

THE CHALLENGE OF TOMORROW

THE BOOK



#BreadForTomorrow



promoting
employment
for the Roma
population



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THE CHALLENGE OF TOMORROW



Manuela, Joaquín, Isabel and Eleazar are four of the nearly 110,000 people who have passed through the Acceder programme in its two decades of existence.

In this book we want to bring together **their stories and testimonies**, which offer us an up-close, in-person view of this programme, run by the Fundación Secretariado Gitano and launched to promote employment for the Roma community 20 years ago.

Because the success of the Acceder programme cannot and should not be measured simply in figures; rather, its success **lies in the tens of thousands of lives which have been transformed thanks to the programme.**

If we have learned something in all this time, it is that **an effective employment policy is one which considers the individual** and his/her tastes, skills and aspirations, and which accompanies him/her in reaching his/her own objectives. However, it is also **an intervention which goes beyond the individual** and works to generate changes in his/her environment and in society itself, creating a climate which better enables Roma people to exercise their rights to work and to a decent life.

The stories of Manuela, Joaquín, Isabel and Eleazar show us that our methods not only boost access to employment, but also **empower, generate self-confidence, reduce gender equality and create role models.** They show us that active employment policies are more than necessary. Because Roma people deserve the same work opportunities as the rest of society; because they do not only want bread today, they want ...

#BreadForTomorrow

MANUELA

KEEP WALKING

Manuela gives a face to the courage and grit of many Roma women. She is an empowered woman who, having gone through difficult times in her life, has decided not to fear anything. Her family is the central pillar of her life: her parents always supported her decisions, and now she tries to instil in her own twelve-year-old daughter the values instilled in her when she was small.



"I'm Manuela. I'm 34 years old. I'm single and I have a 12-year-old daughter. I consider myself a fighter and what's most important to me is my family."

THE ROMA POPULATION IN SPAIN. A DIVERSE COMMUNITY

At present, the Roma population in Spain **is young (much younger than the country's average), urban and heterogeneous**, far from many of the clichés which the media have implanted in the popular imagination.

However, Roma people **are still very far from seeing their right to equal opportunities protected** and they continue to face multiple barriers and discriminations on a daily basis.



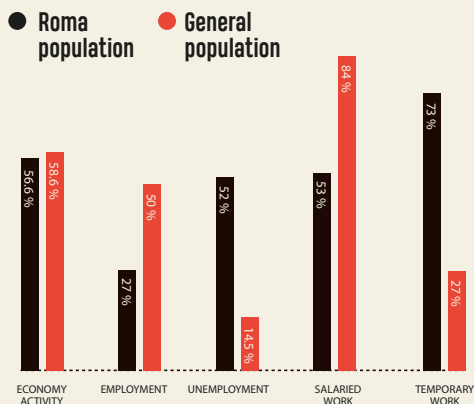
In Europe there are around 12 million Romani/Roma people, representing **a minority with a shared origin which maintains its own cultural characteristics and values, and at the same time is diverse**. In our country, around 750,000 Spanish people are Roma.

Since their arrival on the Iberian Peninsula six centuries ago, Roma people have suffered attempts at cultural homogenisation, more than 200 anti-Roma laws, and measures which serve to persecute and marginalise them. Despite this, Roma people **have managed to maintain their own identity and a rich cultural heritage** and this legacy has contributed to the internationalisation of Spanish culture.

"I worked because I wanted to, because my mother and father didn't want me to leave education, but I was grown up and I didn't want to be dependent on them. Now I'm raising my daughter as my parents raised me. She is very clear that she wants to study and to get somewhere in life. She wants to be prime minister!"

Manuela completed compulsory secondary education, but most Roma boys and girls do not do so (**six out of ten do not finish secondary school**), and this scuttles the future prospects of many young people.

UNEQUAL OPPORTUNITIES



The working situation of the Roma population is marked by **high rates of unemployment and job insecurity**. Many people in employment are in low-skilled jobs, with a high proportion of temporary contracts. The economic crises of recent decades and the digital gap have worsened this situation.

Training and employment have a decisive impact on the finances of Roma families, who typically have low incomes and high rates of poverty. **65.6% of the Roma population are at severe risk of poverty**, with monthly incomes of less than 413.60€ per month. 89% of Roma children live at risk of poverty

"I did training and went on courses until I found what I really wanted to do. I work in a supermarket and I love my job and being with the public. If I could go back in time I would choose to carry on studying. I should have carried on studying, but with looking after my mother, my daughter, the house... I didn't have time."

THE SITUATION OF ROMA WOMEN:

**WORSE THAN THAT OF ROMA MEN
AND MUCH WORSE THAN THAT OF NON-ROMA WOMEN**

Fewer Roma women reach compulsory secondary education (15.5%) than either Roma men (19%) or women in the general population (75.2%).

There is a large gender gap in employment: the employment rate for Roma women is 16%, compared with 44% for Roma men and (and 44.5% for women in the general population).

THE EXPERIENCE OF MANUELA IN ACCEDER

"At the age of 18 I started doing a course to work in equestrian tourism. I really liked it, but I couldn't continue the training because it took up a lot of time. Later, with the Acceder programme I went back into training and they helped me to broaden my CV. I feel it has made me a better person and has helped me find my future path."



IN THE GORGE I WASN'T SCARED TO JUMP IN. I USED TO BE MORE OF A COWARD, BUT NOW I'M NOT SCARED OF ANYTHING. I KEEP GOING FORWARD. MY MOTTO IS **"YOU'VE GOT TO KEEP WALKING"**. HOWEVER MANY POTHoles YOU COME ACROSS IN LIFE

JOAQUÍN

**PERSEVERANCE AND ENTHUSIASM
TO GET WHERE YOU WANT TO GO**

Joaquín has always wanted a better future. He has worked in all kinds of places, on the countryside and in markets. He has seen his relatives face the difficulties that come with doing hard, insecure jobs, and since he was very young he knew that he wanted something better; that he would find something better. This ambition is what led him to take up training with Acceder, and he did so with all the enthusiasm in the world, and always with a smile on his face. He doesn't know any other way of doing things.



"I'm Joaquín, I come from a village in Alicante and I'm pretty determined to get ahead. I'll do any work, I'm not afraid to get my hands dirty. I've worked in markets, I've worked on the countryside, I've been a painter... You have to earn your living honestly and by your own sweat. But I didn't want this for myself, for the future. I aspired to something more."

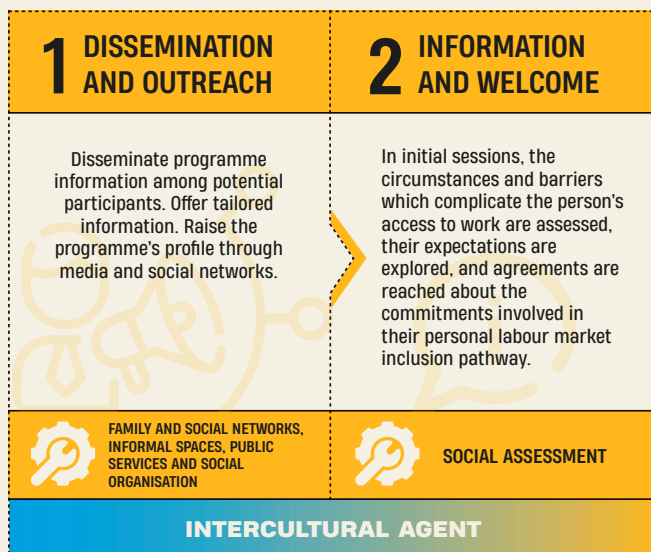


This is what a personal **Acceder** pathway is like...

Acceder is a training and employment programme launched by the Fundación Secretariado Gitano in the year 2000 thanks to the European Social Fund, aimed at promoting the inclusion of the most vulnerable Roma people in the labour market.

Acceder is made up of a **team of Roma and non-Roma people** in different professions. Among them are **intercultural agents** – who disseminate information about the programme, welcome new participants and communicate with families – and people responsible for **employment guidance, job intermediation with companies and coordinating the programme**.

The programme is based on **personalised labour market inclusion pathways** (through salaried employment or self-employment) which enable unemployed people to improve their skills, begin work and develop professionally.



"I got the opportunity to do a course at the Fundación, so I stopped working for daily wages so I could start studying and try to get something better. I was in training for 8 months and thank God, everything went well. Now I'm working".

"My family always told me I had to study. They don't want us to have the future they had, working on the land or in the street market all day. It's not stable... It's much better to study, to work at something you like and find rewarding, and also have some stability, which for me means I don't have to worry".

"I haven't been at the company for long and I'm still learning. I like this job because I work with the public and I quite like working with people. I also feel really comfortable with my workmates. From the first day I arrived to the internship, they really welcomed me. That doesn't always happen".

"These programmes should be there to help people like me and people who deserve an opportunity. I know that if I'd approached the company on my own, I wouldn't be working there, because they don't normally give you the opportunity. But when they give it to you and get to know you... they see that we can do it".

KEYS TO SUCCESS



Innovative from the beginning, the programme shines a spotlight on the **right to work as a lever of change and social transformation**. The success of Acceder is based on its approach:

- **Personalised**, considering each person's circumstances.
- **Skills-based**, developing skills which are in demand in the labour market.
- **Multidimensional**, operating at the level of the individual, their immediate surrounding and the labour market.
- **Integrative**, seeking equal opportunities and social equity.

A man with a beard, wearing a red climbing helmet with a GoPro camera mounted on top, is climbing a rock face. He is wearing a black wetsuit with a red hood. He is holding onto a rope and a metal carabiner. The background shows a rocky cliff and some greenery.

JOAQUÍN'S EXPERIENCE IN ACCEDER

"From the first day, I felt supported by my coursemates and by staff at the Fundación Secretariado Gitano. I still have a strong relationship with them today. They know your circumstances along with everybody else's, and they always encourage you to keep going. I feel really well-supported".

"AT THE FIRST WATERFALL I THOUGHT: 'I'M REALLY SCARED. I CAN'T DO IT... BUT I'VE GOT TO DO IT. **WE'RE HERE NOW, WE HAVE TO DO IT**'. IT WAS STRESSFUL, BUT AFTERWARDS IT WAS REALLY SATISFYING".

ISABEL

THE VALUE OF EXPERIENCE

Isabel was one of the first participants in Acceder 20 years ago and now she works as a technician for the programme in her city, Jerez. Among the many personal goals she has achieved, she has opened a Roma women's association in her area, and she has lived and shared experiences with Romani communities in other countries. Since she was a child, she always wanted to know more about her people, about the Roma community. That's why working daily to help Roma men and women makes her so happy.



"I'm a self-educated person, I really like learning and I think you can never know too much.

I'm now enrolled in a distance-learning university studying Social Education. I think it's important, even though I have a job, to be able to keep developing and contribute even more to the Roma community".

"Roma men and women have always wanted to work and have always worked, since they are very young: in street trading, in waste collection, on the countryside with livestock, as traders... it's something they're born with".

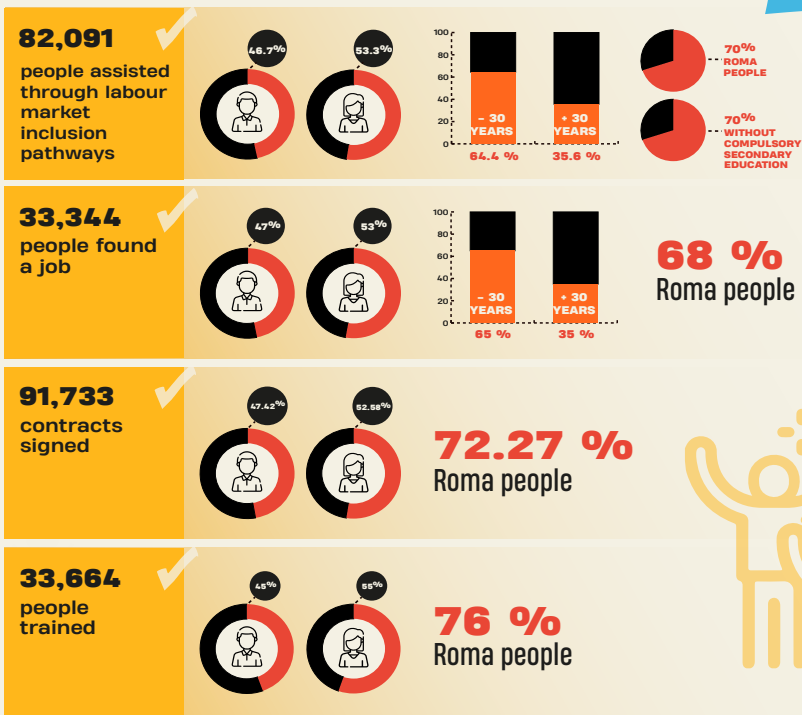
20 YEARS IN FIGURES

Over the last 20 years, the Acceder programme has never stopped growing. Here are some of our achievements over these two decades.

109,875 PEOPLE

HAVE RECEIVED INFORMATION ABOUT ACCEDER

11% OF THE ROMA PEOPLE IN OUR COUNTRY.



"In Acceder we make a personalised labour market inclusion pathway which is a kind of work plan, where you set objectives until you get to what the participant wants to do".

"Inclusion policies are necessary in any region with a Roma community - but genuine, effective inclusion policies, not inclusion policies which don't reach all Roma men and women, or which don't take into account the specific characteristics of each region."

"Involvement in the programmes has to be three-dimensional. All social agents must be involved - public institutions, the Roma community itself, the local business network... the business network is key to the Acceder programme. If the companies don't get involved, the programme is left empty."

"In the 15 years I've been working at the Fundación and on the programme, we've changed a lot of things, because we have to keep up to date with the labour market. Tools we didn't use to use, such as digital job search tools, are now being made part of the programme. The digital gap is very much in evidence in Roma homes".



THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRAMME

Over the last 20 years, the training offered by Acceder has developed. As well as training activities aimed primarily at getting people hired, there are now **longer-lasting training pathways** to improve professional skillsets. The activities also now include **internships in companies, skills-based training, digitalisation, entrepreneurship training and specific activities for young people**.

Recent years have seen an emphasis on **training in the technological sector**, in professions where employment opportunities are growing. Moreover, **the training has been digitalised**, allowing the possibility of participation through distance learning or blended learning.



ISABEL'S EXPERIENCE IN ACCEDER

"I was one of the first participants who came to Acceder looking for work, 20 years ago now. I was there for a while, I started doing training according to my professional profile, and then 15 years ago I got the opportunity to start working on the Acceder employment programme itself. Since then I've been a technician for the programme in Jerez".

"I HAVE LEARNED THAT LIFE GOES ON HOWEVER TIRED YOU ARE. YOU'VE GOT TO KEEP GOING. MAYBE SOMEONE YOU'RE A ROLE MODEL FOR WILL SEE THEMSELVES IN YOU..... **SO I'VE GOT TO SET CHALLENGES FOR MYSELF!** I CAN'T TALK TO YOUNG PEOPLE ABOUT CHALLENGES IF I CAN'T OVERCOME THEM MYSELF"

ELEAZAR

BECOMING A ROLE MODEL

Eleazar has an insatiable curiosity. He loves learning things and, above all, communicating them to others. This urge to share his knowledge with other people has led him to set up his own Youtube channel and create a podcast on topical issues. Recently, he decided to continue his studies in order to enter teacher-training. His desire to keep learning and developing every day has made him a role model for his younger brothers and sisters, who always try to follow in his footsteps.



"I define myself as a very curious person, I'm interested in everything, even the smallest topics. I love talking about things, filling myself up with information and passing it on. People know me now and even ask me "What do you know about this? What do you think?". You become a kind of reference point".

"We need active employment policies. We want to work, but not just in any old job. We want decent jobs. When you work in something, you are something, and being something in this society makes you feel complete, satisfied and happy".

"I have another 4 siblings, I'm the oldest one in the family. They're always watching what I do and that creates a responsibility, because in the end you're the one leading the way, the spearhead. There are people behind you who are following you. Whatever I do ends up affecting them".

ACCEDER TRANSFORMED INTO PUBLIC POLICY

Acceder has shown the need to **invest specifically** (although not exclusively) **in Roma people** to ensure they can access the labour market in conditions of equality, as well as showing the benefits this brings.

Since the programme's beginnings, the dialogue with various public authorities **has been directed when possible towards those responsible for employment policies**, getting them to take responsibility for helping the Roma population rather than leaving it exclusively to social services.

Today, **many public authorities consider the Acceder programme a public policy in itself**; their public employment policy directed at the Roma population.



ACCEDER, A MODEL FOR EUROPE

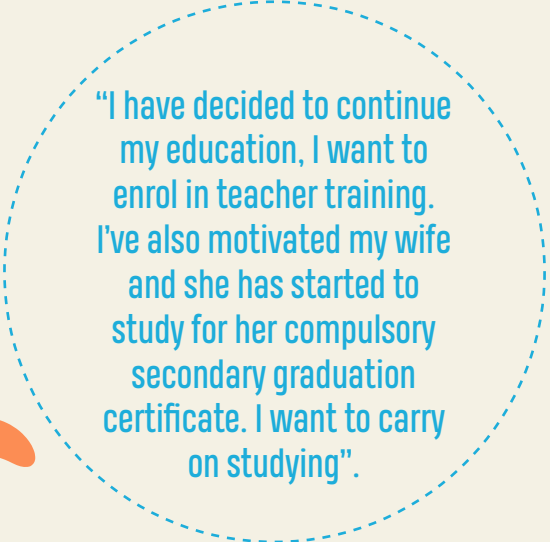
Acceder has been recognised as **an example of good practice on many occasions**, by European institutions, numerous Member states, the Council of Europe, European civil society organisations and the United Nations.

In fact, many of the approaches and lessons learned on the Acceder programme have been included in the **model of inclusion and equality for the Roma population which the European Union launched in 2011** and is currently reinforcing with the EU Roma Framework for National Strategies for Equality, Inclusion and Participation 2020-2030

THE ACCEDER METHODOLOGY IS SPREADING

Various European governments have asked for the programme to be implemented in their own countries.

These transfers have been carried out in Romania and in Bosnia and Herzegovina; the initial process is underway in Italy and Portugal; and it is currently being implemented in North Macedonia by the United Nations.



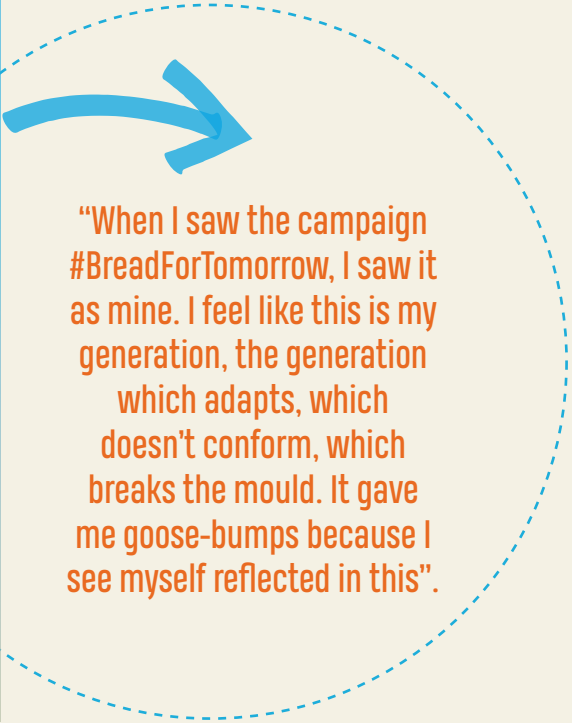
"I have decided to continue my education, I want to enrol in teacher training. I've also motivated my wife and she has started to study for her compulsory secondary graduation certificate. I want to carry on studying".



RAISE AWARENESS AND SHOW HOW ROMA PEOPLE ARE IN REALITY

Social awareness-raising is key to putting the social and media spotlight on the most vulnerable groups in society, drawing attention to their situation and defending their rights.

Since 2004, the Fundación Secretariado Gitano has carried out campaigns to improve the social image of the Roma population, demand their right to education, report discrimination and promote equality.



"When I saw the campaign #BreadForTomorrow, I saw it as mine. I feel like this is my generation, the generation which adapts, which doesn't conform, which breaks the mould. It gave me goose-bumps because I see myself reflected in this".

ELEAZAR'S EXPERIENCE IN ACCEDER

"When I finished secondary school and needed to start work I went to Acceder and they advised me, they told me I was going to start on a programme called "Learning by Doing". I got training in customer service, in making sales pitches, in sales techniques, I did an internship in the company... They said maybe this was my path and my way into the labour market"

"I HAD IT QUITE WELL, BUT I WAS ALSO QUITE SCARED. **IF I COULD DO THAT, I CAN DO ANYTHING**".



THE **IMPACT** OF **ACCEDER** PROGRAMME



The Evaluation of Results and Impact of the Acceder Programme 2000 - 2020 has allowed us to find out about the **programme's reach, its development and its results in terms of labour market inclusion.**

Here are some conclusions:

1

The Acceder Programme is achieving its objectives: **4 out of 10 people who have been through the programme have obtained work.** This means an improvement in the quality of life of many Roma families. In the last 20 years, 82,091 people have improved their employability and 33,344 have found a job.

2

These 20 years have seen **changes in the companies involved, with increased collaboration and the breaking down of stereotypes,** and more and more companies participating in the programme and giving opportunities to Roma people. 4 out of 10 new hirings were made possible by the intermediation work of Acceder.

3

Public authorities, for their part, have been among the key agents in the development of Acceder, especially in two aspects: the stable financing provided by the European Social Fund, and the role of local, regional and national government, which was decisive in the establishment of the Programme in different regions. 11% of Roma people in Spain have taken part in Acceder.

4

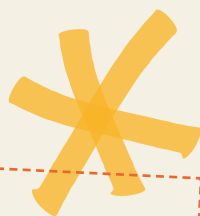
The Acceder Programme **has highlighted the importance of education in being able to obtain employment.** Labour market inclusion increases by 15 percentage points (from 33% to 48%) when people have graduated in the compulsory secondary education.

5

The programme has had a **multiplying and empowering effect among Roma women.**

6

The Acceder programme has been innovative in its methodology, based on **personalised labour market inclusion pathways**, in its specialisation and in its public-private collaborations.



In essence, the Acceder programme attempts to break the cycle of poverty and discrimination suffered by the Roma community, delivering opportunities, training and employment.

20 YEARS
> acceder promoting
employment
for the Roma
population