

# ▶▶ Health

The close relationship between social inequalities (economic, educational, housing, etc.) and health inequalities is clearly highlighted by international health organisations. However, in the case of the Roma community inequalities are not only rooted in socioeconomic variables but also in access to health-care services and their effective use.

Reducing this inequality is one of the priority objectives of the Foundation's Health Area, an objective which received an important boost in 2003 thanks to a Collaboration Agreement signed between the Fundación Secretariado Gitano and the Ministry of Health.

In 2008, within the framework of this collaboration with the Ministry of Health, a number of actions have been undertaken to improve the health and living standard of the Roma community. Priority lines of action include knowledge of the health status of the Roma community, support for pro-active policies compensating inequalities in the area of health, consolidation of actions focusing on capacity-building of the community itself and training of professionals in the social-health field.

## STUDIES:

In 2006 the opportunity arose to conduct a study to take stock of the situation of the Roma community as regards health. Our initial objective was not only to gain insight into the reality facing this population but more importantly to compare the data obtained with those of the Spanish population at large. In 2007 the document entitled *"Health and the Roma community. The situation of the*



PARTICIPANTS AT THE TRAINING SESSION ENTITLED "THE LOGICAL FRAMEWORK APPROACH APPLIED TO PROJECTS TARGETING HEALTH PROMOTION IN THE ROMA COMMUNITY".

*Roma community in terms of health and access to health-care services – conclusions, recommendations and proposals"* was published and contains the initial results of the study along with recommendations and intervention proposals. The study's final report was drafted in 2008 and will be available in 2009. It will present the comparative results of the National Health Survey conducted with the Roma population and that corresponding to the overall Spanish population which was done in 2006.

In this same vein, in 2008 work continued on the European project "Health and the Roma community, analysis of the situation in Europe" funded by the European Commission through its Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection. Based on the Spanish experience, the aim of this project is to gather data on the health status of Europe's Roma population, identify its real needs and establish priority actions. This is a two-year project coordinated by the Foundation's Area of Health involving organisations from Portugal, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Several coordination meetings have been held during this period and in September the first transnational meeting was held in Greece where experts from the participating countries met to share methodological aspects related to the implementation of the study.

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**DEVELOPMENT OF MATERIALS:**

One of the actions undertaken during this period was the publication of the document “*Lifestyles of the Roma community*” which analyses certain aspects related to nutrition, physical activity and safety on the road and at home. This document, intended to clarify and provide information for health-care providers and social workers involved with the Roma community, was drafted thanks to the contributions of two discussion groups in which Roma women from Salamanca took part.

**TRAINING AND AWARENESS-RAISING:**

Two training sessions were run to improve the technical skills of the professionals working for social organisations who deal with the Roma community in the area of health: the first, entitled “The Logical Framework Approach applied to projects targeting health promotion in the Roma community”, took place in October at the Ministry of Health and Consumer Affairs (Madrid) and drew 18 participants who are professionals associated with Roma organisations and the second, entitled “Intercultural mediation in the area of health” took place in November in the city of Merida where 25 professionals attended.

A seminar was also given in 2008 to raise the awareness of public sector social and health-care professionals as to the Roma community and health and provide them with intervention strategies which have proven effective with the Roma community. The seminar entitled “Roma community and health-care services” took place in October in Granada with the participation of 45 professionals.



COVER PAGE OF THE MATERIAL ENTITLED “LIFESTYLES OF THE ROMA COMMUNITY”.

**Direct intervention with the Roma community**

aimed at awareness-raising, capacity-building and the acquisition of health habits has been on the rise over the last several years. Today, group actions and/or individual interventions are carried out with children, youth and adults in most of the territories where the Foundation is operating.

The Romano Sastipen Programme has continued to develop in 2008 in conjunction with the National Drugs Plan. This programme, implemented in 28 locations throughout 11 Autonomous Communities, seeks to support the development of prevention and care initiatives adapted to the Roma population, to enhance protection and decrease the risk to which Roma



WORKING GROUP AT THE TRAINING SESSION “THE FAMILY IN ROMA COMMUNITY PREVENTION SCHEMES”.

minors and youth are subjected and to facilitate Roma's access to mainstream drug dependency resources. In 2008 a total of 1,032 people (mostly Roma adolescents and young people) have benefitted from programme actions.

In collaboration with the National Plan to combat AIDS, a number of actions were carried out to promote general health among the Roma community and to specifically prevent the transmission of HIV-AIDS. Specifically, actions have been undertaken through the "HIV/AIDS Roma population awareness-raising and empowerment programme" to inform, educate, combat myths, counsel and raise the awareness of youth and adults regarding HIV/AIDS in 21 locations throughout 10 Autonomous Communities. A total of 1,300 people benefitted from these initiatives, the majority Roma of all different ages.

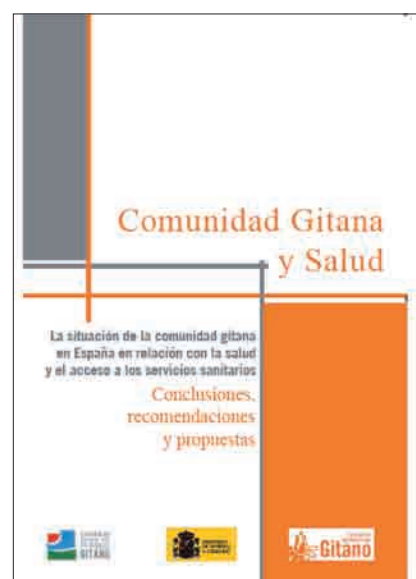
As concerns programmes implemented with the support of the National Plans, training sessions have been conducted targeting professionals supplementing those described earlier, special mention made of the following. The seminar entitled "The family in Roma community prevention schemes" held in October in El Escorial (Madrid). Twenty-five professionals from the Foundation working in the area of drug abuse prevention with Roma adolescents and youth took part. The seminar entitled "Roma community and health-care services" was held in November in Caceres involving 60 professionals from public health-care services and in December in the city of Seville a training session was held on group work and the incorporation of the gender factor in initiatives promoting health within the Roma community. Sixteen Foundation professionals participated in this training, most of them Roma women promoting health among women's groups.



SEMINAR ENTITLED "ROMA COMMUNITY AND HEALTH-CARE SERVICES" (CACERES)

The Area of Health has also continued to provide ongoing technical assistance and consultation services to public and private organisations and institutions.

The Area of Health has also been engaged in ongoing technical assistance and advisory work with public and private organisations and institutions (at national and international level) and with the different offices of the Foundation regarding health intervention with the Roma community. More than 500 actions have been undertaken in this connection in 2008 – dissemination of technical documentation and materials published by the Foundation, information on specific aspects relating to health and the Roma community, support in project management, etc.



ROMA COMMUNITY AND HEALTH. THE SITUATION OF THE ROMA COMMUNITY IN SPAIN IN TERMS OF HEALTH AND ACCESS TO HEALTH-CARE SERVICES.