



Promotion  
of Roma/Traveller  
Integration and  
Equal Treatment  
in Education  
and Employment

## 25<sup>Th</sup> MAY 2005 MEETING REPORT

### REPORT

#### 1. PRESENTATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Concerning the implementation phase of ROMA'S EDEM in the field of education, were invited for this meeting the following personalities/institutions. In the meeting were presented the following personalities/institutions:

- Dr. Bernardo Sousa (ACIME)
- Dr. Helena Torres (ACIME)
- Dr. André Costa Jorge (ACIME),
- Professor Doutor Abílio Amiguinho (E.S.Educação de Portalegre);
- Professora Doutora Teresa Fernandes (E.S. Educação de Beja);
- Professora Doutora Maria José Casa Nova (Universidade do Minho);
- Prof<sup>a</sup>. Isabel Estevens (Agrupamento de Serpa);
- Dr<sup>a</sup>. Ana Paula Loja (OLEFA de Setúbal);
- Sr José Pinto de Sousa (ACH),
- Dr.<sup>a</sup> Mirna Montenegro (ICE);
- Dr.<sup>a</sup> Lurdes Neto (APEDI)
- Dr<sup>a</sup> Elisa Costa (APEDI)
- Dr<sup>a</sup> Ana Oliveira (Associação Mediar)

#### 2. DISCUSSION OF SOME STATISTIC DATA RELATED TO EDUCATION:

In the meeting were presented some statistic data from ENTRECULTURAS database, related to Roma students in Portuguese public schools (1998/99).

- From the statistics it was possible to confirm that there is a difficult relation between scholar system and Roma families, students and communities. The statistic data also showed that most of the Roma students have a tendency to abandon school in the first years
- Most of Roma families/students don't have a successful "career" in traditional schools



### 3. DEBATE WITH ALL PARTICIPANTS: MAIN CONCLUSIONS

After the presentation of the statistic data, all participants were invited to a debate concerning general discriminatory barriers in the field of education. The aim of the debate was that each participant would give his personal experience in this area.

- APEDI is the teacher's association that work in the field of Intercultural Education. APEDI has three centers of teacher's formation (Lisbon, Porto and Algarve), which will allow the APEDI members to know about the Roma EDEM project.
- The main problem at community level, are the few financial supports, schools without Roma workers, as well as an inexistent policy to these issues from the public entities. Educational problem of the Roma communities it's not only a "cultural" problem, but a "social" one.
- Schools should give more attention to the relation school/family. the social mediators role is determinant considering the low levels of schooling predominantly among Roma students.
- It's necessary to have more formation at teacher's level specially in the "fieldwork" using projects that involve all educational community and also use innovative teaching methodologies in the Roma's student's integration process. Also was emphasised the importance of the involvement of Roma parents in all educational matters.
- There are enough diagnostics of the reality, which indicate that, the problem it's not the analysis of the situation.
- Most of the projects had a limited action and time and that usually resulted in a frustration of hopes and expectations in all who were involved.
- Educational barriers of Roma take place not only in a social level, but also in a cultural level. It was emphasised the importance of finding answers to the educational issues and, at the same time, give importance to the specific cultural needs, in an intercultural perspective.
- About the sociocultural mediation concerning educational issues, it was referred that it's important to build a common base concept and range of action.
- It's very important to take more steps in this area. Otherwise the meeting would have low importance because the political decisores are not involved and this does not allow the projects to go further than the diagnostic phase.



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## 22<sup>nd</sup> JULY 2005 MEETING REPORT – 1st Group on EDUCATION

### MAIN CONCLUSIONS

Concerning the ROMA EDEM implementation phase one work group was established. Considering the thematic, this group was designated “The Bologna Agreement work group”. For this group were invited the following experts:

- Professor Doutor Abílio Amiguiño (E.S.Educação de Portalegre);
- Professor Doutora Teresa Fernandes (E.S. Educação de Beja);
- Prof<sup>a</sup>. Isabel Esteves (Agrupamento de Serpa);

In the meeting were also present:

- Dr. Bernardo Sousa(ACIME)
- Dr. André Costa Jorge(ACIME),

Concerning the objectives of the ROMA EDEM project and the main conclusions of the first meeting, Dr Bernardo Sousa made an explanation on the work group’s logic and aims considering the seminary in September. After this brief introduction the experts were invited to a debate with a special focus on the importance of the Bologna Agreement due to the theirs long experience in the field of Roma communities and education.

The Bologna agreement process is actually stopped and each University or High School has the competence to approve the curriculum. The Bologna Agreement will bring a reduction on the contents weight and the institutionalisation of the tutorial model.

Professor Abílio Amiguiño is the President of the general Assembly of the Education High Schools. This organism congregates 14 Education High Schools. There are also 7 Universities with teacher’s formation. In this sense it’s necessary to work with Education High Schools associations



The group should start working on a diagnostic concerning what has already been done in this field:

- Work at level of the intercultural materials and its contents in a way to give a new input to the Bologna Agreement process;
- Transform Intercultural Education in a optional discipline in Education High Schools and introduce Intercultural Education in the curriculum's contents;
- Introduce Intercultural Education in teacher's formation (initial and continuous), integrate intercultural materials in formation programs and approve a intercultural formation model (creditar um modelo /Acções de formação)
- Work at the Media level in order to give more visibility to the intercultural issues in public opinion.



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## 26<sup>th</sup> JULY 2005 MEETING REPORT – Educational Action Assistants Group

Concerning the ROMA EDEM implementation phase a second work group was established. Considering the thematic, this group was designated “Educational Action Assistants Group”. For this group were invited the following experts:

- Dr.<sup>a</sup> Ana Paula Loja (OLEFA de Setúbal);
- Sr.<sup>a</sup> Olga Mariano (AMUCIP);
- Sr. Adérito Montes( OR - APODEC);
- Sr.<sup>a</sup> Anabela Abreu (ARCA)
- Dra. Fernanda Reis/ Dra Carla Benites ( Sec. Diocesano de Lisboa da ONPC);
- Dr. Francisco Monteiro( Obra Nacional da Pastoral dos Ciganos);
- Dr.<sup>a</sup> Ana Oliveira (Associação Mediar)

In the meeting were also presented:

- Dr. Bernardo Sousa(ACIME)
- Dr. André Costa Jorge(ACIME),

Considering the objectives of ROMA EDEM project and the main conclusions of the first meeting, Dr Bernardo Sousa made an explanation on the work group’s logic and aims, regarding the seminary in September. After this brief introduction the experts were invited to a debate due to theirs long experience in the field of Roma communities.

### MAIN CONCLUSIONS

- There is an absence of regulation over the Roma’s sociocultural mediator’s career.
- This situation is a strong barrier to the professional, economical and emotional stability. It also contributes to a growing feeling of frustration not only among the mediators, but also on the families and communities, and in the institutions that usually promote the formation in this area.



- It's still central the need of a policy to increase proximity levels between schools and Roma communities considering the low level of schooling predominantly found among the Roma students.
- It's urgent to reduce the level of school abandon/absence and increase the number of Roma's children since the kindergarten.

In this sense, the aim of this group is to debate the Educational Action Assistants career as a way to promote a bigger involvement of Roma's communities in the field of education.

- Despite the barriers, some Roma's families showed interest in school but in the other side it was hard to find schools and teachers interested in Roma's culture and way of life.
- Considering the instability of the mediators work, some of them opted to start working in schools as Educational Action Assistants.
- However, the aim of the debate it's not to transform mediators in Educational Action Assistants but try to find ways to raise proximity between schools and Roma communities and also to find work opportunities in the field of education.
- Regarding this aim, it is necessary to debate the possibility of implementing in Roma communities the Educational Action Assistant career as a work option considering the advantage for both sides of having Roma workers in schools.
- However, considering that the mediators function is substantially different from the Educational Action Assistant function, it's still important to promote the regulation of mediators carrier, specially near the competent institutions like Education Ministry and Employment Institute (IEFP)
- It's necessary to find near the Education Ministry which are the careers/functions in schools