

▶▶ Education



PUBLICATION “50 ROMA STUDENTS IN SPANISH SOCIETY”

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights speaks to every person’s right to education and provides that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious

groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Similarly, Chapter II, Article 27 of the Spanish Constitution recognises everyone’s right to education and provides that basic education is both compulsory and free of charge.

Moreover, the Organic Law on Education (Spanish acronym LOE) passed in May 2006 reiterates the principles and rights bestowed by the Constitution, defending a new law on quality education for all students in conditions of equality and with the guarantee of equal opportunity. Emphasis is placed on the inclusive nature of education, on equal treatment and non-discrimination for any reason.

Bearing in mind the fundamental framework of the aforementioned declarations and regulations and with a view to guaranteeing the rights of Roma people in terms of their access to and participation in the educational process, the Fundación Secretariado Gitano continues to work for the educational advancement of the Roma community at all levels of education and at all ages. In this connection, a number of different actions have been undertaken in 2008 in favour of the educational advancement of the Roma community with particular emphasis on the most difficult stages as is the case with Secondary Education.

Many of the programmes implemented respond to the needs arising at the compulsory level of education. Increasing involvement of Roma

families in the education of their children has been observed. In this connection we note that the enrolment of children in pre-school is rising and clear advances can be observed in primary school enrolment where, however, lack of regular attendance is one of the main problems.

It is at the secondary school level where we find the Roma community has the greatest difficulties in terms of access, permanence and academic performance. Hence, while statistics show that the percentage of Roma students who successfully complete the compulsory secondary level of education and the number of students who go on to middle or upper level vocational training is increasing year on year, it is equally significant that 80% of Roma students who enrol in year one of compulsory secondary education drop out before completing their compulsory studies.¹

As concerns the academic level of Roma adults we find that seven out of every 10 Roma over the age of 15 are completely or functionally illiterate² which is 4.6 times higher than for the overall Spanish population according to the 2001 INE census. If we consider only the completely illiterate the comparative figures are even more dramatic showing that there are 5.2 times more vis-à-vis the overall Spanish population. This points to the clear need to obtain at least a basic level of education focused on acquiring fundamental instrumental skills

¹ *Incorporación y trayectoria de niñas gitanas en la E.S.O.* (Incorporation and pathways of Roma girls in compulsory secondary education), Madrid: Instituto de la Mujer-CIDE-Fundación Secretariado Gitano, 2006. 175 p. ISBN 84-690-3454-5 www.gitanos.org/educacion

² *Población Gitana y Empleo: Un estudio comparado (Roma population and employment: a comparative study)*. Fundación Secretariado Gitano. "Cuadernos técnicos" series, issue No 35. Madrid, 2005. www.gitanos.org/publicaciones/estudioempleo/index.htm.



AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES IN SALAMANCA

and also knowledge related to general culture and the development of skills to gain access to employment.

The Fundación Secretariado Gitano has mainly been involved in the following lines of action during 2008 as concerns education, some of which are part of the Collaboration Agreement concluded between the FSG and the Ministry of Science and Education back in 2005 and others in collaboration with different administrations and entities at local, provincial or regional level. In general terms, we can speak of:

- 】 Actions focused on promoting and facilitating the **enrolment of Roma children in pre-school** in light of the importance of early school enrolment playing a key role in the subsequent academic success of students and quality education.
- 】 Other actions designed to support **educational mainstreaming of Roma students in primary school** especially emphasising consistent attendance and the development of suitable teaching-learning processes with due consideration given to the intercultural educational framework, the involvement and support of families, monitoring and support of the students' educational processes and

educational compensation in situations presenting difficulties related with social disadvantage. Special attention has been given to attendance at primary school and accompaniment in gaining access to and persevering in compulsory secondary education.

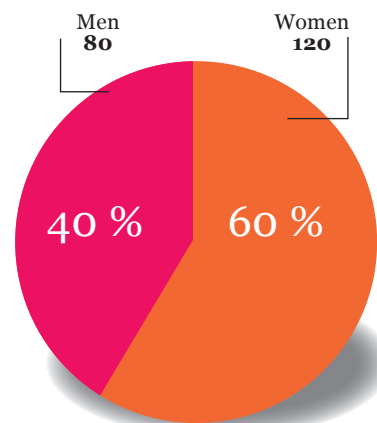
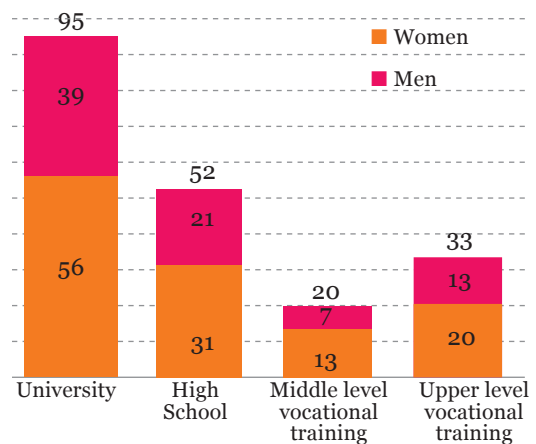
- Along these lines, in 2008 a specific programme called the **Promociona Programme** was designed within the framework of the Multi-Regional Operational Programme to Combat Discrimination 2007-2013 which will be implemented as from 2009 targeting students who are finishing primary school and moving on to secondary school and the families of these students. These actions are specifically aimed at those children who are in a standard school environment but who have been identified as requiring accompaniment to increase their likelihood of achieving their compulsory education degree and going on to post-compulsory studies. A special effort will be made at key moments such as the step from primary

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ACADEMIC SUPPORT ACTIVITIES AT SCHOOLS IN NAVARRE.

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS (2008)



to secondary education, the goal being to generate the right conditions for the success of the educational community in general: students, families, schools, social agents and the community.

- 1 **Providing access to and promoting post-compulsory studies among the Roma community** through the implementation of specific actions at national level subsidised by the Ministry of Education, Social Policy and Sports and funded through special income tax allocations. These actions consist mainly in the awarding of scholarships (a total of 200 students have received economic support), tutoring and the organisation of meetings with the participation of Roma students and their families along with professionals working in the educational and social fields.



TUTORING SESSIONS IN NAVARRE.

An effort has been made to provide access to and encourage the Roma community to go on to post-compulsory studies


In 2008 meetings of this sort were held in Andalusia, Aragon, Asturias, Extremadura, Murcia and the Basque Country with a total of 507 participants. The book entitled *50 Roma students in Spanish society*³ was also published. This book provides insight into the lives of students in middle school and higher education and seeks to inform the Roma community of a reality which they are often unaware of.

- 1 Conduct basic diagnoses and ongoing monitoring of the scholastic situation of Roma students through **studies and research**. This line of action led to the establishment of a new framework for collaboration with the Educational Research and Documentation Centre (Spanish acronym CIDE) of the Ministry of Education, Social Policy and Sports with the aim of conducting a nationwide survey to compare results with those obtained by this same entity in 1994 and 2001 regarding the educational situation of the Roma community in primary school and to obtain the first qualitative diagnosis of the situation

3 *50 Roma students in Spanish society*. Madrid. Fundación Secretariado Gitano-MEPSYD, 2008. NIPO:651-08-058-5 http://www.gitanos.org/servicios/documentacion/publicaciones_propias/fichas/35677.html

or Roma students in pre-school (age 3 to 6) in two Autonomous Communities. Progress was made in 2008 on the design of the study whose fieldwork and subsequent results will be completed in 2009.

- | Promote **basic training for Roma adults** through programmes targeting young people and adults who were early school leavers and those who were never properly enrolled in school. The objective is to provide the means, using the FSG's own resources or in collaboration with other entities, for adults to acquire basic training for their personal development and to gain access to employment. This line of work includes literacy and basic training activities as well as preparation for academic diplomas or access to higher studies.
- | Provide **training, support and technical advice to professionals in the educational and socio-educational fields**. In 2008, we responded to 185 requests from schools, universities, teaching centres and other entities for technical assistance, training, consultation and/or the provision of materials or information.
- | Develop and participate in international initiatives related to education and the Roma community. We participated in study visits and information sharing activities with different public and private European entities such as: Slovo21, IQ Roma Services.
- | Encourage **knowledge and advancement of Roma culture in both formal and non-formal learning environments**. The exhibit entitled "*Culturas para compartir, gitanos hoy*" (Sharing cultures, Roma today) is a resource used by schools


 Our goal is to generate the necessary conditions leading to the success of the educational community: students, families, schools, social agents and the community at large

and education professionals and comes with a teacher's guide for classroom use. The exhibit has been visited by many people of all ages, especially school students. In addition to the permanent exhibit located at the *Adalí Calí* centre in Vallecas (Madrid), we have two mobile exhibits which we have loaned out 18 times to schools, cultural centres, social services, NGOs and other FSG centres during 2008 with a total of approximately 2,400 visitors.