Member State actions to combat poverty and social exclusion, and to reform their social protection systems on the basis of policy exchanges and mutual learning. On 29 February 2008 the EPSCO (Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs) Council and the Commission jointly adopted the 2008 Joint Report on Social Protection and Social Inclusion. In the Supporting Document to the 2008 Joint Social Protection and Social Inclusion Report as well as in the Member States' National Strategic Reports explicit references are given to how the Member States promote the social inclusion of Roma."
- The **EU Employment Strategy** (EES), as the main driver for the achievement of employment goals set by the EU. It was launched in 1997 at the Luxembourg Job Summit. MS are urged to take action and attract more people into the labour market and although the situation of Roma is not specifically identified in the EES, the low formal employment rate of Roma /Gypsies and Travellers in Europe, as well as their poor labour opportunities should oblige MS to take targeted action. The key elements for the EES are:
  - Employment Guidelines issued annually by the European Council upon proposal from the European Commission. These guidelines are the common priorities for MS employment policies.
  - These Guidelines are monitored through a set of annual National Action Plans that should put into practice the set employment priorities.



- Annual Joint Employment Report. Both the European Commission and the Council examine each National Action Plan and make up a joint document.
- Annual Recommendations to MS upon proposal by the Commission.
- After the renewed Lisbon Social Agenda this whole process has been integrated within the Strategic National Reference Framework, which means that employment issues are wisely mainstreamed into economic issues, but on the other side, the previous process of follow-up and monitoring of objectives weakens.
- The **Open Method of Coordination (OMC)** provides a new framework for political cooperation between the Member States, whose national policies can thus be directed towards certain common objectives. Member States agree to identify and promote their most effective policies in the fields of Social Protection and Social Inclusion with the aim of learning from each others' experiences. This intergovernmental method takes place in areas which fall within the competence of the Member States and it is based principally on: jointly identifying and defining objectives to be achieved; establishing measuring instruments (statistics, indicators, guidelines); and benchmarking.

In July 2008, the European Commission proposed to reinforce the Open Method of Coordination in the social field to allow the EU to achieve better results for the 2008-2010 period and pave the way for the introduction of a sound framework post-2010. The communication, adopted by the European Commission identifies four priority areas:

- Increasing political commitment and visibility;
  - Strengthening the positive interaction with other EU policies;
  - Reinforcing the analytical tools;
  - Better ownership through peer reviews, mutual learning and involvement of all relevant actors.
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- **Structural Funds**, as the main EU financial instrument to promote social cohesion. Mainly the ESF but also de ERDF has been relevant to the Roma population. These funds have in various cases aimed at improving the access to the labour market of Roma communities under Operational Programmes (O.P.) (i.e. the ACCEDER programme, under the Spanish Multiregional O.P. Fight Against Discrimination 2000-2006 and 2007-2013, described in this document) but also under the EQUAL Community Initiative, seeking for new approaches to fight against discrimination and inequalities in the labour market. Previously, some of EU Employment and Human Resources Initiatives (INTEGRA, YOUTHSTART...) financed programmes that focused on the Roma population and developed new approaches and tools to tackle exclusion and discrimination of the Roma population when accessing the labour market.

- **Human Rights monitoring**, previously under the work of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) recently turned into the Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), whose aim is to watch over human rights protection, including Roma as a specific target group.

Next future changes within the EU structures -both Parliament and Commission- may create indecision and reluctance for taking relevant decisions in the short term. Nevertheless this moment could also be seen as an opportunity to launch a renewed agenda on this issue.

## 2.2. Employment Policy

As previously mentioned, the **European Employment Strategy** has been a crucial instrument at the EU level to address employment issues: to increase employment, improve productivity and quality of work and strengthen social and territorial cohesion.

The Employment Strategy is also central to the **Lisbon Strategy** (2000 and even more after its revision in 2005), particularly because of its focus on growth and jobs. The Lisbon Strategy stressed the need for attracting people into the labour market, including those at the margins, whose situation still needs to be substantially improved. It is also the objective to increase labour market participation, particularly those, like migrants and ethnic minorities, with low rates of participation<sup>3</sup>. In this sense, **combination of employment and social policies** become crucial when promoting successful labour integration of disadvantaged and discriminated groups, such as the Roma. Measures aimed on one hand, at tackling discriminatory practices and attitudes, and on the other, to promote equal opportunities are still needed nowadays.

Although there are no EU-wide statistics that specifically measure the labour market situation for Roma, there are some surveys and research that give light to **the labour reality of the Roma communities across Europe**: low formal employment rates, high rates of unskilled active population, high rates of unemployment, precarious and unstable jobs, discrimination in accessing training and jobs, low salaries, etc. This situation requires of urgent measures that tackle, right from the root, the causes for such a disadvantaged and unfair reality.

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<sup>3</sup> As stated in Commission Staff Working Document, 2008 "... In the introduction of Employment Guidelines it is stated that *"Equal opportunities and combating discrimination is essential for progress"* directly after the overarching targets of full employment, improving quality and productivity at work and strengthening social and territorial cohesion. Ethnic minorities including Roma are covered by areas which refer to "low skilled", "unemployed" or other disadvantaged groups. Moreover, Guideline 19 refers explicitly to *"ensure inclusive labour markets, enhance work attractiveness, and make work pay for job-seekers, including disadvantaged people and the inactive"*. In the narratives to the guidelines, it is mentioned that *"combating discrimination, promoting access to employment for disabled people and integrating immigrants and minorities are particularly essential"*."

Despite the fact that under each MS Specific Recommendations there are one or two recommendations particularly focusing on employment, those problems affecting specific groups do not appear. Nevertheless in the MS assessment done by the European Commission, half of them “received Country Specific Recommendations or points to watch on vulnerable groups or disadvantaged groups. Roma or ethnic minorities were not mentioned explicitly, although in some cases Roma were implicitly targeted. Roma were mentioned in the analysis preceding the recommendations in the case of BG, CR, HU, RO and SK. In seven Member States, immigrants or migrants are the targeted group mentioned; in some cases Roma could be a part of this group<sup>4</sup>”.

As the European Commission admits, the European Employment Strategy tools could be used to put a stronger focus on Roma in the framework of the existing Strategy. In fact, there is much discussion lately on **the role of the Commission and EU instruments as a whole and the role and responsibility of MS** in developing and implementing policies aimed at improving the social and labour integration of Roma.

Furthermore, and as it was claimed at the Roma Summit in Brussels last 16th of September 2008, the EU should work toward the development of a comprehensive EU Framework Strategy for Roma Inclusion by EU Member States and institutions. According to the last European Councils (June 2007, December 2008), the European Commission has the mandate to set up coordination process **-the future EU Roma Platform-**. Such Platform could be the starting point of an EU Framework Strategy for Roma Inclusion with a set of common standards to guide the implementation of EU policy strands available for Roma inclusion to meet development targets.

### 2.3. Roma and Employment

Although data on Roma are notoriously poor, several studies and researches have shown the deep levels of poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and unskilled workforce of the Roma communities across Europe. Not to forget the widespread discrimination they have been suffering for centuries in the access to education and employment, as the European Commission highlights in its document *“The situation of Roma in an Enlarged European Union<sup>5</sup>”*. According to one of the most comprehensive data set currently available, the UNDP’s 2004 report *“Avoiding the Dependency Trap: The Roma in Central and Eastern Europe<sup>6</sup>”*, unemployment figures of Roma would be around 64% in Slovakia, 51% in Bulgaria, 32% in Czech Republic, 25% in Hungary and Romania, etc. Alongside, **in most countries employment rates of Roma are comparatively much lower than majority society**; furthermore, **Roma women** –as it always happens with women employment rates in European societies- are far less likely than Roma men to be employed. Roma involvement in employment informal-sector is on average four or more times more common than the involvement of majority

<sup>4</sup> Commission Staff Working Document. 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Directorate-General for Employment and Social Affairs. EC, 2004. This document provides an overview of the complex and vulnerable economic and social situation of the Roma across the enlarged European Union.

<sup>6</sup> This report is available on <http://vulnerability.undp.sk> . The report data set is available on <http://roma.undp.sk>

society in such activities. In sum and according to the **Recommendations of the Report of the High Level Advisory Group of Experts on the Social Integration of Ethnic Minorities and their Full Participation in the Labour Market**<sup>7</sup>, "... country studies together with the survey among stakeholder experts and the work of the Roma experts allow defining 14 barriers which prevent members of ethnic minorities from fully participating in the labour market:

(1) Lack of education and training (2) Lack of language skills (3) Lack of recognition of skills and qualifications (4) Lack of access to professions (5) Lack of access to citizenship (6) Lack of integration policies (7) Stereotypes, prejudices and negative attitudes (8) Lack of mobility and concentration in certain areas (9) Industrial Change (10) Disincentives through welfare systems (11) Discrimination (12) Lack of information (13) Labour market competition (14) Undeclared work.

These barriers are relevant for all ethnic minorities. In the case of their accumulation they are mutually reinforcing and lead to the virtually total exclusion from the labour market. Some of these barriers – lack of education, stereotypes, and disincentives through welfare systems – have a tendency to become higher from generation to generation. In fact, for many Roma people the lack of education is the starting point of future disadvantage and exclusion from the labour market; early drop outs of school and consequently lack of further professional training lead to lack of employability and higher participation in the informal economic activities.

As all these sources of information highlight, **there is a cluster of critical employment obstacles that Roma people are faced with when trying to access the labour market in Europe**. It is acknowledged that no sustained improving of the living standards can be achieved without engaging Roma in the mainstream workforces. Even though many isolated and partial attempts have been made to tackle this problem, the impact of such programmes/projects have not been as good as desired, lacking long-term view and therefore, greater transformation effect. **Inclusive, comprehensive and long-term economic and social measures** need to be put in place urgently in order to achieve real impact and change in the so unequal and disadvantaged employment situation of Roma in Europe.

The current worldwide economic crisis should not stop governments and the European Union take actions, but rather give more impulse to **solid responses** to tackle the dramatic situation of one of the most vulnerable groups in Europe. Since crises tend to have a greater negative effect on those groups in need, special attention should be paid to the Roma communities.

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<sup>7</sup> The Report, supported by the European Commission, was launched in December 2007. The report is available on [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/fundamental\\_rights/pdf/hlg/etmin\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fundamental_rights/pdf/hlg/etmin_en.pdf)

## 3. Roma in Spain

### 3.1. An overview

#### 3.1.1. Historical notes

There is documented evidence that the first groups of **Roma arrived to Spain in the year 1425**, making their way into the Iberian Peninsula from the north following the medieval pilgrimage routes leading to the city of Santiago de Compostela. In 1492, the *Reyes Católicos* (Catholic Monarchs) managed to unify the Spanish kingdoms through a social and cultural integration process which included the expulsion of the Jews and Moors. Roma managed to avoid expulsion probably due to their small numbers and owing to their nomadic lifestyle which made them difficult to pin down and the fact that they converted to Catholicism, the official religion.

Roma's unorthodox behaviour, their nomadic lifestyle, their dress, their peculiar trades and their language all contributed to the Catholic Monarchs' enactment, just a few years later, of the first anti-Roma law which ordering the expulsion from the Kingdoms of any Roma found "without a trade, without a lord or together" (refers to travelling together). This law, which was only the beginning of a long **history of exclusion and repression**, was followed by over 300 more during the course of four centuries. The sheer volume of these laws which were generally aimed at the lazy and troublemakers, behaviours associated with Roma, bear witness to the practical inefficiency of many of them while others were enforced with effective harshness as exemplified by the episode known as *La Gran Redada* (the great round-up) in which over 12,000 Roma were taken prisoner during the course of one night. Some of these anti-Roma laws remained in force until the enactment of the Spanish Constitution in 1978.

These medieval laws did manage to **extinguish the language of the Roma people, some of their labour activities and the nomadic lifestyle of some groups**. Spanish Roma today do not have their own language although some of the elderly members do still use some words of a Romany dialect known as *Caló* but do not speak enough for it to be considered a language. In contrast to popular belief, Roma in Spain were not nomadic until the 60's, many of them actually taking up permanent residence centuries ago.

**Recently, especially during the 70's and 80's as part of a permanent settlement process, a mass migration took place from the countryside to urban centres.** This migratory process was caused by the transformation of the rural world which spelled the end of many of their traditional trades: *chalaneros* (buyers and sellers of livestock), basket weavers, farriers, sheep shearers, field hands, etc. This massive migration from rural to urban areas was not specific to Roma but included the entire Spanish population and was part and parcel of the productive structure modernisation process.

However, if we are to understand the phenomenon of Roma shanty-towns and sub-standard housing in urban and semi-urban areas, there are certain **peculiarities characterising Roma migration which are very important to bear in mind**. In general terms, massive migration of Roma happened later than that of the non-Roma

population and, while it was the younger generations who emigrated in the case of the latter, in the case of Roma it was the entire extended family meaning that all rural ties were severed. Moreover, while non-Roma found work mostly in the industrial sector, in the budding services sector and in public administration, their Roma counterparts worked in the collection of scrap metal, paper and industrial waste and later in mobile trading. The phenomenon of shanty-towns, sub-standard housing and the so-called “absorption settlements” was not exclusive at that time to the Roma population but affected many national immigrants. However, the public housing schemes of the 70’s and 80’s, while indeed benefiting many Roma practically eliminated the shanty-towns of the non-Roma but not those of the Roma.

### 3.1.2. Demographic notes

**Spanish Roma today are urban dwellers**, even to a greater degree than the rest of the Spanish population, **and are concentrated mostly in large cities and towns**. As shown in the following table, they live in Andalusia (approximately 45%) and in the most densely populated Autonomous Communities (AC) such as Madrid and Catalonia.

**Table 1.** The Roma population in Spain broken down into Autonomous Communities.<sup>8</sup>

Autonomous Community	2007	
	Nº of dwellings	Population
Andalucía	34,076	169,732
Aragón	2,065	10,036
Asturias	1,805	8,861
Islas Baleares	1,035	5,025
Canarias	471	2,436
Cantabria	641	3,462
Castilla La Mancha	3,493	19,406
Castilla y León	5,338	26,240
Cataluña	7,831	39,551
C. Valenciana	12,431	57,892
Extremadura	3,082	16,739
Galicia	2,641	12,278
La Rioja	824	4,520
Madrid	9,323	43,391
Murcia	3,353	17,003
Navarra	1,468	7,013
País Vasco	2,056	10,061
Ceuta y Melilla	32	142
<b>Spain</b>	<b>91,965</b>	<b>453,788</b>

*Self elaborated based on the source: Fundación Secretariado Gitano. “Map on housing and Roma community in Spain, 2007”. Madrid: FSG, 2008. This data only takes into account municipalities of over 5,000 inhabitants, lacking therefore information regarding Roma living in smaller municipalities. <http://www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/mapavivienda/>*

<sup>8</sup> The estimations obtained from this research done by the FSG are based on a calculation upon the average number of inhabitants per house (4,9). Such calculation may have certain limitations but it certainly implies the most accurate and recent data available. Other general estimations range from 600,000 to 700,000 Roma.

The number of the Roma population with respect to the overall Spanish population (slightly over 1%) seems low when compared with Central European countries such as Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Romania. However, it is high when compared with the older members of the EU.

Having regard to breakdown by age groups, the Roma population is young, especially when compared with the overall Spanish population which is one of the countries with the highest life expectancy in the world. It is estimated that around 50% of Roma are under the age of 25 while only 27% of the overall Spanish population fall into this category. However, as with other aspects, a transformation process is under way in the structure of the Roma population: 20 years ago 70% of the Roma population was under the age of 25 and only 2% was over the age of 65 while this latter figure now stands at 4.3%.

**Table 2.** Breakdown of the Roma population by age groups and evolution from 1978 and 2004\*

	1978	2004	2004
Age groups	Roma population	Roma population	Overall Spanish population
From 0 to 10	38	17.1	9.1
From 11 to 20	24	23.1	10.6
From 21 to 24	8	11.3	7.2
From 25 to 30	12	8.8	8.8
From 31 to 44	8	20.4	24.6
From 45 to 54	5	10	12.60
From 55 to 65	3	5	10.2
From 66 and over	2	4.3	16.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

\* Self elaboration based in two sources: Sociological study, Spanish Roma 1978. Asociación Secretariado Gitano and from the housing data of EDIS and Survey on living conditions of INE (Statistics National Institute), 2005

This indicates that the birth rate of the Roma population is falling drastically while life expectancy is on the rise. In addition to this demographic phenomenon, if we consider that the number of children per family is falling off substantially, people are marrying later and the extended family is giving way to the nuclear family, it becomes clear that the family, the main pillar of Roma tradition and culture down through history, is undergoing a radical transformation process.

### 3.1.3. Radical changes

#### Democratisation

**The arrival of democracy** to Spain and the Spanish Constitution which acknowledges the equality of all citizens under the law has provided a clear opportunity for **the exercise of the Roma community's civic rights**. While it is true that this minority still suffers serious discrimination and that surveys on prejudice show that social rejection basically targets persons of Roma and Moroccan origin, it is no less true that now Roma can legitimately claim their rights, defend themselves before the courts and, most importantly, are recognised as full-fledged rather than second-class citizens. This democratic transformation has spelled a change in the attitude of the Roma community, in the public administrations and in the services furnished by the latter. The most illustrative example of this transformation is that prior to democracy the Civil Guard in application of the loitering and delinquency law, devoted a portion of their time to persecuting the Roma population, but throughout the 70's and 80's these same officers were the protectors of Roma children enrolling in public schools and of Roma families moving into their flats in normal residential neighbourhoods.

#### Rise of living standards

Most people are well aware of the economic and social development that Spain has undergone over the last two decades which, to a large degree, is due to EU accession. In 1986, per capita income in Spain was 71% of the EU average while today that figure is over 90% of the EU-15 average and stands 106% of EU-27 (EU-27=100%)<sup>9</sup>. This economic development, not only accounting for a higher standard of living but also for improved infrastructures, public services, etc., has undoubtedly benefited the Roma community.

However, there are doubts as to whether Roma have benefited from this economic boom to the same degree as other sectors of the Spanish population in light of increased inequalities, but **it still remains clear that our country's economic progress is one of the factors contributing to the headway made by Roma in Spain over the last several years**. The rise in mobile trading and overall commercial activity of the Roma population, contributing to a higher degree of integration and serving as an alternative to the practical disappearance of traditional professions, the fall in seasonal work and the collection of scrap metal, have been possible thanks to an increase in consumption levels. Significant access to standard employment which has been gained over the last several years, especially among Roma youth, has been possible in Spain thanks to the decline in the unemployment rate from 22% in 1991 to 8.5 % in 2006.

#### Universalisation of social welfare policies

In Spain, as in other Mediterranean countries, the welfare state was a latecomer. The percentage of public spending in areas such as housing, education, health-care and social protection in general remains below the EU-15 average. But a fact that has **characterised our social protection system in all of its different facets** is that it has **included the Roma** and guarantees two basic principles: that of universality, i.e. it

<sup>9</sup> EUROSTAT, 2007



is made available to all Spanish citizens (and therefore to Roma as well), and the principle of redistribution, i.e. citizens with the greatest needs benefit most.

The Roma population, which for the most part lived on the fringes of society and was persecuted often by the institutions themselves up until the 70's, is now beginning to reap the benefits of the social state. The first step taken in this direction was that of across the board documentation for everyone. It should not be forgotten that until as recently as the end of the 60's, many Roma had no documents whatsoever, i.e. they were not accounted for in the census, they had not identity card, no Family Record Book and therefore had not rights and could not take advantage of public services, schools, health-care, etc. For all intents and purposes they were non-existent and charity was their only safety net.

### **Implementation of programmes specifically targeting Roma**

At the time Roma were starting to make use of public services, a large number of support programmes (target programmes) were concurrently implemented throughout the whole of Spain **to compensate for the disadvantages suffered by the Roma population in different spheres**. Specifically in the area of housing we can find many examples throughout all of Spain of resettlement and shanty-town eradication programmes which, rather than targeting the Roma population at large, focused on those Roma citizens who did not have a dignified home and who had not taken part in the social housing programmes. In the area of education, we would draw attention to what at that time were known as "bridge schools", the first step in enrolling (not all) those Roma children who had never attended school, and the school support and follow-up programmes which are still in vogue today.

In the field of employment, a good example is the ACCEDER programme which operates at national level in cities where the greatest number of Roma inhabitants is found. Its aim is to compensate the disadvantages endured by the Roma population in the area of vocational training and employment.

**The debate concerning whether specific programmes targeting Roma should be implemented or whether Roma should simply participate in the programmes in operation for the population at large**, quite heated in some Central European countries and oftentimes in the European Commission as well, has been resolved in Spain in a practical way, i.e. by trying, with varying degrees of success, to **encourage Roma to take part in existing programmes available to the entire population** while at the same time implementing, to a greater or lesser degree depending upon the situation, **programmes and initiatives targeting those Roma who are especially disadvantaged or who, for some reason, fail to take advantage of universal measures**.

### **Mobilisation in favour of Roma Community**

Until the 60's, a large percentage of Roma lived on the fringes of Spanish society. During the last stage of the dictatorship and the first years of democracy, coinciding with the rise in social movements in Spain, people started to mobilise in support of the Roma community later giving rise to the associative movements. The first pro-Roma

initiatives were taken by individuals (religious and secular) mostly through the Catholic Church which established ties with Roma and made their problems known to the public administrations.

At this important juncture of the democratic transition, mobilisation in support of the Roma Community helped to make Roma visible in society and put their issues on the political agenda. In this connection, the Interministerial Commission was created to study the problems affecting the Roma community and to encourage understanding on the part of the Spanish society that Roma are citizens with the same rights and duties as all other Spaniards.

### **Divergent situations and cultural change**

The reality facing the Roma population today in Spain is tremendously plural and heterogeneous and diversification is constantly increasing. This plurality of situations is due to a variety of factors, some of which are historical as mentioned above.

In general terms and simplifying things quite a bit, we could say that there is a segment of the Roma population (small) characterised historically by integration in society either owing to high income level, stable professions or higher level of education. They live like anyone else, they feel and behave as Roma and do not have any particular social needs. Another more representative segment of the population, by far the largest, is now undergoing an impressive process of transformation and change. This is the segment most affected by the changes referred to in the foregoing and which is taking part in this process with greater or lesser impetus and with varying support needs. This group encompasses those who, in just a few short decades, have gone from being undocumented to being subject to rights and duties, from being semi-nomads to permanently settling down, from having their own traditional labour activities to partaking in mobile trading or taking up salaried employment, from being illiterate to enrolling in school, from living in shanty-towns to living in standard flats alongside non-Roma, in short, from living on the fringes of society to being integrated into it, albeit at the lower echelon and often lacking quite a few of the necessities.

There is a third segment comprised of the most disenfranchised groups of people who are typically characterised by a very precarious standard of living, who are more dependent on government benefits and social programmes, whose employment situation is particularly precarious, who live in segregated settlements with less interaction with their surroundings and some of whom have suffered the ravages of social phenomena such as drugs and who, in short, are living in a situation of extreme marginalisation.

In the wake of the changes described in the foregoing, **a far-reaching cultural transformation process is also under way within the Roma community.** This is not to say that Roma culture is in risk of disappearing but simply that it is evolving in a context in which there are a myriad of ways of interpreting what it means to be Roma in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The disappearance of many rules and guidelines governing social behaviour owing to their unfeasibility at this point in time, the loss of meaning of many traditional symbols, changes in priorities and traditional values and the elimination of others, all contribute to a state of perplexity, if not crisis, for many members of the

Roma community. The culture of resistance, the basis on which Roma identity was forged in a context of persecution and repression, no longer makes sense in an open society in which people possess **multiple identities**. Increasingly common and irreversible phenomena among many groups of Roma, such as the disappearance of the extended family living under the same roof, urban dispersion, the new role played by women, the growing number of people taking on salaried employment in the standard labour market, an increase in mixed marriages, etc., will all lead to important changes.

These changes which the Roma community is undergoing owing to the factors described in the foregoing and the concerted effort many members have made to integrate themselves into society, are not given due social recognition. The perception that the rest of the Spanish society has of Roma continues to fluctuate between the selective troubadour stereotype of the Roma artist, happy-go-lucky bullfighter, etc. who is socially recognised and admired and the all pervasive predatory stereotype of the Roma drug addict who is despicable, a troublemaker, lazy and uninterested in integration. The Roma population, according to most opinion polls, continues to be the social group held in lowest esteem by the Spanish society. This rejection of Roma is more intense than that endured by the general immigrant population and is only comparable to that which the Moroccan population is subjected to.

**Table 3.** Would you be *very, quite a bit, not very* or *not at all* bothered if your neighbours were...

	Very	Quite a bit	Not very	Not at all	Does not know	No comment	(N)
Ex prison inmates	14,5	0,3	28,7	24,9	4,7	1,6	2485
Roma	15,5	0,2	25,6	30,7	2,7	0,8	2485
Students	0,6	0,0	17,9	76,7	1,3	0,4	2485
Persons on the extreme left of the political spectrum	5,8	0,1	19,5	57,0	6,0	0,7	2485
Alcoholics	12,6	0,3	27,9	27,2	2,5	1,0	2485
Persons on the extreme right of the political spectrum	10,4	0,2	19,2	47,2	5,7	1,2	2485
Families with many children	0,8	0,0	15,2	79,7	1,1	1,0	2485
People suffering from psychological problems	6,8	0,2	28,9	38,4	3,9	0,9	2485
Immigrants	4,5	0,1	26,6	55,5	2,4	1,2	2485

Source: 2005 "Barometer" survey of the Sociological Research Centre (Spanish acronym CIS)

Large-scale immigration to Spain over the last several years making Spain a multicultural nation also means that Roma is no longer Spain's number one minority in terms of numbers, that Roma affairs are losing the little relevance they have had on the social and political agendas over the last few decades and that Roma policies need to be readdressed in accordance with this new intercultural context. However, it also represents an opportunity for our country to take a more pro-active stance in combating discrimination and to be more open in the management and governance of diversity.

## 3.2. Roma and Employment in Spain

### 3.2.1. General context of the labour market

The Government as well as social agents (Employers and Trade Unions) agrees that the Spanish labour market, back in the year 2000, faced a two-pronged problem: **insufficient volume of employment and high degree of temporality**. This concurrence in analysis in turn supported a common diagnosis of the situation of the labour market back then.

Between 1992 and 2003, the working age population in Spain (15 to 64 years of age) grew from 25.8 million to 27.8 million, i.e. an average annual growth rate of 0.7% which is approximately two times EU-15 rate. This growth came about despite a decrease in the number of people emerging from the educational system into the labour market and is most likely due to the **very intense acceleration in the flow of immigrants**, especially over the last several years.

During this same time period, the difference in the employment rate between Spain and EU-15 fell by 5.5% but the percentage of the working age Spanish population with paid employment is below the EU-15 average and therefore far from complying with the objectives of the European Employment Strategy.

Moreover, as was pointed out in the Report submitted by the "Commission of Experts for Social Dialogue" to the Ministry of Labour: *"Although the aggregate employment rate has risen substantially, **these gains have not been distributed equally among all population groups and significant differences can still be observed**; the employment rates for women, young people and those with lower levels of education and fewer professional skills are lagging far behind the aggregate employment rate"*.

The other major problem is the **large proportion of short-term contracts** which also outnumber the EU average and important differences can be observed between population groups. The fact is that those population groups with the lowest employment rate are also affected by a larger proportion of short-term contracts.

The diagnosis would be incomplete without making a reference to a third aspect concerning which there seems to be general consensus: **the deceleration of our economy's productivity and the latter's ensuing impact and repercussion on quality of employment**.

This situation therefore shows that the labour market remains segmented and that young people, women and lesser qualified workers face many more difficulties achieving labour market integration, are more frequently subject to short-term contracts and a significantly higher number of them become trapped in precarious situations keeping them from achieving a reasonable degree of job stability even after a period of time.

Based on the above, **the need to keep active training and employment policies “focused” on combating exclusion and discrimination of population groups with particular difficulties** appeared to be justified for a number of reasons:

- Because maximum labour potential must be exercised; if not, productivity in our country per hour worked could fall to untenable levels while low qualification levels remain intact and our competitive capacity declines.
- Because this would represent a solid contribution to convergence and social cohesion.
- And especially due to social justice and “real” equal opportunity criteria clearly entailing explicit concentration of resources through tailored measures targeting disadvantaged groups and those with special characteristics (women, youth, immigrants, Roma, etc.).

### 3.2.2. Some data on the situation of Roma in Spain<sup>10</sup>

Previous to 2005 the non-existence of studies or of other sources of information furnishing representative data on the whole of the Spanish Roma working age population in respect of their labour situation had been an obstacle standing in the way to the development of socio-labour policies addressing this community.

Some of these studies carried out always contributed to draw the following schema regarding the main labour activities from the Roma community in Spain. In the following chart, reflecting the situation of the labour reality of the Roma population in 1978, it can be observed how traditional activities, in transformation process, still account for the majority of their economic activities, while being activities with lack of future.

This chart, compared with the data on the situation of Roma population and Employment (2005), will help us understanding **the progress and changes affecting the labour structure and reality of the Spanish Roma community**.

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<sup>10</sup> This text is based on the *Report on Roma Population and Employment* carried out and published by the Fundación Secretariado Gitano, Spain. 2005. The whole document can be unloaded at <http://www.gitanos.org/english/>

MAIN LABOUR ACTIVITIES OF ROMA COMMUNITY-1978

	DESCRIPTION	PROFESSIONAL AREA	% APROX.
TRADITIONAL ROMA PROFESSIONS (GENERALLY, SELF EMPLOYED)	<i>In transformation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Street markets</li> <li>· Re-collection of urban disposals</li> <li>· Seasonal Work (Agricultura)</li> </ul>	50-80%
	Liberal professions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Antique dealers</li> <li>· Merchants</li> <li>· Art related professions</li> </ul>	5-15%
NEW PROFESSIONS (GENERALLY, NON SELF EMPLOYMENT)	<i>Non -qualified</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Building area</li> <li>· Public works</li> <li>· Non qualified civil servants</li> <li>· Other</li> </ul>	10-15%
	Qualified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Qualified civil servants</li> <li>· Other</li> </ul>	—

(\*) these percentages represent wide ranges of approximation to the employment areas of the Roma community.

All policies and measures implemented by national and international institutions focusing on employment, social inclusion and social cohesion of ethnic minorities increasingly insisted on the need for objective data and indicators in order to define the situation and its problems. Thus, the Fundación Secretariado Gitano, within the framework of its **Multiregional O.P. Fight Against Discrimination 2000-2007**, decided to carry out a study entitled “*Población Gitana y Empleo*” (**Roma Population and Employment**), providing, for the first time, objective and updated data on the labour situation of the Roma community with a view to defining all future policies regarding training and employment.

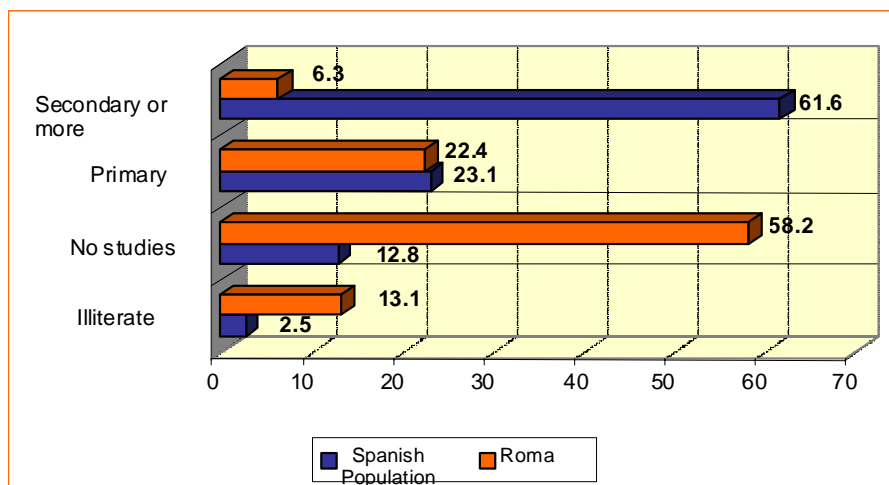
Analysis of the data obtained provided the following results characterising the reality faced by the Roma population today in respect of training and employment:

**Data concerning the situation and characteristics of the Roma population age 16 and older<sup>11</sup>**

- The Spanish Roma population age 16 and older totals accounts for 69.9% of the total population with 50.8% women and 49.2% men and an average age of 35.

<sup>11</sup> Please note that all this data corresponds to research study carried out in 2004, and some figures may have change through time.

- **7 out of every 10 Roma over the age of 15 are either completely or functionally illiterate.** The figure representing Roma who are completely illiterate is 4.6 times higher than that same figure among the general population.
- Two thirds of the Roma population over the age of 15 claims to have a son or daughter. With an **average of three children**, Roma are 1.24 percentage points above the overall average according to the 2001 census of Spaniards with children.



Source, Report on Roma Population and Employment, Fundación Secretariado Gitano, Spain. 2005. 2001 Census data provided accounts for overall Spanish population in 2001.

### Data concerning the employment situation of the Roma population:

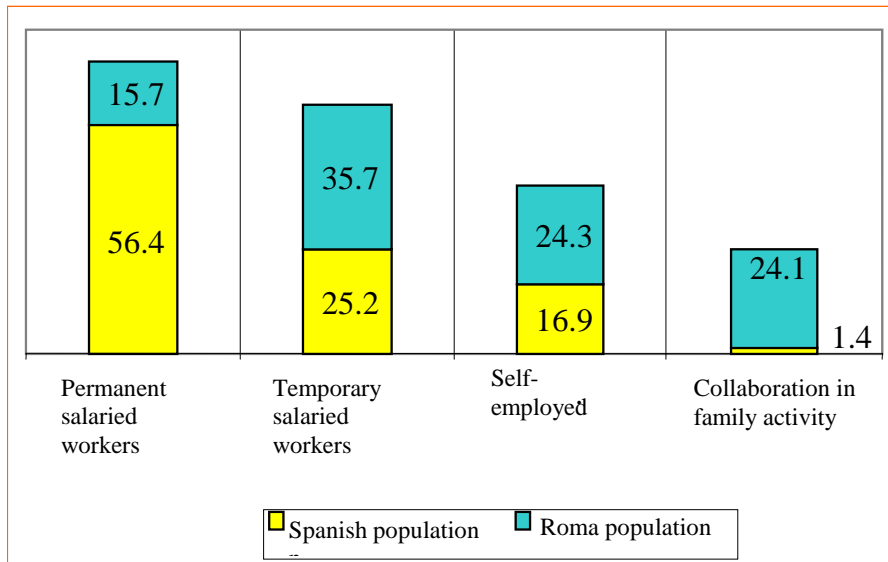
#### The active Roma population:

The following table shows the main figures from our survey and the corresponding figures taken from the Active Population Survey (EPA) from the fourth quarter of 2004 for the entire Spanish population.

	Spanish Population	Roma Population
Population age 16 and over	34,474,300	Aprox. 450,000
Activity rate %	56.1	69.3
Unemployment rate %	10.4	13.8
Employment rate %	50.3	59.7
Working in Industry %	18.0	4.7
Working in Services %	64.6	75.9
Fixed-term contract %	30.9	70.9
Part-time employment %	8.5	42.0

The following facts were derived from the comparative summary and the data furnished by the 45 variables comprising the said survey:

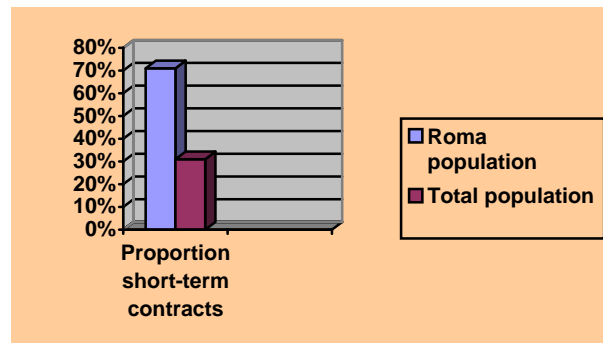
- **Regarding the employed segment of the population:**
  - **The Roma population enters the labour market at an earlier age** than the rest of the population and therefore has a longer working life.
  - The difference between the age at which the Roma population joins the labour market and the age for the Spanish population in general accounts for the difference in educational levels between the two but also on factors related to cultural level and living standards, which also affects their view and value of education and training. **While 5 out of every 10 active Spaniards complete at least secondary education, not even 1 out of every 10 active Roma reaches this same educational level.**
  - **51.5% of working Roma has salaried employment** compared with 81.6% for the Spanish population on the whole.
  - **48.5% of Roma workers are self-employed** (nearly half of the total number employed) while only 18.3% of the general Spanish population is self-employed.
  - It is very important to stress that **of the working Roma population, close to 25% describe their activity as “collaboration in the economic activity of the family” which, at best, is indicative of a precarious or not at all “standard” situation.** In clear contrast, only 1.4% of the general Spanish population works in that activity.





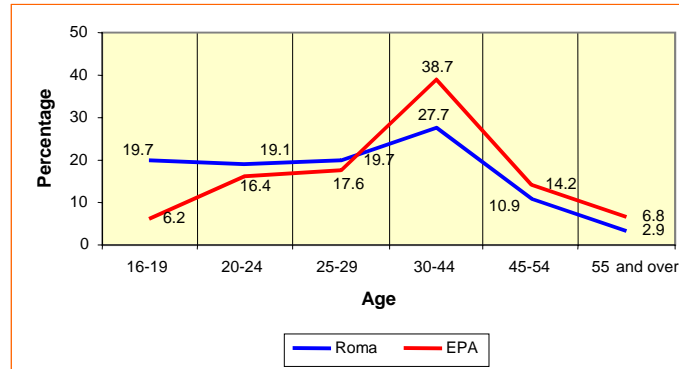
This “collaboration in the economic activity of the family” is a result of the characteristics of **a large number of family businesses** with low profit margins and scant economic formalisation where the owner is the head of the household and the other active members do not exact any social or labour rights from their activity since they are not able to make the corresponding social security payments. **This reality may well constitute the most significant weakness in the labour structure of the Roma population** and therefore all strategies must explicitly address this situation.

- An equally noteworthy aspect which must be underscored is the **high degree of precariousness in employment** facing the Roma population:
  - **42% of salaried Roma work part-time** while this same figure for the overall Spanish population is 8.5%.
  - **71% of Roma workers have temporary work contracts compared to 31% for the Spanish labour market as a whole.** This means that the number of permanent salaried Roma workers is 3.5 times less than the number of permanent Spanish workers in general.
  - **15% of Roma workers have no contract (only verbal agreements).**



- **Regarding the unemployed segment of the population:**
  - **Unemployment** affects the Roma population more than it does the Spanish population in general with **an overall rate of 13.8% compared to 10.4% respectively.**
  - **Unemployment among the Roma population hits youth the hardest.** In contrast to what occurs among the Spanish population in general, young Roma (those under 25) are most affected by unemployment. This is just one more indicator of the early incorporation of Roma into the labour market.

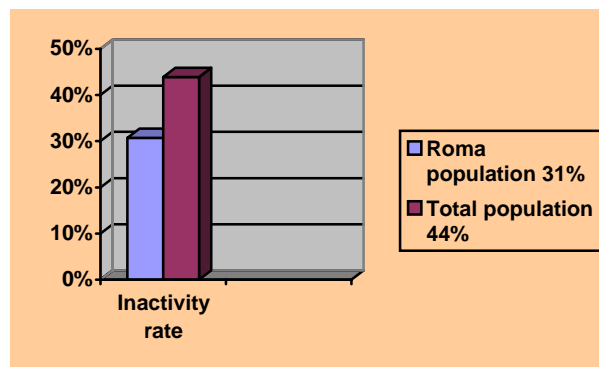
- Of the unemployed Roma, 72% are either completely or functionally illiterate while that same figure for the entire Spanish population is barely 5%.



\* EPA stands for Active Population Survey which accounts for the economic and labour activity in Spain. As stated in this graphic, it refers to data for the overall Spanish population.

### The inactive Roma population:

As occurs with other figures, the inactivity rate of the Roma population is different to the one for the general Spanish population (30.7% versus 43.9%). Inactivity affects women to a higher degree than men, and Roma women more than non-Roma women. Out of the inactive Roma population the retired ones only account for 11% while general population retirement percentages sum up to 30%. The same trend occurs with students, which are only 7% of the inactive while the overall student population goes over 16%.



### Data concerning gender

The following table shows the main variables relating to the situation of disadvantage faced by Roma women vis-à-vis Roma men in the field of employment:

	Roma Population	
	Men	Women
Activity rate %	80.89	58.01
Unemployment rate %	11.89	16.29
Employment rate %	71.27	48.56
Working in Industry %	6.2	2.5
Working in Services %	66.2	89.6
Short-term contract %	65.8	77.9
Part-time employment %	32.21	55.87

- As can be observed, **the Roma population exhibits a pattern similar to that of the overall Spanish population when it comes to the gender issue:** less activity and lower employment rate and higher unemployment rates, short-term contracts and part-time employment in the case of women.
- **53.5% of inactive Roma claim to be inactive because they are taking care of the home** compared to 32.5% of the general Spanish population. However, only 2.8% of Roma men take responsibility for domestic duties compared with 75.9% of the women.
- **93.8% of Roma women working part-time claim “family obligations”** as the main impediment standing in the way to full-time employment.
- **Women (17.6%) take part in vocational or general training courses more readily than men (13.1%).**

### Data concerning the Roma community’s perception of discrimination

Discriminatory attitudes towards the Roma population seem to still be prevalent among many sectors of society given that **45.4% of those surveyed stated that at certain times they feel discriminated against.** The following groups have felt particular discrimination:

- 83% of those unemployed when they were seeking employment or when they were working.
- 78% of those who have looked for work in the last four weeks.
- 60% of men when seeking employment or at work.
- 19% of the young people between 16 and 19 where they study or used to study.

### Some conclusions

When looking at research results it is important to keep in mind the historical background of the analysed situation. As regards data on Roma it is important to understand how the traditional economic activities they have been developing until now are being either destroyed or restructured due to further market requirements. That is

the case for scrap metal, paper, and industrial waste, and more recently to the mobile trading who are no longer viable alternatives for the younger generations. They have to look for other labour options... they have already started to do so.

The results of the research show that despite recent developments in the Spanish labour market, especially concerning improvements in activity rates and reduction in unemployment, **unemployment continues to have the greatest effect on those facing greater difficulties in gaining access to the labour market, which is the case of the Roma population.**

Together with this obvious under-representation in the labour market, the results also point to **serious situations of disadvantage in the said labour market** giving rise to:

- **initial disqualification** preventing merited and desired permanence in job posts;
- a high degree of **precariousness**;
- persistence of **non-regulated activities and non-protected employment** spelling the absence of labour rights.

Despite this situation which could very well be described as discouraging, it should be stressed that **the data collected clearly lend credence to the affirmation that “the Roma population wants to work”**, thus dispelling a still prevalent prejudice that Roma are lazy, that they do not want to work and therefore are responsible for their situation.

This conclusion is clearly supported by different **data collected during the study** such as:

- the high activity rates among the Roma population;
- the long period of time they spend in the labour market (they start at a much earlier age and retire at a later age);
- the expectations and desires expressed by Roma today in terms of access to employment;
- the readily apparent and high degree of motivation on the part of women to receive training and find work.

These findings clearly show that this sector of the population is a **very important “potential asset” for the labour market** both in the present and the near future.

However, this should not conceal but rather help to highlight the problems and difficulties facing Roma men and women today in the labour market and the situation of social disadvantage they are in vis-à-vis the rest of the Spanish population.

## 4. The ACCEDER programme: *promoting equal access to jobs*

The initiatives taken with the Roma population managed by the Fundación Secretariado Gitano within the framework of the **European Social Fund's (ESF) Multi-Regional Operational Programme "Fight Against Discrimination"** – known as the **ACCEDER Programme** – have comprised the fundamental instrument employed by this organisation since the year 2000 and up to now, to give *impetus* to a line of action aimed at improving the living standards of this community through measures favouring their access to salaried employment in the labour market.

### 4.1. Why the ACCEDER programme? Main aims and characteristics

The Fundación Secretariado Gitano started in 1998 developing a pilot project in Madrid called ACCEDER, financed by the EU Employment Initiative INTEGRA. The approach and methodology tested in this pilot project has been the seed for the later nationwide expansion of the ACCEDER programme during 2000-2007 and still nowadays.

Back in the late 90's and beginning of 2000 Spain was enjoying a fast economic growth characterised by a steady requirement of intensive labour force mainly in the service and construction sector. Alongside to this **positive economic/labour context** and to the above-mentioned **decline of the traditional economic activities from which Roma were being expelled and had no future**, an internal situation of **cultural change within the Roma community** in Spain was happening. While Roma children were attending schools and Roma were having access to proper housing in close contact with no-Roma people -more than ever-, new generations of Roma in need of alternatives and eager to go for them appeared. All these factors shaped the optimal conditions for the setting up of the ACCEDER programme, with the determined focus on employment as the final step for a full social inclusion.

The Programme's main assumption is that **"Gaining access to the labour market is the gateway to social inclusion and equal opportunity"**. In fact, the ACCEDER programme has focused on the promotion of labour-contract employment versus self-employment as a better means for social inclusion, understanding that through coexistence in labour market, cultural understanding between Roma and non Roma peoples would be facilitated. For centuries the economic activities of the Roma have been developed on the side, in an isolated way, based on their own family-run-businesses... These economic experiences have not generally helped a better coexistence between the Spanish Roma population and the rest of the Spanish society. Sharing working environments and training schemes are ways of getting closer one another and improving each other acknowledge of the other.

Such assumption and approach should not be understood as being the only one promoting multicultural understanding through employment, but rather as a starting point, a strategic decision which later on (from 2005 onwards) has been complemented little by little with the promotion of certain self-employment schemes as another labour option.

The programme was initially based on a conviction and an opportunity: on the one hand, the firm belief that in order to take significant steps forward in the **social inclusion of the Roma community**, employment (especially salaried employment) is one of the key factors. On the other hand, the opportunity came on the wing of the **Structural Funds**, the financial instrument focusing on EU development and cohesion. The Programme first emerged in the year 2000 as a clear opportunity which had to be seized and taken advantage of for the social inclusion of society's most disadvantaged groups. The NGOs were able to take on the challenge of directly managing the Structural Funds, a challenge which they have been quite successful at.

Over and above the positive employment results achieved by ACCEDER possibly its principle value is the **impact on changing the idea that many Roma families have concerning salaried employment as well as the preconceived ideas that many government administrations have of the Roma community**. The former have discovered that employment is the vehicle whereby to improve their standard of living and opportunities while the latter have been shown that they should have high expectations of the Roma community if they are provided with **stable and tailored programmes with sufficient funding**.

In sum, the setting up of the ACCEDER programme **certain assumptions** were made:

- The labour market situation as **an opportunity** in terms of potential employment demands (of low qualified workers);
- The **focus on salaried employment** as:
  - The most efficient way of getting to more Roma people into the labour market (in terms of the investment/outcomes ratio of such a strategy compared to others focusing on self-employment, for example);
  - As a way to provoke multicultural gathering and get-together between Roma and non-Roma and change mentalities in both sides: salaried employment as the centre for intercultural dialogue and prejudices breakdown.
  - As the missing step towards full social inclusion of Roma people into mainstream society (once education and housing is already fulfilled somehow).
- Making the most out of the **cultural internal change** of the Roma community as regards openness to new economic alternatives for the new generations (and lack of perspective in the traditional economic activities);
- To base the strategy on an **intercultural / multicultural approach**: working ACCEDER teams mixed with Roma and non-Roma professionals. Programme aimed mainly at Roma beneficiaries but not only, that is, facilitating contact with non-Roma job seekers, both at guidance and counselling sessions but also at training courses, etc.

- The ACCEDER programme to be set **on a voluntarily bases**, meaning that Roma beneficiaries would come to the programme without existing any link to social services obligations.

#### 4.2. What is the ACCEDER about?

Given the fact that employment, together with education, housing and health are the main instruments for favouring the social inclusion of the Roma community, the Programme's philosophy is based on the **Roma labour market integration**. Through employment, comprehensive actions are undertaken always taking into account the other three instruments.

The main priority of the ACCEDER Programme is for Roma people to access the labour market, thus achieving equal opportunities for the Community. Roma access to the labour market is processed mainly through labour insertion actions such as individual employment itineraries and the development and improvement of human resources.

In general terms, the ACCEDER programme focus on **two complementary axes**: a) the development of grassroots intervention and actions regarding employment of Roma and b) the promotion of pro-active policies for the Roma.

#### **A) Under the grassroots intervention the programme develops a whole range of actions, which are the core of the programme.**

##### Individualised comprehensive pathways to employment

##### a) Guidance, training and labour insertion:

- Seeking out the Roma community and raise awareness of their own need to look for work. Welcome and information actions consisting of an initial introduction to ACCEDER services and providing background information on the world of employment and training.
- Guidance, advisory and monitoring actions. This entails drawing up an individual diagnosis, tutoring, establishing individualised comprehensive pathways to employment and monitoring of the different stages through which they progress.
- Referral actions and monitoring of mainstream training actions.

##### b) Actions implementing vocational prelabour-training and training activities specifically tailored to the Roma population

##### c) Labour market study and mediation

- Actions focusing on analysis and search for employment. Undertake prospective labour market studies and collect job offers while

offering a mediation scheme to companies with a view to closing the gap between supply and demand.

- Actions to support hiring, facilitating information and technical assistance.
- Labour market accompaniment actions. Monitoring and support for those just starting to work in order to assure their permanence in the job.

**B) As regards fostering pro-active policies aimed at the Roma population**, the programme centres on promoting strong partnership structures at local, regional and national level for the better development of the programme itself by joining efforts and creating synergies, as well as by promoting a better understanding of the complexity and umbrella of needs of the Roma. These efforts contribute to multiply and reinforce public programmes aimed at improving social conditions of the Roma population in Spain.

Alongside, the programme has dedicated great efforts (in the planning, managing and resources allocation) to the production of data on Roma in Spain. In fact, several studies and research have contributed to gain greater insight into the Spanish Roma population. An information system has been also created: a *Monitoring Centre on Roma Community Labour Insertion* which provides information on developments in the employment situation of Roma<sup>12</sup>.

A third element has been the development of awareness-raising actions and sensitising campaigns contributing to the breakdown of stereotypes and improvement of the social image of the Roma population.

Other actions carried out:

- Training for social intervention professionals and the organisation of reflection and debate forums.
- Technical assistance for government administrations and social organisations in the design of plans and measures.

#### 4.3. How the ACCEDER works

In order to implement the Programme, 48 integrated employment centres were set up throughout Spain. These units are located in accessible places for the Roma community and they are fully equipped with the necessary tools. Each centre has an average staff team made out of professionals in charge of the Programme implementation at local level (1 coordinator, 2 labour counsellors, 1 enterprise intermediary and 1 intercultural mediator).

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<sup>12</sup> The information can be accessed at: <http://www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/observatorio/>

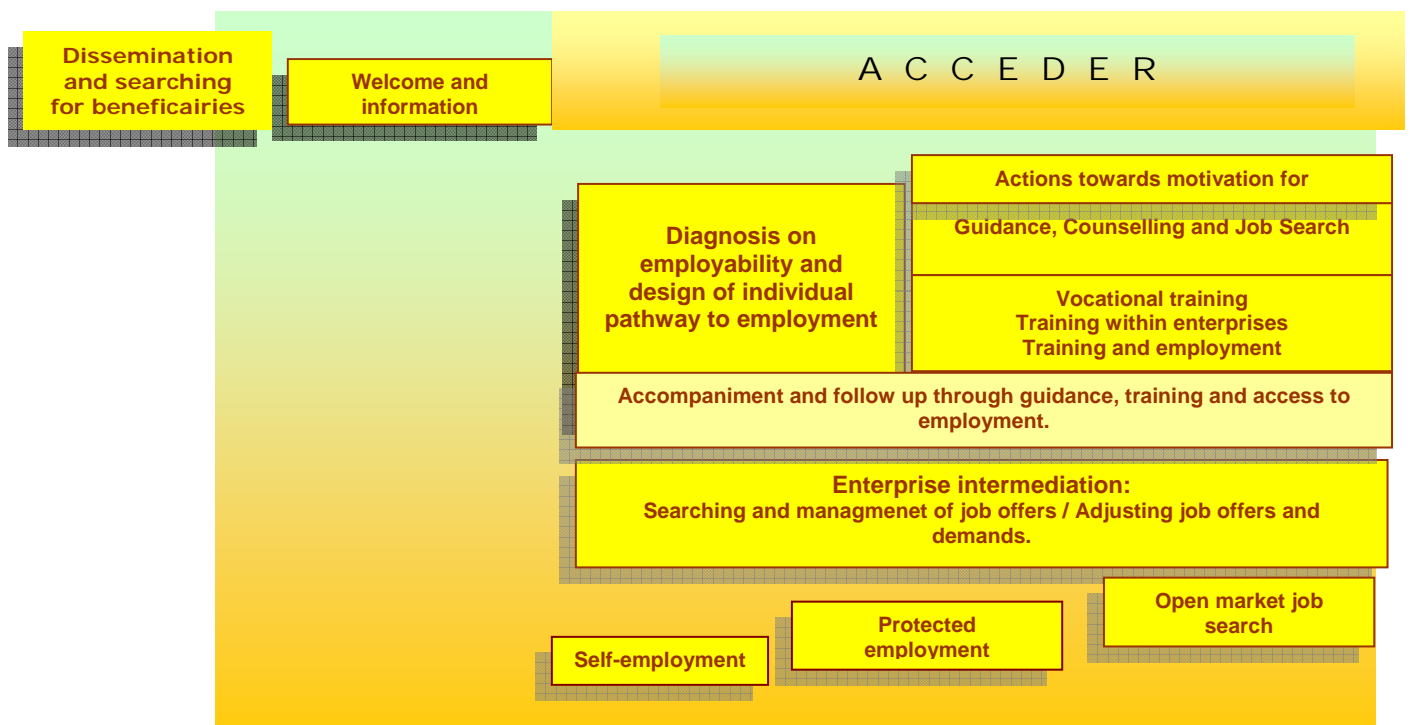


Each professional has assigned specific duties within a common process, taking into account the strategic balance of the social and economic perspective of the methodology. In other words, within the teams there is equilibrium between the staff in charge of dealing directly with the Roma beneficiaries and their extended family and community and the staff in charge of having direct contact with the employment arena, namely, enterprises, training schemes... Fluent communication and coordination between both spheres is a key methodological element.

The multicultural composition of the teams and the stress on the professional capacity of all staff, regardless of their ethnic background, has been essential in the development of the ACCEDER programme as holding different points of view on the needs, wishes, capacities and potentialities of both Roma beneficiaries and enterprises, which, undoubtedly, have led to a successful intervention.

MEDIATORS	COUNSELLORS / ADVISORS	INTERMEDIATORS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Captation</li> <li>• Receptions and systematizing the first data</li> <li>• Information on training resources</li> <li>• Accompaniment to the access</li> <li>• Monitoring</li> <li>• Family mediation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diagnosis</li> <li>• Design of individualized itineraries of insertion</li> <li>• Development of actions: labour information, job search, guidance, social skills ...</li> <li>• Accompaniment</li> <li>• Refer to other resources or services</li> <li>• Monitoring, on the job follow up.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Search for job offers</li> <li>• Labour market intermediation</li> <li>• Promotion of cooperation with companies. Partnership</li> <li>• Local development and insertion of Roma population</li> <li>• Follow up in the workplace</li> </ul>

Below is the ACCEDER scheme represented graphically:



#### 4.4. Key elements

Many of the key elements of the ACCEDER programme can be already guessed through the description of the programme itself and of its methodological approach.

Nevertheless it is worth summarising and noting them:

- **Focusing on employment as a missing part within global social inclusion processes.** Complementing employment processes with social actions around it.
- **Combination of a bottom up - top down grassroots intervention with awareness policy strategy.**
- **Individual comprehensive employment pathways** within the framework of an integral community approach. Integrated and individualised approach to actions developing a wide range of actions enhancing the employability of beneficiaries. Fostering of Roma autonomy in the labour world taking action not only with direct beneficiaries but also with the family surroundings.
- **Methodological approach combining social and economic dimension.** Development of integral and integrating intervention incorporating the Roma socio-cultural perspective as the basis for the diagnosis preceding the socio-labour insertion processes, viewing employment and the latter's economic component as a key integration factor while at the same time meeting the needs and requirements of the labour market in the planning of actions
- **Intercultural approach** and intercultural and multidisciplinary teams, stressing the professionalism of the working teams. All work teams are comprised of Roma and non-Roma as well as diverse and complementary professional profiles. The active involvement of Roma professionals is the best way to attract new beneficiaries and generate credibility and to foster positive expectations.
- **Strong partnership ties:** close link with the business sector and a suitable system to channel public-private relations. The aim is to cooperate with all of the main actors: public administrations, businesses, the media, politicians, etc.
- **Long term approach** for achieving greater impact.
- **Mainstreaming while targeting.** The development of specific actions while promoting access to general resources for all citizens as a way to compensate disadvantage of the Roma people while avoiding segregation. Depending on the characteristics of the beneficiaries, either tailored actions (targeting) or others supporting access to external resources (mainstreaming) are used. The ultimate goal of counselling is to foster the Roma population's access to existing resources in each territory on an equal footing with all other citizens. It is about tailoring but not segregating.
- **A success-oriented approach,** seeking for positive results, "betting on the best prepared" and creating multiplier effect on the rest.

- **National dimensions for local actions.** The combination of a generic national approach and adaptation to local idiosyncrasies within the Programme contributes to the greater efficacy and efficiency of intervention. A national perspective approach allows learning taking place in one location to be transferred to others thus capitalising on knowledge.
- **Centralised management and coordination system for a national programme:**
  - Creation and standardisation of working tools for all ACCEDER teams at national level.
  - Dissemination and continuous exchange of know how (internally and externally).
- **Flexibility** and adaptation to the individual circumstances of each person means adapting to each person's process and pace and to providing the most appropriate support at all times. It is important to stress that this flexibility means understanding that if these people are to become integrated into working life, many obstacles need to be removed and therefore major efforts have been put into preliminary social work and accompaniment without which access to employment is simply not feasible.
- **Capacity for innovation** in terms of formulae adapted to the labour market itself and the needs of Programme beneficiaries and innovation in the creation of working tools and adapted training schemes.

#### 4.5. Management and evaluation system

The following structure has been crucial for the good management and development of the Programme namely:

- A centralised managing and development Team at the headquarters in Madrid, in charge of coordinating the programme: **The Employment Department.**
- **Centralised administration teams** in charge of all the financial, legal, economic aspects of the programme. They have controlled the overall budget, giving specific indication for the expenses to be made, the correct form of invoices, audits, provision of general supplies, managing of human resources, supervising co-finance and certifications both to national, regional and local administrations, as well as to the ESF Administrative Unit. This Administration team has four parts:
  - Administration and Accounting Department
  - Human Resources Department
  - Legal and General Resources Area
  - Computing support
- A **standard team** in each of the 48 cities where the programme has been implemented, in charge of running the programme at local level and in direct

contact with the Roma community, regional and local administrations, the Business sector and other social entities. Such teams, coordinated at regional level by a Territorial Director, is made out of:

Local ACCEDER teams:

- 1 Coordinator
- 2 Labour Counsellors
- 1 Enterprise intermediary
- 1 Mediator

This composition responds to the essence of the ACCEDER methodology but has been flexible enough as to adapt itself to the specific needs of each territory, i.e. reinforcing the teams with an education counsellor or vocational training specialist...

In sum, what we learn from the ACCEDER managing structure is that **national wide programmes need of a centralised managing structure** who assures the even level of development in all regions where programme is being implemented. In order to do so, **general and shared strategies as well as procedures and criteria** need to be launched and coordinated by someone. Using the same tools, not only at financial or human resources level, but also at a more technical one, helps a better and faster development of the work done by local teams.

**Continuous evaluation**, not only internal but external ones, has been relevant for the constant re-planning of the programme, both at technical and methodological level, and at administrative and financial level.

The Fundación Secretariado Gitano has been an **Intermediate Body** of the Multi-Regional Operational Programme Fight Against Discrimination, ESF and ERDF 2000-2007 and ESF, 2008-2013. As Intermediate body managing Structural Funds they have been allowed to propose, in de mid term, renewals and updates on the kind of operations they wanted to develop. Such possibility has given the FSG the opportunity to readapt the programme and to focus its efforts in whatever came out of their evaluations and assessments. Such **flexibility** has helped achieving such good final results.

#### **4.6. Resources and budget**

##### **Resources**

Forty-eight integrated employment centres were established throughout Spain for implementation of the Programme in the Autonomous Communities of Andalusia, Aragon, Asturias, Castile-La Mancha, Castile-Leon, Catalonia, Community of Madrid, Valencia, Extremadura, Galicia, Navarre, Murcia and the Basque Country.

##### **Inter-cultural and multi-disciplinary work teams**

These centres have inter-cultural and multidisciplinary work teams comprised of Roma and non-Roma with diverse and complementary professional profiles. Each team has between 4 and 7 people in charge of programme execution at local level (coordinator,

labour counsellor, enterprise intermediary, intercultural mediator and social technician) totalling 260 workers throughout Spain: 165 women and 95 men.

### Technical equipment

These centres are completely equipped, are located in places which are accessible to the Roma population and have the material resources and proven and adapted technical tools for work with the Roma population. Special mention should be made of the intranet connection at all centres and the development of an ACCEDER Database which has proven vital for managing know-how and serves as a link between job seekers and employers.

### Budget

Major programme funding has been furnished by the ESF and ERDF. Together they account for 67.76% of the economic resources and the rest is through a co-funding effort involving national public administrations (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs - MTAS 7.09%), regional (Department of Employment and Social Welfare 12.30%) and local (10.37%). Private funding has also recently been increasing in importance.

The use of Structural Funds imperative to search for co-finance has made the FSG invest a great deal of time and efforts in finding co-financers for the whole programme period. This need to sign agreements with public administrations has fostered the involvement of many administrations, not only of those in charge of social services (to whom responsibility on Roma issues are usually assigned, exclusively), but also of those administrations of the area of employment (accounting for approximately 35% of the agreements signed).

Below is the ACCEDER Programme budget from its commencement in the year 2000 until the mid-2008.

**ACCEDER Programme Budget**

OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME FUNDING	TOTAL €	%
ESF	36,549,515.18	67.76%
ERDF	7,312,308.00	
Co-funding Autonomous Communities (Regions)	7,959,420.62	12.30%
Co-funding City Councils	6,715,229.33	10.37%
Co-funding Central Govt. (MTAS, now MEPSyD)	4,592,545.51	7.09%
Co-funding Provincial Govt.	578,559.13	0.89%
Co funding private sources	1,023,220.23	1.58%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>64,732,798.00</b>	<b>100%</b>

If we look at the relationship between results and investment, the following ratios<sup>13</sup> result:

Ratio per attended beneficiary: 1,454€
Ratio per labour contract: 2,010€

Such numbers should be put together with cost of other employment schemes focusing on self-employment and support for family business when analysis the relationships cost/benefit in employment programmes. As a starting point it seems like promotion of labour contract employment is a rather efficient strategy from the economic point of view.

#### 4.7. Results and Impacts of the Programme

##### Main Results

During the course of the Programme a total of **35,304 people** were served at the integrated centres and approximately 70% of these were Roma. These figures are well above the original forecast of 20,000 people. More than **26,000 work contracts** have been signed and 13,902 people have taken part in training activities.

##### Equality in the participation of men and women

Participation has been very balanced from a gender perspective. There are even slightly more women beneficiaries – close to 53% of the total. The percentage of women and men in the Roma population is practically equal. The active participation of women in the programme shows their growing interest in joining the labour market, especially over the last several years, and the impact that positive action measures carried out within the framework of the programme have had (support in reconciling family and professional life, development of training actions specifically targeting women, etc.).

##### Youth and ACCEDER

The programme has been particularly successful among young people. The under 30 group is the largest accounting for 56% of the total number of beneficiaries.

##### The number of beneficiaries has been growing over time

Programme recruitment and dissemination carried out by mediators has been key in attracting the attention of the Roma community in those cities and towns where the programme has been established. This work was especially relevant and necessary in the initial years of the programme although word of mouth has been the real driving force behind the high level of Roma participation during the ensuing years. This mechanism is itself an indicator of satisfaction and acceptance of the programme on the part of the Roma community. In this connection, it is important to bear in mind that

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<sup>13</sup> These ratios are only rough calculations based on the total budget of the programme. More accurate calculations could be made taking only in consideration the budget allocated to direct actions, taking out all expenses related to managing, awareness raising campaigns, and other administrative expenses.

participants *voluntarily* take part in the ACCEDER programme and receive no remuneration whatsoever bearing further witness to its success.

Analysis of the numbers of people taking part in the ACCEDER Programme during these six years has led to the design of a coverage ratio indicating the proportion of Roma served out of the total number of potential Roma beneficiaries. This ratio reaches the 5.90% level nationwide but varies significantly from one Autonomous Community to another.

### **Extending training opportunities**

One of the most significant characteristics of the beneficiaries is their low level of education. In fact, 7 out of 10 Roma beneficiaries do not have their 8<sup>th</sup> grade diploma. These educational deficiencies have had a decisive effect on the options and labour conditions available to these individuals who work mostly at precarious and temporary jobs requiring only minimal skills. For that reason, training is one of the key elements of ACCEDER. A total of 13,902 people have taken part in some form of training accounting for 40% of all programme beneficiaries. 846 courses have been taught during this period, most (345) with fewer than 40 hours of instruction.

### **The Foundation is the place to go for training**

There is a balance between those who have received training through in-house resources taught within the framework of the ACCEDER Programme or the FSG and those who have received their training elsewhere. Roma, however, do tend to take part more in in-house training. This difference by ethnic group is also evident in the gender breakdown: Roma women prefer in-house training (57% of the total). Generally speaking, gender differences are not that significant although there is a higher number of women receiving training in-house as opposed to through external resources. This greater participation of women in in-house training, especially Roma women, may be a factor of the more “protected” environment in-house adapted to participants’ circumstances and needs. Some women, especially those who are receiving training for the first time, feel that their interests and concerns are better met and they also appreciate the more personal follow-up and accompaniment.

A wide and varied array of courses has been offered (846) focusing on the fields of construction and public works as well as maintenance and auto repair. These courses vary in duration; while the largest proportion are short courses of under 40 hours (40% of the total), these are very practical in nature and are linked to concrete employment opportunities and in many cases are taught on the premises of the companies themselves. These training experiences have been widely accepted by many of the programme beneficiaries who have found them to be very useful with immediate results for subsequent employment. A large number of courses up to 100 hours have also been offered but there are relatively few which are longer than 100 hours.

Concurrently with this type of training more linked to immediate employment opportunities, there are other training actions more focused on programme beneficiaries whose employability level is lower and who need basic skills before they can benefit from any sort of vocational training.

### **Training courses linked to employment opportunities**

The availability of a budget item within the ACCEDER programme to carry out training actions is key for the methodological development of the programme itself. Moreover, flexibility in the management of training actions has been of fundamental importance in responding to the diversity of situations in which programme beneficiaries find themselves and in being able to adapt to the different collaboration opportunities arising with companies. Efficiency in this connection has been high.

### **Training within enterprises, a step towards inclusion**

While managing in-house training, the ACCEDER Programme also facilitates Roma access to already existing training resources run by third parties in the understanding that this strategy contributes to fostering the presence of Roma in public and private resources targeting the general population. Therefore, the data concerning access of programme beneficiaries to outside resources demonstrates the success of this intervention which, in most cases, entails preliminary work with the managers and technical personnel of these entities as well as accompaniment and monitoring by ACCEDER team members before and during this outside training received by programme beneficiaries. It tends to be the youngest programme beneficiaries who take the plunge and participate in these outside training initiatives. However, the majority of young people continue to receive their training in-house.

### **Jobs found. 26,014 jobs: men and women on an equal footing**

A total of 26,014 work contracts have been signed during the six years of the programme, 70% corresponding to Roma. A look at the gender distribution of those engaged shows total equality between men and women. This positive result has been gradually achieved during the course of the programme since at the outset women were at a real disadvantage. The ACCEDER teams implemented pro-active initiatives to improve employment figures for women programme beneficiaries (priority focus on labour mediation with companies having the greatest potential for engaging women, training in occupations with high levels of labour market integration for women, etc

During the years that the programme has been under way, employment has been increasing regularly and is well over the original estimate of 2,500 jobs. The breadth of relations with the business community and the effectiveness of the active job search have contributed to these ideal results.

### **Labour market intermediation has led to job contracts**

ACCEDER has achieved 38% of its work contracts through labour market prospecting. In this connection, we should draw attention to the role of labour market prospecting in providing programme beneficiaries with access to the labour market accounting for 38% of the work contracts nationwide. These data point to the importance of the prospector or job hunter on the ACCEDER team. Their importance is even more evident in helping women to find jobs and accounts for 42% of the total number of work contracts awarded to women during this period nationwide. The active job search is the most common way to find a job, especially for men accounting for 40% of the total number of jobs found. This indicator shows that the job seeking skills of programme beneficiaries are improving thus achieving another of the aims of the programme, namely Roma autonomy in seeking work.



### **Where is the work? In the services sector**

Contracts for works and services rendered account for the greatest percentage (60%). These are followed at a distance by production-related contracts (22%). In over 50% of the cases, these contracts have duration of three months or less. These characteristics are the result of labour conditions in unskilled employment which are the types of jobs which most beneficiaries find.

Having regard to areas of activity, the services sector predominates accounting for over 71% of the jobs followed by industry, construction and agriculture. Jobs are very gender oriented, especially in the services sector where there are considerably more jobs for women than men. The opposite is true in the case of the construction sector.

Most job offers have come from small and medium size enterprises (57% are companies with fewer than 50 workers). Some gender differences are observed, especially in companies with between 51 and 250 workers where a significantly higher number of women than men are engaged. These tend to be the companies which are mostly looking to cover cleaning service openings which is the majority occupation of women programme beneficiaries. There is a marked gender bias in the jobs found: while women's jobs focus on cleaning (accounting for nearly 30% of the total), administrative assistants, receptionists and shop clerks, men's jobs mostly revolve around brick-laying, construction labourers, cleaners, stockers and industrial labourers. The average duration of employment is three and a half months and the work is usually full-time although nearly 40% of the women's jobs are part time. Recruitment subsidies supported just under 3% of the jobs found.

### **12,145 people employed, 57% of whom are under 30**

Of the 34,526 people who have taken part in the Programme, 12,145 (35%) have been awarded a work contract. There are no major gender differences: 37% of the jobs went to men while 33% were awarded to women. Over the years, Programme beneficiaries who are active on the labour market have been awarded several contracts (characterised by the aforementioned precariousness and short duration), the ratio being 2 contracts per Programme user with no major differences between men and women or between Roma and non-Roma.

Young people account for the highest number of work contracts (57% of the total). It is also the young people who are awarded the greatest number of first-time work contracts: 26% of the total number of contracts are first-time labour experiences.

Roma account for most of these first-time experiences, especially Roma women. Once again, these results point to the importance of the ACCEDER Programme in helping Roma, especially Roma women, make their way into the labour market.

### **Labour Intermediation, the key to labour market integration**

Labour intermediation with companies is one of the key elements in the development of the labour market integration pathway diminishing the gap between the Roma population and the labour market, specifically those job vacancies companies need to cover. Based on this initial contact collaboration agreements are drawn up with companies not only for labour market integration but also, in the majority of the cases, for on-the-job training which is completely adapted to the functional needs of the companies, is very practical and has provided excellent results during the course of the Programme.

This type of collaboration which was merely experimental at the outset, has given rise to the signing of formal agreements with over 350 companies and another type of collaboration agreement with a further 200.

### **32% of the companies sign a second agreement with the ACCEDER Programme**

The fact that 32% of the companies which signed an agreement with the Programme have repeated the experience (2 or more times) is a sign of the growing trust companies have in the Programme. Some companies have signed over 7 agreements.

The main purpose of the agreements with companies is vocational training (72%) related with trades or occupations in the company's activity sector. 26% of these agreements are for work internships.

The main sectors of activity for internship or training agreements with companies are **commerce, construction, catering and services**. These are followed by activities in the areas of education, mechanics, hair-styling, etc. (including the "other" category).

## Impacts

### Impacts regarding individuals and institutions

During the years the Programme has been in operation, **a change of mentality** has been observed as concerns the Roma population's access to employment on the part of the Roma people themselves and the public administration, the business sector and the society at large. The increasing presence of Roma workers in companies has contributed to the gradual breakdown of stereotypes and elimination of prejudice: Roma persons who have positive experiences in a work context with non-Roma people; co-workers of Roma who, on many occasions, have their first direct contact with people of the Roma community; entrepreneurs who, after having had positive experiences engaging Roma workers, acquire a different image of the Roma community, etc.

We have also witnessed an **increase in the levels of training and professional qualification of Programme beneficiaries** thus enhancing the low levels of employability which most started out with. . This positive impact has been even greater for **Roma young women**, for whom the ACCEDER has improved their labour possibilities and also their personal and professional attitudes and expectations. In fact, it can be recognised as an outcome of the programme the creation **of role models among Roma women** which have been instrumental in gradually increasing their presence, interest and participation in the labour market. The final result has been gender equality in the employment achieved.

The Programme has also served to bring Information Technology and Communication to people facing special difficulties in achieving labour market integration thus reducing the digital gap between the latter and the higher skilled sector of the population.

As was shown in the analysis of the quantitative data, the Programme has provided an employment alternative for many young people, especially women, for whom it has

been the key opening the door to their first work experience. It is therefore fair to say that the ACCEDER Programme has contributed to **increasing the active population and employment rates by developing an effective system whereby to foster participation in the Spanish labour market.**

**It has contributed to improving active employment policies** by making it easier for those facing the greatest difficulties to take advantage of them thus achieving greater social and territorial cohesion and the practical implementation of the equal opportunity principle while fighting discrimination at the same time.

Boosting greater participation in the labour market has also led to **better living standards for the Roma population** not only due to having a work contract and earning a salary, but also because this process **increases their access to mainstream services in areas such as training and employment, education, health, housing, etc.** Indeed, part of the programme's qualitative impact has to do with using resources available to all citizens which many Roma had never before taken advantage of. In other cases, promoting access to training and employment has given rise to a different process: That of **breaking the vicious circle of dependence** on certain social benefits which had been the norm for years.

### Impacts regarding the work methods

The ACCEDER Programme has developed a **methodological model which**, through flexible, dynamic and individually tailored labour market integration pathways, **has proven useful** in promoting the social-labour insertion of Roma. This methodology has also included and **implemented complementary measures and affirmative action to boost equal opportunity** which has had positive repercussions on the participation rate and subsequently on the labour market integration rate for women which has been very high thanks to the Programme.

In addition to carrying out direct action with beneficiaries, businesses, public administrations and private entities, the Programme has also sought to promote the **acquisition and production of know-how regarding the problems and difficulties faced by the Roma population in gaining access to employment** through studies and research: "The Roma population and employment" – nationwide and in the Autonomous Communities of Aragon, Asturias, Castile-Leon, Galicia and Madrid-, and "Employment and Roma Community Observatories" as well as the social awareness-raising campaigns targeting the society at large entitled "Get to know them before judging them", "Prejudice means letting others put words in our mouths" and "Employment makes us equal". All of these **complementary actions have had a positive impact and have contributed to achieving the objective of eradicating stereotypes and improving the social image of the Roma community** in the eyes of economic and social agents, the public administrations and the society in general.

The promotion of a two-sided strategy on training combining the development of training actions within the FSG while promoting Roma access to external training has contributed to, on one hand, carrying out of efficient training actions (when they were inexistence within the territory) and on the other, to **encourage Roma to take part in ordinary public and private resources.** Through this strategy the programme has facilitated Roma access to training and the use of resources available for all citizens.

**Intense work has been done to create a partnership network** with national, regional, provincial and local administrations and businesses creating synergies and mobilising their commitment with the initiatives focusing on the most excluded individuals and groups. The Roma issue is much higher up on the public policy agenda at the different levels of public administration and there is an increasingly greater number of projects and programmes designed to combat the problems which some members of the Roma community still face today.

**Relationship with enterprises** (through training agreements, recruitment processes...) has resulted in an **articulation of collaboration mechanisms** with the employers at national level, having creating a structure has been fundamental for assuring further development of the programme through time.

The ACCEDER Programme has not only furnished resources for intervention with the Roma community but has also **contributed to creating synergies in the cities and towns where it has been implemented attracting other resources** (public and private) and a keener awareness of this segment of the population in different social situations such as education, housing, social actions, etc ). Not only has the programme seen its budget increasing through time but also has been the spur and incentive for having an increase number of programmes (and budget) targeting the Roma relating to education, housing, youth etc, in the different Spanish regions. This situation very much helps the **future sustainability** of the programme.

The work conducted over these last several years has involved a great degree of **capacity-building related to the management and training of many professionals in intervention with the Roma population**, not only on the part of the Fundación Secretariado Gitano but also carried out by the public administration itself and private entities.

Guidelines have also been designed allowing for the development of methodologies and specially tailored tools so as to be able to **transfer this experience to other European countries, many of which have expressed their interest in this connection.**

## 5. Employment and Roma: *What to learn from the ACCEDER experience*

Out of the various lessons we can learn from the ACCEDER experience, we should look carefully at the most relevant ones in order to assess their potential transferability into different contexts. These lessons concern not only the policies but also the approaches, strategies and tactics.

**a. Actions should be implemented both at national and local level.** These actions fit within the framework of the Multi-regional Anti-Discrimination Programmes which includes actions targeting those groups suffering discrimination and social exclusion. When dealing with certain issues, the national dimension favours greater cohesion and territorial balance. Alongside nationwide based programmes have many advantages in terms of articulating a general policy, creating greater synergies, transferring the *know how*, making the investment more profitable...

**b. Social initiative leadership.** Whatever entity in charge of running such a programme should become actively involved in national and regional Operational Programmes (from the planning and design phase through to the execution phase) and play a role as public service providers. This leadership role should be played by mature organisations with proven experience, either public or private, Roma or non Roma; what matters is the commitment, flexibility, leadership, capacity to create synergies and to put together different wills (from administrations, enterprises...) and of course, to have credibility among the Roma community.

**c. Solution adapted to target groups guarantee and increase action impact.** The aim is to build bridges linking the needs of the Roma community to active employment policies, ultimately striking a balance between the development of affirmative action measures for target groups and closing the gap between the latter and mainstream services and the adaptation of these services to the characteristics of the Roma population.

**d. A strong partnership between public and private organisations** favours the improvement of management systems, mutual learning, experience sharing and the creation of resource synergy.

**e. A suitable coordination and management system** is key to Programme success.

**f. Parallel actions along with grassroots direct intervention is also needed in order to achieve greater and long-lasting impacts.** Intervention at policy level, awareness-raising and involvement of the business sector, the media, other entities and the society at large is essential if we are to renew the social perception of the

Roma population and their labour market integration. Studies shedding light on the objective situation of this community is vital for the planning of actions and monitoring of change.

**g. Widespread dissemination and visibility of programme actions and results and formation of Follow-up Committees to ensure transparency.** Visibility and open communication facilitate awareness-raising regarding the topic of discrimination and social exclusion. Transparency and the constant flow of information through follow-up committees are essential to the Programme's credibility.

**h. Mobilisation of local and regional resources.** All resources are aligned in achieving the same objective and synergies are created among all available resources.

**i. Structural Funds** used appropriately can have a major impact on socially excluded groups while also favouring social cohesion. The new objective of European Territorial Cooperation is the most ideal framework for the implementation of transnational actions based on themes such as the social inclusion of the Roma community and their labour market integration.

## 5.1. Further thoughts

Although so far strengths of the Programmes have been highlighted, there are several weaknesses or issues that still need to be tackle and should be mentioned.

It is important to bear in mind the role that **the economic context** -both economically and in relation to the labour market- has played in the successful development of the ACCEDER Programme. In this respect it is worth asking ourselves whether the mentioned success would be happening somewhere else, and what is more, whether this success will continue being so in the near future in Spain. In fact, recent data from the ACCEDER regional development are starting to show an outstanding decrease in the number of labour contracts acquired and an increase in the number of job seekers arriving at the programme.

In order to be able to answer this question we should be able to differentiate how much of the success was due to the positive economic context and how much was due to the ACCEDER approach and methodology as key factors. In this sense, we should take analyse which elements, if not the whole strategy, seems to be key in order to assess their transferability into different contexts. To our understanding that would be the case of the partnership network: when critical moments, such as current economic crisis, building upon solid and complementary structures will make us stronger and with higher chances to success in our common duty. Therefore, **partnership** appears as one critical element of the methodology to pick up. We should critically search for other ones.

As regards **sustainability**, the ACCEDER programme may have a weakness. The renewal for 6 more years of another Operational Programme 2007-2013 surely gives the programme a view for improvement and for development. Nevertheless, dependency on ESF budget along with national/regional/local financial support opens up a window for uncertainty in the medium term. Reinforcing search for private funding as well as creating self-financed economic schemes arise as an urgent need for sustaining such programmes, or at least, as an issue to discuss.

Regarding the essence of the ACCEDER strategy, namely, the **promotion of labour contract employment** could also be taken on board for discussion. As we all know programmes supporting employment of Roma have otherwise focused on self-employment, micro-credits, support for family businesses.... In this regard the usefulness of the ACCEDER strategy and the comparison on its pertinence could be discussed: what would have happened if the option would have been a different one? Would the strategy have been valid or would it not have achieved so much impact? Data in this respect seems to show that the programme was good enough and efficient enough.

Another element for discussion relates to **the nature or type of organisation that run the ACCEDER**: are the results of the programme so good due to capacity of the FSG? Would it have worked the same way if a public administration had carried out the programme? Or perhaps some other type of organisation? Under which conditions? What seems clear is that regardless of the type of organisation, the relevance is to comply with certain criteria that have proved to be the bases for the good development of the programme.