

FINAL REPORT

STUDY VISIT- *ACCEDER PROGRAMME*¹ Working Group on Employment *EURoma*

11th, 12th and 13th March 2009
Spain



STRUCTURAL FUNDS: INVESTING IN ROMA

¹ www.gitanos.org



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The study visit to the ACCEDER Programme run by the Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG) in Spain was the first activity of the Working Group on Employment of EURoma network. It took place in Spain (Madrid, Córdoba and Valladolid) the 11th, 12th and 13th of March 2009.

A total of 37 participants took part in this study visit. They were members from Administrative Units of ESF, from Ministries from Labour and/or Social Affairs/Policies and similar, Offices for Roma Issues and other administrative bodies, the European Training Foundation, and the European Commission (DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and DG Regional Policy).

The aim of the study visit was to provide some profound insight into the ACCEDER Programme theoretical framework, its aims and key elements as well as its methodological criteria and practical operation. A balance between theory and practice was seek as crucial for a deep understanding of the essence and daily life of the programme, emphasising both the positive elements but also the difficulties. Such detailed information was analysed and discussed among participants.

The agenda for the three days was divided into three blocks:

1. Overview of the ACCEDER programme by several administrations involved, Expert presentation on the key elements characterising the programme; the programme's methodological description; a review of all the *complementary actions* and communication policy of the programme; and finally a round table with the programme's partners point of view (administrations involved and companies).
2. Practical session on the ground, with visits to ACCEDER local offices and teams in Córdoba, Madrid and Valladolid. In-depth discussion of study cases and thematic issues (enterprise intermediation in big cities, labour insertion of beneficiaries receiving social income and vocational training schemes for low qualified beneficiaries).
3. Feedback session and discussion on the ACCEDER potential for transferability. Round of interventions from participants outlining the most and least outstanding elements from the ACCEDER programme along with its potential transferability to other contexts/countries.

1. Overview of the ACCEDER programme

1.1. Institutional Welcome and general overview of the ACCEDER programme

The reception of all participants and most of the sessions took place at the FSG headquarter in Madrid. The meeting was welcomed by Isidro Rodriguez, the FSG Director, who emphasized his satisfaction for sharing the FSG long experience in running the ACCEDER programme, whose main aim has been, and still is, to provide equal opportunities to the Spanish Roma community in accessing the labour market. Results and outcomes from the programme have been successful and widely acknowledged by many institutions; nevertheless there is still scope for improvement and further progress and to test whether the essence of the ACCEDER



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approach and methodology can be of any use to other organisations/administrations working in very different contexts such as those EU Member States represented in EURoma and specifically in the Employment Working Group.

Carlos Tortuero, Deputy Director ESF Administrative Unit. Ministry of Employment and Immigration from Spain followed the welcoming of participants. He highlighted the support of the Spanish ESF Administrative Unit to the ACCEDER programme, not only in its first programming period (2000-2007) but also in the current one (2008-2013). This solid support also applies to the launching of the European Network EURoma, whose Technical Secretariat and functioning is financed by the Administrative Unit he leads. The Spanish administration commitment was also reflected through the presence of Juan Carlos Mato, General Director of Social Policy from the Ministry of Health and Social Policy. He stressed the need of focusing on the most disadvantaged groups, such as the Roma, at times of crisis. EURoma was recognised as a very appropriate initiative as it tries to improve the use of the EU financial instrument, the Structural Funds for the benefit of the most excluded ethnic minority in Europe.

A general framework and overview of the ACCEDER programme was also outlined from the European Commission (EC) point of view. Sonia Vila Núñez, from DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (C.3 – ESF Denmark, Spain and Turkey), presented what she considered the most outstanding ACCEDER elements: i.e., close link of the programme with beneficiaries, administrations and enterprises, the focus on the fight against discrimination of most vulnerable groups and the setting up of professional and so committed teams as underlying the success of the ACCEDER.

Last presentation was carried out by Javier Sáez del Álamo from Spanish ESF Administrative Unit. Ministry of Employment and Immigration, who made a brief description of the ACCEDER Programme as part of the ESF Operational Programme *Fight Against Discrimination 2000-2007* and of the renewed 2008-2013.

1. 2. Expert presentation on the ACCEDER programme

This in-depth session was carried out by José Manuel Fresno, former Director of FSG and current Director of the Fundación Luis Vives from Spain. The presentation focused on the content of the Framework Document which was distributed beforehand to all participants.

The session was structured under the following topic headings: *1. Roma in Spain 2. Roma and employment 3. The ACCEDER programme 4. What to learn from the ACCEDER experience.*

Roma in Spain

Some historical notes were highlighted, followed by a description of the demographic situation and the most recent relevant changes that had occurred.

Spain is the country with highest Roma population in Western Europe. Nevertheless the percentage of Roma living in Spain, except in Andalusia, is not so high as in most Central and Eastern European countries.

Roma people suffer in Spain from poverty, exclusion and discrimination as it happens, unfortunately, all around Europe. But what is important to remark is that they have made more progress in the last four decades than they made in the previous five and a half centuries. This is basically due to five reasons: (1) the process of democratization since 1978 has given the Roma for the first time the opportunity to be full citizens; (2) with the admission to the European



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Union in 1986, Spain has drastically increased its living standards and Roma have profited from this economic growth; (3) Spain, as other Mediterranean countries, has a young welfare system, nonetheless its social protection system has been very inclusive with the Roma community, not because they are Roma but because they have more needs than other groups -in terms of social housing, education, social incomes, etc.; (4) at the same time and with different levels of development, regional governments have implemented specific target programs and actions addressed to Roma people suffering special disadvantages; (5) since 1960 Spain has had an important mobilization of civil society in favor of the Roma community.

All these factors have led the Spanish Roma community to an important change, not only in terms of living standards, but also in relation to their culture, traditions, integration in neighborhoods, etc. Spanish Roma are currently as diverse as the Spanish society is, and although some of them still suffer extreme exclusion and discrimination, it is worth underlining that many others are totally integrated into society.

Roma and employment

Concerning employment, the Roma community has traditionally been self-employed; Roma generally worked in family businesses and their jobs were related, before emigrating to the cities, to the agriculture sector, such as gathering of scrap and solid residues, and more recently to the mobile trading. What is happening more and more is that some of these jobs do not have a chance in the labour market and others are difficult to develop without a proper entrepreneurship qualification. In this situation many of the Roma adults are expelled from the labour market and the new Roma generations have no opportunities in the former family businesses.

The ACCEDER programme

The ACCEDER project has been conceived to tackle this situation. In the year 2000, the youth Roma community had poor opportunities in their traditional jobs, the Spanish economy growth was 4% annually and the labour market drastically reduced the former rates of unemployment creating intensively low qualified jobs in the sector of the construction and in services. Many indicators showed that new generations, born in the democratic period, were facing a cultural change related to their expectations and their understanding that they are living among the *gadjes* (non Roma), they now go to school with the *gadjes* and sometimes they even marry them; therefore they should have the same opportunities as them. In brief, they understand that “you can continue to be a Roma despite working in a *gadje* business”.

ACCEDER is the answer from Fundación Secretariado Gitano (FSG) to this situation. It started from a previous 2-year pilot experience developed in the city of Madrid that was later spread around Spain with the support of the new period of Structural Funds 2000-2006. The idea was to support Roma youth in their access to normalized employment as an alternative to self-employment or family business. The assumptions were:

- There is a momentum to provide many young Roma people with the opportunity to enter the labour market with the aim of closing the circle of normalization (living among the others, going to the same schools, having same social benefits and working with the others).
- If this approach works, the project will be able to change the mutual understanding and perceptions between Roma and non Roma reducing prejudices and stereotypes. Roma, entrepreneurs, politicians and citizens will understand that Roma want to work



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and are able to do it as anyone else if they have an opportunity. This will improve their expectations related to the employment and their self-perception.

- Launching a national-wide programme would not only be able to cover the entire country, but would also allow the articulation and strengthening of Roma policies, creation of synergies, scale economies and, therefore, complement bottom-up with top-down approaches.
- The programme would provide with know-how, better understanding of the Roma phenomenon, information and data, working tools and skilled workers, Roma and non-Roma, specialized in this issue.

In terms of fields of action, the ACCEDER programme had from the very beginning two complementary levels: (1) a grass-root approach with 48 teams currently working all around Spain, mostly in the biggest cities providing integrated insertion itineraries (guidance, training and labour insertion, search for employment, etc.) (2) a policy approach complementary to the others: awareness-raising, campaigning, research, creation of working tools, data collection, influencing policies, etc.

The ACCEDER programme works under some principles that respond to the corporative culture of Fundación Secretariado Gitano (which are indeed its identity distinctiveness) and include: the intercultural approach involving Roma and non Roma at all levels of the organization (board, workers, volunteers and beneficiaries); the idea under this approach is that the Foundation reflects what the society is. Another key principle is the culture of partnership, which means that the project involves around 200 effective partners from different levels of public administrations, business sector and civil society. The third one is combining the mainstream approach with the target approach based on normalization.

In terms of results, as it is well known, the ACCEDER programme has been able to go beyond the objectives foreseen in 2000. During the course of the Programme a total of 35,304 people were served at the integrated centres and approximately 70% of these were Roma. These figures are well above the original forecast of 20,000 people. More than 26,000 work contracts have been signed and 13,902 people have taken part in training activities. It is important to highlight that in term of beneficiaries the project has had a gender approach with more women (53%) than men (47%) benefiting from its services.

Besides the factual results, it is worth drawing the attention to the impacts that the programme has been able to achieve. Some of these impacts concern the improvement of expectations from the Roma and non Roma community, creating permanent networks and structures of cooperation, working methods, systems of data collection and monitoring, human capital at grass-root level, etc.

What to learn from the ACCEDER experience

As it is well known, this project has been recognized, not only at Spanish level but also at European level, as an example of good practice and has received several awards and prizes, not only for being a relevant experience in Spain but because there are many things to learn from this project that can be transferable to other experiences:

- In terms of policies, the stronger value of ACCEDER is probably the ability to articulate a national Roma employment policy based on the Structural Funds; the ability to use the



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Structural Funds as a springboard for the Roma labour market inclusion. It could also be added other relevant policy elements as the combination of both the grass-roots and policy level (national dimension for local actions), mobilizing all local and national resources, creating synergies, the leading role of a civil society entity in the articulation of the policies, long-term planning, integrated approach from the employment to the inclusion, etc.

- The ACCEDER project tackles the Roma issue in a particular manner. From its approaches we can highlight the top down-bottom up perspective, good coordination and management system, individualized integration pathways within an integral and community approach, tailored but not segregated services, innovation and permanent improvement, and a win-win approach face to the companies.
- Concerning the strategies and tactics there are also things to learn from this project: for example, the global strategy adapted to the local situations and circumstances, the ability to act with flexibility and to adapt to the individual situations and rhythms, the capacity to create working tools and monitoring systems, to collect data, and the visibility, transparency and accountability as an action criteria.

There were some final thoughts and questions for discussion: Has the ACCEDER worked so well just because of the positive context of the labour market? Will it continue achieving (the same) positive results in the new recession period or must change the strategy? To what extent is sustainable or has gained sustainability the ACCEDER project? What is useful from ACCEDER when the options are self-employment, family business...? To what extent has the ACCEDER worked just because it has been led by FSG? Would it have worked if it had been managed by a public body or by a Roma association?

After the speech, various participants took the floor to make further questions and comments. It was widely agreed that most of the ACCEDER elements could be seen as transferable to other contexts, even though reality in many other Member States were quite different. The session was highly evaluated as having tackled very interesting elements to take into account when setting up an employment scheme.

1. 3. Presentation of the ACCEDER Programme: the methodological approach

This session was introduced by José Sánchez, Head of FSG Employment Department and explained in detailed by Arantza Fernández, FSG Employment Coordinator. The Employment Department from the FSG is the one responsible for the setting up, coordination and evaluation of the ACCEDER programme at national level.

The aim of this session was to give an in-depth insight of the methodological model of the ACCEDER programme, a programmed aimed at the socio-labour market integration of Roma in Spain.

An introduction was given as to understand the history of the programme. Through the ACCEDER-INTEGRA experimental project, and taking advantage of the opportunity provided by the Community Initiative on Employment and Human Resources Development, INTEGRA chapter, of the European Social Fund, the FSG opted for an innovative strategy entailing the implementation of a training and employment access scheme for Madrid's Roma population tailored to the latter's potential and the real possibilities that the labour market has to offer.



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This programme was implemented in the city of Madrid on 1 January 1998 and concluded on 31 December 1999. With a view to increasing the employability of the Roma men and women taking part in the programme, different labour market integration actions based on individualised pathways and structured into different stages were tested. This pathway was designed to be both logical and progressive ranging from reception to integration and including different actions such as preliminary training, training, labour market integration and accompaniment at the job site.

The Roma population immediately responded to the programme. The most visible product at this stage was the creation of a labour market integration scheme which had managed to standardise a basic action methodology, define a series of working tools and identify skills in a multi-disciplinary team. The result was a product tested in daily action and validated by the Roma population which was satisfied with process quality and results achieved.

Once it was proven that with the proper action and methodology integration of the Roma population into the salaried labour market was possible, the FSG, through actions targeting the Roma population within the framework of the Multi-regional Operational Programme Fight Against Discrimination, co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) 2000-2006, transferred the scheme tested in Madrid to a number of towns throughout the whole of Spain. This programme, co-financed by a multitude of State, Regional, Provincial and Municipal Administrations, has been instrumental in providing individualised employment pathways to over 33,000 people through 48 centres which were opened and run by several of the over 200 professionals who currently work at the ACCEDER centres.

The session continued with the general context of the Spanish labour market, the characteristics and profile of the programme participants, as well as with a description of the barriers and discrimination that Roma people face when accessing training and/or employment in Spain. They continued with the programme aims and with a broad explanation of the ACCEDER intervention model, namely:

- The individualised approach
- The integration approach
- The multidimensional approach

They continued with the ACCEDER 3 basic axes for intervention:

- Design of Individual Employment Pathways
- Work with the surrounding environment: family and community
- Intervention in the labour market

Individual Employment Pathways

“To build a pedagogical process aiming to change from a current situation to a new desired one”

In contrast to impersonal employment policies, FSG sees a very clear need for individual attention in the access to employment process which calls for a model based on a personal labour market integration pathway. This individualised process must be based on a preliminary diagnosis of each person's employability and then the necessary measures and steps are proposed with a view to improving access to employment for these persons.



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The individualised approach, while generating an intervention strategy, is an end in itself because we must not lose sight of the core objective which is to allow people to "take charge of their own destiny" and attain a sufficient degree of autonomy needed to manage their problem and to that end it is vital that they become actively involved starting with their personal situation and embracing an educational-training process from a perspective of responsibility and commitment.

As an intervention strategy, the individualised approach allows one to undertake all of the processes which have an impact on the personal development of each participant fostering social skills, basic and academic training, professional qualification and work experience. Participants will be accompanied in their first job and will be given help to keep it.

Individual intervention can be broken down into three steps:

- Curricular inventory and variable analysis consisting in an analysis of personal and professional potential and global factors and others specifically inherent to integration.
- Socio-labour diagnosis, consisting of a preliminary evaluation report on the integration process defining actions to be taken regarding social-family matters, training and counselling to enhance the likelihood of employment.
- Design and implementation of the personal pathway. The integration pathways are linked together in logical phases. The aim of the intervention can be deduced from the initial diagnosis.

The Individual Employment Pathways have the following **Phases**:

- 1- Dissemination for participation of beneficiaries
- 2- Information and reception
- 3- Employability diagnosis and outlining individual employment pathway
- 4- Motivation bridging - actions towards employment
- 5- Occupational training
- 6- Labour counseling
- 7- Labour market intermediation
- 8- Labour insertion and monitoring employment

1- Dissemination for participation of beneficiaries

Objectives:

- To disseminate information about the service
- To visualize the program among different supports
- To establish information, coordination and referring protocols to other organizations.

Actions:

- To disseminate materials to make known the program between beneficiaries
- To identify spheres to make known the program between beneficiaries



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- To present the Program
- To establish first appointment

2- Information and reception

Objectives:

- Motivate the beneficiaries about the importance of training and employment.
- Analyze and register data about potential personal and professional skills.
- To facilitate and exchange baseline information in employment and occupational training

Actions:

- Reception interview
- Baseline analysis of personal, family and professional variables
- Baseline action plan

3- Employability diagnosis and outlining individual employment pathway

Objectives:

- Baseline analysis from the labour market view with beneficiaries (variables such as training skills, motivation, availability, personal and professional project of life)
- To register relevant data
- To establish commitments, compromises and agreements with beneficiaries

Actions:

- Deep interview
- To design or pre-design a professional objective
- To design or pre-design actions in order to build the pathway. To establish agreements

4- Motivation bridging - actions towards employment

Objectives:

- To raise awareness and motivation towards occupational training and employment actions
- To train in core skills and social- labour habits
- To become aware of strengths and weaknesses

Actions:

- Meeting groups about information on labour market
- Actions to learn how to use surroundings resources
- Actions related with household and labour conciliation

5- Occupational training

Objectives:

- To acquire technical knowledge and social- labour skills: to improve core skills
- To acquire labour experience through internships
- To sign enterprise agreements

Actions:

- Customised training
- Financing own training
- Training agreed upon enterprises



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- Public offers in occupational training

6- Labour counseling

Objectives:

- To learn all needed resources for the job seeking
- To increase self-confidence and autonomy

Actions:

- Job seeking skills
- Self-candidacy
- Meetings groups for job seeking
- Actions for self-employment

7- Labour market intermediation

Objectives:

- To obtain relevant information about labour market to detect new sectors
- To establish direct relation with enterprises
- To attract, analyze and manage job vacancies

Actions:

- Reinforcement actions
- Actions towards labour markets demands
- Actions towards labour market offers
- Job seeking and vacancies management

8- Labour insertion and monitoring employment

Objective:

- To assure workers to their jobs
- To support other personal dimensions in order to assure workers to their jobs.
- To reinforce relations with enterprises

Actions:

- Monitoring job placement (of both enterprises and beneficiaries)

Work with the surrounding environment: family and community

The participation of the family in the socio-labour market integration process is vital for the Roma population. The family, with its needs, expectations, beliefs, habits, peculiarities, etc., has an important influence on each participant's access to and perseverance in the mainstream labour market.

Moreover, the degree to which community resources such as social services, schools, health-care centres, cultural centres, social participation, etc. are used provides an indication of the likelihood of success in the labour market integration process.

And, as has been observed in other sections, labour market integration is just one more aspect of a person's reality and therefore use of the different resources sometimes goes hand-in-hand with the actions of the pathway itself. Attainment of a secondary education degree through adult



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education classes, applying for pre-school or school lunch services, doing the paperwork to rent or apply for publicly subsidised housing or habitual use of public transportation are all actions which are completely in line with labour market integration. The everyday use of mainstream resources, having one's own home, having reached a certain academic level and taking part in social associations or groups feeds the need to join the labour market as a vehicle for personal advancement.

The ACCEDER employment programme is in line with the FSG's work philosophy by fostering the full participation of the Roma population in the community life of the towns where they reside and in society and to that end, depending on the resources which the FSG has in each territory, it employs one or more of the following strategies:

- Referral of beneficiaries to specialised community resources
- Mainstreaming as a criterion will guide action so that, to the degree possible, the Roma population takes part in all types of standard services set up for use by all citizens. To that end, public or semi-private services liable to be used by the Roma population will be encouraged to make an effort to adapt their facilities to make them more accessible: social services centres, adult education schools, vocational training centres, etc.
- Pedagogical accompaniment in addressing formalities
- The main objective of ACCEDER intervention when working with the surrounding environment is to refer and accompany the Roma population, as needed, to mainstream services and instruct them as to the proper use of such services. To this end, the following actions are undertaken:
 - Actions to ensure understanding of how resources and services operate.
 - Actions to control and adjust expectations and demands.
 - Actions to raise the awareness of public resource facilities concerning the Roma community and help them to understand and make allowances for these differences when providing services.
- Referral to internal specialised FSG services.

Intervention in the labour market

Intervention in the labour market seeks for possible labour opportunities and partnerships including the identification of new market and employment niches, the establishment of commercial networks favouring the creation of businesses while fostering the establishment of collaborative relationships and networks as well as co-management between entities, institutions and companies, the management of partnerships involving families in the integration process, fostering of the associative movement around employment while encouraging viable projects in the vicinity and the establishment of collaboration with public and private economic agents committed to the integration of Roma.

- Actions focusing on the analysis of job posts and the search for employment. Work involving labour market prospecting and the monitoring of job offers is undertaken while also offering a mediation system to companies with a view to matching supply to demand.
- Actions supporting the hiring of workers, facilitating information and technical consultation.
- Labour market accompaniment initiatives. Follow-up and support of those who have just begun to work to make sure they are able to keep their jobs.



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- Collaboration agreements with businesses to undertake training sessions linked to business activities (internship training in companies, training with a commitment to subsequent employment).
- Actions to support protected employment initiatives and integration companies whose purpose is to create situations serving as a "springboard" from which to make the transition to mainstream employment through the acquisition, in a protected labour environment, of experience and the technical and social skills needed for later integration into the ordinary labour market.

The session also analysed the ACCEDER team composition and each workers' profiles: coordinators, counsellors, mediators and enterprise intermediators.

The Standard ACCEDER employment team

1. A multidisciplinary team.

In order to provide a comprehensive response to the labour situation of programme beneficiaries, the team is comprised of different figures/duties and a combination of different professional backgrounds thus ensuring an economic vision of the labour market and coverage of the social aspect responding to the needs of beneficiaries.

2. A team featuring the Labour Mediator

Mediation acts as a bridge connecting the Roma population and helping them to overcome difficulties gaining access to public resources, encourages social participation and is instrumental in providing adequate information on the deficiencies, problems and needs of this population.

3. An intercultural team

Having both Roma and non-Roma professionals on the ACCEDER team helps establish greater trust and understanding between the two groups helping to close the gap and fostering communication between programme beneficiaries and the technical personnel.

The intercultural team helps the Roma population to overcome some of the barriers they come up against in taking part in the mainstream training and employment circuits by encouraging:

- Communication and the sort of language used by the technical team.
- Greater insight into the Roma culture and its idiosyncrasies.
- Better match between supply and demand and between beneficiaries and technical personnel to help keep them on their employment pathways.
- A decrease in prejudices and stereotypes on both sides having regard to Roma integration into the salaried labour market.
- The fine-tuning of programme actions to the needs of the Roma population.

4. Gender balance

The Programme strives to balance the number of women and men on the professional technical teams given that the actions target Roma men and women. The presence of women on the professional teams encourages young Roma beneficiaries to initiate their



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employment pathways which they otherwise might not do if faced with only male technicians, especially if they do not know them.

1. 4. Complementary actions and communication policy.

During this session, a description of all those “other” elements that build up the ACCEDER programme was carried out. These other elements refer to the communication strategy, both with the Spanish society in general and with the public administration cofinancing the programme and collaborating entities. This session was conducted by José Sánchez, Head of the Employment Department and Benjamín Cabaleiro, head of the Communication Area from FSG.

Complementary actions refer to:

- Dissemination and visibility: among Roma community, enterprises and public administrations
- Transparency: By participating at Follow-up Committees with Administrations; by developing Intermediate and Final Results Evaluation
- Studies and research to acquire further knowledge on the socio-labour situation of Spanish Roma and comparing it with the overall Spanish population. Creation of a Monitoring Centre for Employment and Roma to keep track of developments happening in the access of Roma in the labour market.
- Production of materials.
- Seminars and Courses. Training and sensitising of social intervention practitioners. More than 350 seminars developed and more than 69.000 participants, both from NGOs and administrations.
- Raising awareness. Magazine Gitanos, Pensamiento y Cultura; Newsletter “El Secre”; ACCEDER Web. Sensitising Campaigns.

Special attention was given to the Awareness raising campaign designed by the FSG under the ACCEDER programme. The three-phase campaign can be seen at www.gitanos.org

Emphasis was given to the importance of combining sensitising campaigns with direct intervention programmes; these two lines of action are fully complementary. The focus on working along with very professional publishing companies along with avoiding campaigns that try to blame the general society for being “racist or discriminatory” were also highlighted.

1. 5. Insights from the point of view of partners: public administrations and companies

This session was conceived to provide a different and complementary point of view of the ACCEDER programme on the side of the public administrations that cofinance and collaborate with the programme as well as of the companies that also take part in it.

A wide range of administrations were pres

From the local level:

- City council of Avilés (north of Spain), the Head of the Social Inclusion Programme.
- City council of Madrid, the General Directorate of Equal Opportunities. Governmental Area of Family and Social Affairs.



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From the regional level:

- Regional Government of Andalusia (south of Spain), Employment Department.
- Regional Government of Navarra (north of Spain), General Directorate of Social Affairs.
- Regional Government of Galicia (north of Spain), the Head of Social Inclusion Unit.

The national level (General Director of Social Policy, Ministry of Health and Social Policy) had already been present at the opening and welcoming of the study visit.

The speeches highlighted the close collaboration that the ACCEDER programme has achieved with many administrations and that is so much needed for the success of the programme itself. Many administrations claimed that the ACCEDER was not a specific scheme address to Roma but a specialised resource within the overall administration provision of services.

They also emphasized their shared will to support employment schemes such as the ACCEDER in the long run, meaning renewing cofinance agreements (some of them have annual, some others biannual and some others four years long financing agreements).

Another key element was the administration involvement, not only on the side of the Social Services departments, but also, and very importantly, of the Employment and/or Economic departments, within the same local or regional administration. This fact contributed to the understanding and assumption of Roma issues as Citizens issues within the own administrations. As an illustrative example: if ACCEDER is dealing with access to employment, Employment Departments should understand the support to this programme as part of their role and tasks. This multiple-department participation launched by the ACCEDER has fostered great coordination and synergies within the administrations themselves.

The close relationship with administration not only applies for financial issues, but also for complementarities. This has been different according to the locality, but there are cases where this close collaboration has lead to the integration of the ACCEDER scheme within the Employment Service at regional level (Andalusia). This means, for example, referral of Roma beneficiaries searching for jobs directly to the public employment service according to established criteria. The search for efficiency at regional or local level irreparably needs of real complementarity, in terms of social and employment practices, in terms of training of public practitioners, etc...

It also has to do with close follow up through the setting up of indicators and follow-up committees on a regular basis. In fact, in several cases, the relationship established through the ACCEDER leads to new projects in areas where no action was taken before.

Some debate took place regarding the relevance and the role of the European Commission regarding social and employment issues as well as equal treatment. It was agreed that the EC instruments such as directives but also others, have a direct effect on the local and regional level and helps Politian to give a greater push to social issues to become priorities.

To finalize an enterprise took the floor and highlighted the close and useful relationship they have with ACCEDER in terms of mutual benefit. The added value of working with nation-wide enterprises was also commented.



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2. Study visits to ACCEDER office “in the ground”.

The second day of the study visit participants were divided into three smaller groups in order to see in detail the local teams and their daily work, as well as the ACCEDER tools. They travelled to Córdoba, Madrid and Valladolid. The criteria suggested for such division was each participant's interests to focus on a specific topic, namely:

Córdoba: training schemes with enterprises
Madrid: Enterprise intermediation in a big city
Valladolid: labour insertion of beneficiaries with social income

The visit structure was the same for the three teams: presentation of the ACCEDER team and brief explanation of the agenda. Presentation of 3 study cases based on the interest that these persons' individual pathway could have for illustrating the ACCEDER methodology. A balance between positive and negative elements in the process were taken into account and highlighted. In some case the beneficiaries themselves explained their own labour processes. Job description of the ACCEDER staff was also described in detail.

Explanations of some of the specific working tools of the ACCEDER teams were also given. A final block for an in depth analysis on the specific topic was also provided, followed by participants discussion. There was high participation in all groups during all sessions. Both in Valladolid and Córdoba there were representatives of public administrations welcoming or closing the sessions. Debate also took place with them.

2.1. Visit to Córdoba

They firstly visited the centre where the local team remarked the importance of a proper use of different spaces to follow a complete individualised pathway of insertion: first contact, interviews, trainings and counselling, internships, etc.

The team offered a general overview of the lines of action undertaken in Cordoba and the timing used for each one:

- employment (individualised integration pathways, elaboration of Curriculum Vitae, preparation of selection interviews, tools for active search of employment)
- training (information and referral to external professional / occupational training schemes and training courses within enterprises)
- social intervention (assistance in housing, equal treatment and no-discrimination, educative actions) and
- actions with Roma from the Eastern Europe (identification, updating, support and assistance in health, housing and other social resources, implementation of the programme “Temporal Housing”).

Representatives from enterprises that offer temporal contract were also present at the meeting and explained their collaboration with the ACCEDER programme and the training undertaken as preliminary selection. They assured that the training they provide it is certified by a diploma that may well serve for other enterprises in the same sector in case this enterprise does not end up hiring the total number of trainees.



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After having heard the work sequences by the local team, and the experiences of three beneficiaries and the enterprises proposals, EURoma representatives put forward the following questions:

1. What is the ACCEDER added value in comparison with the public unemployment services?
2. Which mechanisms are put in place to avoid the precarious labour contracts?
3. How many enterprises have hired ACCEDER beneficiaries? Have all of them signed an agreement with the FSG?
4. Who has political will in the area for the social inclusion of the Roma population, and how the FSG promotes the coordination with the public administration at political level?
5. How can be sustainable such long individual pathways of insertion?
6. How the FSG in Cordoba will replicate the housing programme with Roma from the Eastern Europe?

There was much debate and exchange of opinions around all these questions. As a summary, some of the positive aspects underlying the success of the ACCEDER programme seemed to be: The good and broad partnership carried out in order to develop the ACCEDER strategy; technical specialization; well organised tools, follow-up mechanisms and, above all, the commitment and devotion within the FSG team.

2.2. Visit to Madrid

The sessions started by describing several study cases based on beneficiaries with different backgrounds, different employability diagnosis and, therefore, different stages within their personal employment pathway. The variety of cases showed how the ACCEDER methodology has to adapt itself to individual needs and how employment can be finally achieved in cases where previous distance with the labour market could be seen as insuperable obstacle. Such was the case of some beneficiaries with a criminal record, addiction to drugs and complex family relationships.

Through this various examples, the ACCEDER methodology could be seen in concrete terms:

- How dissemination of the programme was carried out
- How individual employment pathways were designed and followed up through time
- The work undergone with the immediate environment of the beneficiaries (parents, couples, other relatives...)
- The network strategy for collaborating with other organisations needed for a comprehensive and integrated approach
- The ACCEDER team internal communication to coordinate actions (mediation, guidance and counselling, enterprise intermediation....)
- The role of the intercultural mediators

Special attention was given to the work carried out by the Enterprise intermediation service within the ACCEDER team. A more in-depth description of the working process was described, combined with concrete examples regarding different types of collaborating enterprises. A



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variety of collaborations take place: from those enterprises signing agreements for training and further hiring of trainees, to those enterprises just wanting pre-recruitment processes...

Many questions were made by participants and a vivid debate took place.

2.3. Visit to Valladolid

This group specifically tackled those beneficiaries receiving social income. This fact is not so widely undertaken in other ACCEDER teams although all of them have several cases like the ones discussed in Valladolid. In Valladolid they have signed a special agreement with Social Services in order to specifically address this profile of beneficiaries.

The focus on people with low employability was stressed for those who receive social income subsidies. For these cases, somehow exceptional, employment pathways have to mix training, employment seeking mechanisms and self esteem courses. The coordination among stakeholders (administration and local organizations) is completely necessary not only for adapting the resources to the individualized profiles but also to assure the autonomy of beneficiaries which will shorten the subsidiary perception.

The EURoma group in Valladolid had the opportunity to visit the office where the local team carries out the daily work which includes: interviews, designing individualised employment pathways, support for interviews, training and counselling, internships, among others. It was stressed out that persons perceiving social income usually need integral support in many diverse areas as housing, education, neighbour intermediation, equal treatment and sensitive fields as gender violence or legal advice, etc.

Cases from two beneficiaries of ACCEDER were presented by the team, and the EURoma participants had the chance to talk to one of the persons, hearing his experience from first hand.

Afterwards, representatives coming from local and regional governments participated in the study visit in order to explain their collaboration with the ACCEDER programme and the difficulties and benefits of this initiative. In this part, it was remarked that this programme, on one hand, is really close to the people, adapted to the needs of the citizens and makes a good use of all the available resources. But on the other hand and due to the fact that people benefiting from this intervention hold very low employability, the pathways might become very long processes.

The main concerns of the EURoma representatives after having heard the work sequences by the local team, the pathways of two beneficiaries and the governmental representatives were in connexion with the following: budgetary and efficiency issues, coordination with other private and public resources (mainly training), sustainability of long and individualised insertion pathways, social income vs. active policies.

There was much debate and it was mainly agreed that despite the fact that the specific programme analysed could be conceived as a great investment with a relevant budget, it was stated that sometimes is the proper way to break the circle of poverty of low income families. Finally, all participants agreed that the commitment and the devotion transmitted by the FSG teams is one of its most relevant values.



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3. Final feedback session: analysis of key point of the Programme and debate about its transferability

The last day, participants got together again and, with the support of a given questionnaire provided by the Technical Secretariat, they did a round of interventions highlighting those elements that had been of greater or lesser interest for them.

Participants agreed that the study visit had been of great value to them, since it had provided them with in-depth and concrete on how an employment scheme for Roma actually works in order to achieve success.

Discussion around the most outstanding elements of the ACCEDER programme could be summed up as follows:

- The establishment of such a strong partnership and the synergies generated at local and regional level
- The integrated approach through the itineraries, dealing with the economic/employment issues but also with other social elements
- The long term approach
- The nationwide dimension
- The professionalised teams and the high personal commitment and involvement of FSG workers.
- The integration of intercultural mediators as part of the working teams (and methodology).
- Flexibility and adaption to individual needs
- Awareness raising campaign as a complement to direct intervention on the ground.

On the other hand, the weakest elements were considered to be:

- The low quality jobs that Roma beneficiaries were having access to
- The scarce impulse of the education sphere within the ACCEDER strategy (very much focused on access to employment when the education part could be considered as also necessary and preventive for future low qualified Roma workers searching for jobs).
- The real sustainability of the programme in the long run and its real mainstream. In this sense some participants warned about the possible danger of being inefficient by duplicating resources when developing targeted programmes at the same time there are mainstreamed ones.
- The danger of maintaining a Roma-targeted programme too long.

Nevertheless, transferability of the programme was seen rather complex due to different reasons, mainly related to the context in a broad sense. Indeed, Member States' contexts differ to a great degree from the Spanish context in terms of economic situation, but also of political will. The situation of the Roma communities themselves was also seen as a major difference with the Spanish case (in some MS, such communities are strongly segregated and/or living under severe/moderate poverty conditions where essential needs are lacking). In some other cases the inexistence of a national and solid Roma NGO was also seen as deficiency. The ACCEDER strong partnership was also considered to be not so easy to achieve in other MS.

Therefore, for many participant MS, after the study visit further discussion at their national level had to be developed as to analyse which ACCEDER elements could actually fit into their respective contexts, understood in general terms as explained above. Combining ACCEDER elements with other new-more-adapted ones to the given context (i.e. socio-medical services, housing schemes...) could be a way forward.



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It was concluded that despite the fact that no programme can be directly transferred into another context, there are some key elements from the ACCEDER programme with a great transferability potential. The identification of such elements considered being essential in order to achieve good project development and great impact was the essential aim of the study visit.