

# » The FSG in 2009

One of 2009's special highlights was the implementation of the FSG's 2009-2013 Strategic Plan which was publicly presented at the 1st Nationwide Meeting of the Fundación Secretariado Gitano held in Alicante on 26-27 March.

Over 400 Foundation workers took part in that Meeting held under the slogan "Renewed enthusiasm and engagement" and it was plain to see that our organisation is alive and committed to our cause. The process leading up to the drafting of the Strategic Plan was an opportunity to strengthen this commitment and define the objectives we plan to achieve during this period which lies ahead.

This year also saw the consolidation of the work undertaken within the framework of the new *Acceder* operational programme for 2008-2013.

In this connection we would stress the strong support received from the Ministry of Health and Social Policy which, to offset this period's budget cuts, provided our organisation with a new programme funded through Income Tax allocations.

Similarly, and in accordance with our Strategic Plan, we have begun to implement our *Promociona* programme. The name "*Promociona*" stands for all of the initiatives carried out in the field of education with the overarching goal of having an impact on the educational situation of the Roma community and to specifically make headway in reducing the early school leaving rate of Roma children.

The effects of the economic crisis have been especially poignant this year, especially in terms of the spectacular rise in unemployment which is taking an inordinately high toll on the Roma population. To tackle these effects we proposed measures to bolster training,

basic family services and more intensive work with the business sector. It is safe to say that this work has been fruitful given that, despite a downturn in labour market integration, we have continued to sign work contracts for our users proving that our network of offices in most Spanish cities is contributing to softening the impact that the crisis is having on many Roma families.



PRESENTATION OF THE FSG'S 2009-2013 STRATEGIC PLAN



FSG HEADQUARTERS (MADRID)

Despite this crisis situation, 2009 has been a year of growth for our Foundation. Our global budget has reached EURO 23 million. We also expanded our services opening two new especially emblematic centres: one in the town of Paterna in Valencia in the neighbourhood known as La Coma with a significant Roma population. The other centre was opened in the city of San Sebastian with the support of the Provincial Government of Guipuzcoa.

These are some of the milestones marking this intense year.

### **THE FSG'S STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Strategic Plan, which will define the future of the Foundation and which was unveiled in 2009, was preceded by

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a wide-ranging participatory process to establish the objectives that will guide us through the next four years.

Interculturalism, promotion of equality, sensitivity to culture and quality work are all part of our vision, values and principles and we want these to be the characteristics for which we are known. Furthermore, we believe that extending these values to the society at large brings us closer to our strategic vision and we therefore need to practice what we preach and make sure that these approaches also inspire our internal operation and relationships within the organisation itself.

Within this new Plan, our work to promote Roma culture is considered a strategic objective and in achieving it we will collaborate with those organisations and institutions which have been doing excellent work in this field. The notion of promoting culture entails greater visibility of the “Roma aspect” on the cultural agenda requiring a consistent and differentiating approach taking cultural advancement on board, once again, from the perspective of defending rights because it is not by chance that cultural rights are now considered third generation human rights.

The challenge we now want to tackle is that of developing a comprehensive intercultural intervention model in contexts of diversity to which we may be able to refer in future strategic plans as another characteristic for which we are known. All of the foregoing can be summed up in a series of Strategic Objectives around a set of action axes for the period 2009-2013 (see p. 17 in this report).

### **EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME: ACCEDER 2007-2013**

Generally speaking, the implementation of the new programme within the current programming framework of the European Social Fund (ESF) has brought financial stability and a certain continuity in the implementation of our Foundation's activity for the next several years, although it has also meant a major effort in adjusting the budget and resources in general and staff reduction which has affected some Autonomous Communities more than others.

Despite the relevant reduction in ESF contribution to the new Programme in

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2009, in general terms we have managed to maintain funding from regional and local administrations and to significantly increase the contribution made by the central government through the Secretariat of State for Social Policy which, as already mentioned, has approved a one million euro subsidy through the new Income Tax programme thus becoming the main co-funder of *Acceder*.

Actions have been implemented paying particular attention to training for employment, specifically through training-employment schemes in collaboration with companies. Emphasis continues to be placed on labour counselling and job seeking and in that regard a boost has been given to labour market intermediation through follow-up and closer support of work performed and by seeking partnerships with companies for the purpose of training and subsequent employment, with special emphasis on collaboration agreements with large companies present in several different regions.

### **THE FSG'S SOCIAL ACTION**

In the area of services and programmes which we have grouped under the heading of



SIGNING OF THE AGREEMENT WITH THE UGT TRADE UNION

Social Action, we draw attention to the most important national and European projects.

› **The “Promociona” educational programme**

In 2009, in addition to the normal activities revolving around the scholarship programme and educational mainstreaming activities we carry out in most of the territories, we began to implement a new educational intervention programme within the framework of the ESF Operational Programme with the aim of implementing pilot actions in some cities to reduce early school leaving at the compulsory level of education.

The *Promociona* Programme was designed to set the standard in the field of education, similar to what *Acceder* has done for our Foundation in the field of employment. Education is one of the priorities of our new Strategic Plan and our aim is to promote the educational mainstreaming of Roma students with a view to achieving higher academic standards at the end of primary education and throughout the compulsory secondary level of education and to promote continued middle and/or higher studies and vocational training.

The implementation stage of the programme in the field was done in 2009 with initial contacts made and agreements reached with schools, families and students in 11 cities producing the following initial results: collaboration agreements reached with 62 of the 102 schools contacted, collaboration agreements with 111 of the 193 families contacted and activities under way with 132 students.

› **Intervention in the area of housing**

An effort was made this year to draw up the *Roma Community Housing Map*



TRINIDAD JIMÉNEZ AT THE PRESENTATION OF THE STUDY ON HEALTH

in all of the Autonomous Communities where we are working. This work has not only had repercussions in terms of dissemination and awareness-raising of the data and situations described in the study but has also been instrumental in activating, in some cases, relations between the Foundation and the local and regional administrations with competences in this field which will foster future collaboration.

Moreover, given that a new collaboration agreement has not yet been signed with the Ministry of Housing, our focus is at local and regional level with different types of intervention (direct intervention in the resettlement or rehabilitation of homes, technical assistance, conducting studies, drawing up reports, etc.) with varying degrees of intensity in a total of 20 cities located in 7 Autonomous Communities.

› **Health and the Roma community**

Two elements merit special mention in this field: the presentation of the national study we conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Health in April 2009 and the implementation of the European health project replicating this study in 6 partner countries (Bulgaria,

Slovakia, Greece, Portugal, the Czech Republic and Romania) whose results were presented at an international seminar held in Madrid.

### › Promotion of equal treatment

The Foundation continues to play a prominent role in this line of work which is one of our main challenges for the next several years as set out in the Strategic Plan.

Our sixth *Discrimination and the Roma Community* report was presented in December 2009 at the Ministry of Equality. The report describes 111 cases of discrimination and the main progress made in this field along with some valuable initiatives. These include training courses for officers and a consultation and defence service for victims of discrimination. However, the major thrust of our efforts has been at the institutional level in different territorial and administrative spheres (Ministry of Equality, the Council for the advancement of equal treatment and non-discrimination of persons for reasons of racial or ethnic origin, the Racism and Xenophobia Observatory, the Human Rights Office, etc.).

Worthy of special mention in 2009 was the constitution of the Council for the advancement of equal treatment and non-discrimination of persons for reasons of racial or ethnic origin where the FSG is a member of the board.

### › Gender equality

As part of the agreement which the FSG has signed with the Women's Institute, activities included the XIII National Conference on Roma Women. Mention should likewise be made of the presentation of the *Shadow report on the situation of Roma women in Spain* before the United Nations Committee for the elimination



PRESENTATION OF THE HOUSING STUDY IN SEVILLE

of all forms of discrimination against women at its headquarters in New York.

### › Youth

This was the final year of the European project entitled "Roma Youth - European Citizenship" funded by the European Commission and involving Bulgaria, Romania, the Czech Republic and Slovakia as partner countries, the main objective being to close the gap between European institutions and Roma youth from these countries. Support also continued for the Chabós Nebó - Youth today Network with the support of the Youth Institute.

## OUR ACTIVITY IN THE DIFFERENT TERRITORIES

2009 was a year of stability in the Foundation's territorial implementation after a year of transition between Operational Programmes. We would stress that we closed out this period with a new team in Donostia and another team in the La Coma neighbourhood of Valencia. Moreover, we maintained our specific weight at regional level and the number of initiatives is on the rise especially in our three priority areas: employment, education and housing.

› Special mention should be made of sustained growth in **Andalusia** where 20% of our activity and resources are concentrated. The official recognition of our *Acceder* employment offices by the Andalusian Employment Service (public institution) was an important step in the consolidation of our Programme.

› In **Valencia**, special mention should be made of the work performed within the framework of the *Caixa Proinfancia* Programme (supporting children) and funding from the Caja Mediterráneo savings bank for the CAM Romí programme.

› A concerted effort was made in **Catalonia** to compensate for the inadequate funding of the Operational Programme. This year we would note the good work done in the Roma Programme in Eastern Europe and, in general, the important institutional and social recognition it is receiving.

› **Galicia** is another case of strong growth and expansion where we continue to highlight the relevance of the initiatives in which we are engaged to eradicate shanty towns.

## “Despite this crisis situation, 2009 has been a year of growth for our Foundation.”

› The Communities of **Extremadura** and **Castile-La Mancha** are areas where we can and should foster greater growth and consolidation in programmes and activities other than the *Acceder* employment programme.

› Our teams in the Communities of **Aragon** and even more so in **Murcia** and **Asturias** suffered financial cuts last year and in 2009 have managed to keep up their work in the field with a special accent on maintaining existing resources. These are areas where diverse and personalised activity is carried out with Roma families.

› In **Castile-Leon** we would also draw attention to ESF budget cuts which have precluded the maintenance of activity at the same level as previous years.

› **Navarre** is another area with scant funding from the ESF which has been compensated by access to a wide variety of sources of funding from the regional government and town halls.

› **Madrid** has suffered a noticeable cut in funding from its Agreement with the City Council and from the ESF and has therefore had to reduce its level of social intervention although this situation has been partly offset by new resources coming in through the area of employment.



AT THE UN HEADQUARTERS IN NEW YORK



INTERVIEW WITH THE MINISTER MERCEDES CABRERA

› Lastly, in the **Basque Country** we should mention the opening of a new centre in San Sebastian with funding from the Provincial government of Guipuzcoa. The new Basque Government has opened the door to new possibilities for our activities in that Community and for the first time we have benefited from the collaboration and financial support of the Directorate-General for Employment.

**INTERNATIONAL ACTION**

Our international action this year has remained intense but not exempt from difficulty. The FSG is widely known among European institutions having to do with policies targeting the Roma people not only due to the positive assessment received by our initiatives (mainly but not only the *Acceder* Programme) but also thanks to the approach of our action model.

The Foundation is in charge of the Technical Secretariat of *EURoma* (European Network on Social Inclusion and Roma under the Structural Funds), one of Europe's most important networks which has had the backing of the European Commission

from the very outset. Our priority is to promote and coordinate the exchange of experiences and knowledge between the parties responsible for policies targeting the Roma population in the 12 EU Network Member States and the European Social Fund managing authorities in each of these participating states. Steering Committee and working group meetings were held during 2009. From among the different activities, we would draw attention to the educational visit of Network members to our offices to take a close, first-hand look at the *Acceder* employment programme.

In this connection we would also like to highlight the most important initiatives carried out during this year:

› The strategic project for the transfer of the *Acceder* Programme in Romania. This is a challenging endeavour to implement the methodology and strategy of our *Acceder* employment programme in eight cities in Romania. It is being carried out by the National Agency for Roma in Romania which is funded by the European Social Fund in that country with the participation of the FSG as a transnational partner.

 The Strategic Plan which was unveiled in 2009, was preceded by a wide-ranging participatory process to establish the objectives that will guide us through the next four years.

**This year we worked very hard on the design of the new awareness-raising campaign on “Education and the Roma Community”.**

› Project in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This project, launched in 2006 with the opening of an *Acceder* office in the city of Sarajevo, has come to a close because the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID) which was funding the project is no longer working in the Balkans.

We should also draw attention to other European projects in which we participated in 2009:

- › We signed an agreement with the European Commission to carry out a project in Turkey, the main purpose being to compile a report analysing the situation of the Roma population in that country and the political and social context surrounding the rights of minorities. The expected result is a report featuring proposals and recommendations for the design and implementation of policies / programmes to enhance the social inclusion of the Roma population in Turkey.
- › The results of the project promoted by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) entitled “Respect, protection and promotion of the right of free movement and residence in the European Union: the case of the Roma population” in which we participated as a partner were presented. The priority

objective of this project is to analyse the situation of the immigrant Roma population in countries of origin and destination.

This year was also characterised by intense institutional activity involving work in different cooperation projects in addition to our presence in the most significant discussion fora based on the belief that our experience allows us to share the lessons we have learned and thus contribute to moving our issues up on political agendas.

### **COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL AWARENESS-RAISING**

In this chapter, in addition to our ongoing editorial activity through our publication *Gitanos, Pensamiento y Cultura* (Roma Thought and Culture), electronic bulletins, our Web page and media relations, this year we worked very hard on the design of the new awareness-raising campaign on “Education and the Roma Community”. To this end, the following actions were carried out in 2009:

- › Drafting of a three-year campaign development strategy.
- › Design of the campaign format (selection of the agency, briefing, etc.).
- › Preliminary work to come up with the content of the key messages entailing both in-house (board of trustees, territorial and area directors, Roma workers, etc.) and external consultation (market study by a specialised consulting agency).

We would also note the important role played by the I Nationwide Meeting of the FSG held in Alicante in boosting internal cohesion and communication.

One of the highlights of the encounter was the video entitled *The Fundación Secretariado Gitano, over 25 years of history* specifically filmed for the occasion.

Also in 2009 we reaped the benefits of the previous awareness-raising campaign (“Employment makes us equal”) which won the prize for the best spot at the international Social Advertising Festival (Publifestival) forming part of the prestigious Malaga film festival.

### **POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL ACTION**

This year we had the chance to speak to the Ministry of Education about our vision of the educational situation of the Roma community. Despite their receptiveness to our proposals, the change of government and specifically the Minister, stood in the way to significant progress in this area.

We would also draw attention to the signing of a collaboration agreement with the UGT trade union which is willing to put the issue of labour market discrimination against Roma on the union agenda.



PEDRO PUENTE IN THE 1960'S (VIDEO ENTITLED “THE FSG, OVER 25 YEARS OF HISTORY”)

The year concluded with an initiative by the presidents of the ONCE Foundation, the Red Cross and Caritas, who invited the FSG, to petition the Government for additional support to boost the actions being carried out by our organisations within the framework of the Operational Programme to Fight Against Discrimination with a view to bolstering the resources and measures earmarked for the groups we target at this time of economic crisis.

We have likewise maintained our participation in the different platforms and institutions where we were already present:

› As already mentioned, in 2009 the Council for the Advancement of Equal Treatment and Non-discrimination of Persons for Reasons of Racial or Ethnic Origin was formally set up and the FSG participates as a member of the board.

› **State Council of the Roma People.** We are represented here by our President and the Territorial Director of Aragon, Isabel Jiménez. This year, the main topic on the agenda is the drafting and implementation of the new Roma Development Plan.

› **State Council of NGOs.** Our Foundation takes part in this Council and in the groups focusing on Social Inclusion and Employment and Quality.

› **Social action NGO platform.** The Foundation is also a member of this platform which finalised its Strategic Plan this year and implemented the income tax campaign entitled “Tick the box to make a contribution for social causes”.

› **Roma Cultural Institute.** We participated in different activities organised by the Institute and a joint act at the Romería de Cabra (Cordoba) although we have not yet managed to establish a stable framework for collaboration.

› **The EAPN-es Anti Poverty Network.** The FSG continues to play an active role in this Network which groups together over 300 local organisations working in the sphere of social inclusion. Five of our territorial heads are also presidents of regional networks. This is just one more example of Roma issues making their way onto the agendas of other social organisations.

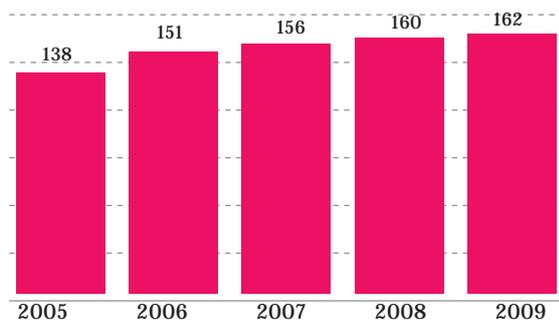
› **Youth Council.** We continue to participate in the Council and lead some of the work committees.



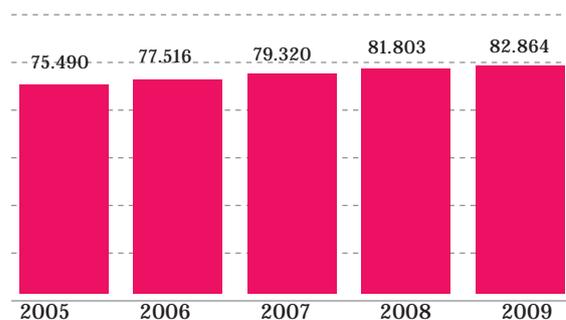
THE AWARD-WINNING EMPLOYMENT CAMPAIGN AT THE MALAGA PUBLIFESTIVAL

The Foundation is in charge of the Technical Secretariat of the EURoma Network, one of Europe's most important.

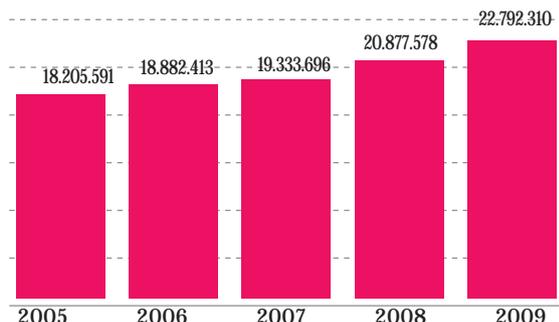
**PROGRAMMES IMPLEMENTED**



**PERSONS SERVED**



**ECONOMIC RESOURCES**



**PEOPLE HIRED**

