

» Volunteerism



IX NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MEETING (CIUDAD REAL)

Volunteerism is increasingly forming part of our daily activity and the idea of offering our time for the common good is becoming more common. Volunteerism is valued and promoted by the FSG on the basis of the benefits it has for those giving of their time as well as those on the receiving end. After seven years of experience in volunteerism, it is safe to say that we are in the vanguard in terms of the demands from many sectors showing interest in the work the FSG has been doing with the Roma population.

It is our duty to see that all FSG volunteers receive prior training so as to better understand the history and culture of the Roma people. Fostering volunteerism within the Roma population itself has presented and continues to be a challenge. Those responsible for volunteers consolidate and

reinforce each activity carried out by the Foundation.

Volunteerism as such is a relatively new notion among Roma. Until just a few years ago, activities of this nature were limited to one's family or most immediate surroundings. Providing opportunities for Roma to do things for others, in this case for those of their own community, with the support of an organisation such as the FSG, is one of the activities that has borne the most fruit over the last several years because not only is it growing but it is taking shape both within and outside of the organisation.

Volunteerism in some territories, especially for the FSG, forms part of everyday activity where it would be unusual to find work being done without the reinforcement and accompaniment of volunteers. Now we must make an effort to implement an Area of Volunteerism at all of the FSG's territorial offices.

Being a volunteer in an organisation such as the FSG means being tolerant, respectful and empathetic. Creating awareness, generating commitment and encouraging participation are values which are taking on increasing importance in each of the territories but are more special when it is the Roma people themselves who assume this role by taking part in many of the activities and training sessions done within the Area of Volunteerism specifically designed for those



PARTICIPANTS AT THE IX NATIONAL MEETING

who decide to feely give of their time and share their life experiences with us.

This year the Area of Volunteerism has incorporated new tools, modified others and, most importantly, has become involved in networking. Teamwork is what contributes to a job well done at the end of the year; fruit-bearing work achieved by anonymous people who have made a commitment to work with the FSG.

The achievements made this year indicate that 2009 has been a special year for volunteerism at the Foundation. There were a total of 335 volunteers this year, 71.2% of whom were women and 29.2% men, their ages ranging from 16 to 75. We do not have figures on the number of Roma participating with us as volunteers in the territories but we do know that at some of our centres 100% are Roma. The recruitment of Roma volunteers is an important objective for us.

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At the FSG we try to provide help to those who do not tend to seek out care services and, in the case of volunteers, we try to get those who do use our facilities to engage with this associative movement. The wide range of volunteer activities we offer throughout Spain allow us to provide potential volunteers with a number of choices.

In 2009, activities were carried out in 50 of the 54 centres the Foundation has around Spain. In Ciudad Real we held the IX National Volunteer Meeting under the slogan “Education is for us too” in which 56 people

...Raise awareness, generate commitment, foster participation...

from different parts of Spain took part and was the first such experience for many of the volunteers who recently joined our ranks.

During the year, the Area of Volunteerism has either directly organised events and activities or has collaborated in their organisation.

The following activities were carried out: a regional volunteer conference in Galicia in March; the IV regional meeting

of Roma students in Pontevedra; the Castile-Leon regional conference (in Leon and Valladolid); a video forum in Don Benito (Badajoz); tutoring for the “Promociona” education programme in Salamanca; advertising spots in Pontevedra; celebration of Andalusian Roma Day on the 22nd of November in all provinces of Andalusia; participation in the Badajoz book fair; celebration of Romanian Easter in Alicante; and participation in the citizenship project (football referee and summer school) in Granada and Almeria at the youth conference and open doors day in collaboration with the city’s university.



ACTIVITIES IN ALICANTE SUPPORTED BY VOLUNTEERS.