

# Tools for Improving Employability of ROMA

No 2

Lithuania

## *Project Report*

### Meeting in Vilnius

The second partnership meeting was organised on March 30<sup>th</sup> – April 1<sup>st</sup> 2008 in Vilnius on the subject “Tools of Improving Employability of Roma.” During the meeting partners participated at the international seminar, visited Roma Community Centre and Kirtimai Roma Settlement, private company "Notanga", where some Roma work. At the partnership meeting incentives for the employers were discussed as an important tool for integration of Roma.



### Seminar “Effectiveness of Roma Inclusion into Labour Market: Main Tools and Main Drawbacks”

In March 2008 international seminar “Effectiveness of Roma Inclusion into Labour Market: Main Tools and Main Drawbacks” was organised in Vilnius, aimed to introduce foreign experience to the Lithuanian organisations and policy makers. Seminar was organised by SOPA and Human Rights Monitoring Institute. All the Grundtvig partnership members made presentations, as well as representatives from Spanish organisation Fundacion Secretariado Gitano. Among participants of the seminar were Dutch

and Spanish ambassadors, representatives of Lithuanian Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Vilnius city and Ukmerge municipalities, NGOs and other interested parties. For the organisation of the seminar additional sources of financing were attracted from Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Vilnius city municipality.

Read more about the presentations of the seminar in pages 2-5.

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## Labour counselling for Roma: Slovakian experience

Laco Oravec from Milan Šimečku Foundation presented experiences from Community Innitiative EQUAL project "Local Labor Counseling Centers – a New Service for Marginalized Groups".

### Main targets of the project where:

- **Definition of obstacles** inhibiting Roma from successful entry into the job market, tools to their elimination and promotion of anti-discrimination policies in public policy;
- **Creation of the Net** of Local Labor Counseling Centers (LLCCs) and provision of its operation;
- **Increasing the capacities** of local governments in creation employment opportunities for Roma population

During the project, 10 LLCCs entered the common Net. Centers were mostly run by local NGO's with coordinating and fundraising support from project partners. LLCC workers were continuously educated in social and technical skills.



Slovak partners Laco Oravec and Julius Pecha

### GOOD EXPERIENCES of the project:

- **Clients want to work**
- Work is being perceived as a factor for **improvement of life standards**
- People who went through the service **are more interested** in search for jobs, even individually without help of labor counselor
- Service is possible only in **cooperation with state institutions** (employment office); it is not a competitive service to state services but complementary
- **Cooperation** between Centers is useful (e.g. sharing data on employers...)

### BAD EXPERIENCES of the project:

- Clients often **leave the work** after few days (based on long-term unemployment habits, personal troubles, etc.)
- Offered income in combination with low education and experiences level is often in conflict with income based on social benefits (often **it does not pay off to work**)
- Expectations of clients (mainly about income) are often **higher than their education level**
- Clients often **do not know to operate** with modern technologies
- Certain percentage of employers show openly **discriminatory approaches**

*"Roma want to work"*



Local Labor Counseling Centers in Prešov County

## Incentives for employers: case of the Netherlands



Director of FlexPay  
Rob van Maanen

Rob van Maanen from Flexpay presented 2Track construction used in the employment of long-term unemployed (or other persons with integration problems). The model focuses on the incentives for the employer: first 6 months of employment 40 % of the salary is paid by employer and 60 % comes as a benefit from the state social security system. Gradually, as the person acquires more working experience and skills, the contribution of the em-

ployer grows up - from 6th to 18th months of working contract employer pays 60% (social service system - 40%) of the salary, from 18th to 24th months - employers contribution reaches 80% of the salary.

This flexible system can serve as an example of support for employer who is taking risk to employ person from vulnerable groups and keep him/her at work.

*“We never look at what someone cannot do, but instead what person CAN DO”*

## Development of entrepreneurship: case of WerkAdvies (the Netherlands)

Motto of WerkAdvies is "Doing business has nothing to do with making money. Money is a result of doing business". According to the vision of WerkAdvies entrepreneurship may be learned, so the company helps in this process by focusing on each individual, and providing one-on-one supervision.

The basic steps of work with the client were introduced at the conference by the director of WerkAdvies Gerpiet Wicherts.

At the beginning of work with the person who wants to start his/her own business, various tests (Behavioural, Learning style test, qualities, interests) are used in order to make assessment of the person. On the basis of the test results, combined with the information which is obtained during the counseling interviews, counselors draw up strengths and weaknesses analysis which serves as a foundation for a training programme, geared towards the entrepreneur's specific qualities. So

the vision of the business is developed by developing skills of the client and training practical knowledge about doing business. When the business plan is made (including costs, revenues, investment, marketing) it goes to the stage of feasibility study to examine the idea. Once the business starts, WerkAdvies continues to provide the client with supervision and counseling.

The total process of preparations leading to a successful company takes from 3 to 9 months. However, the best training for an entrepreneur is practical experience. For this reason WerkAdvies continues to support the entrepreneur during the first year his/her company is in business ranging from 6 to 12 months. WerkAdvies also provides incidental support to its clients during their second and third year in business when it is needed.



Director of WerkAdvies  
Gerpiet Wicherts

## Overview of Sinti and Roma situation in the Netherlands

Jan Karpies, the director of Foundation for the Rehabilitation of Sinti and Roma (Stichting Rechtsherstel Sinti en Roma) presented the situation of Sinti and Roma in the Netherlands. He pointed the general picture of the Sinti and Roma in the Netherlands:

- Roma and Sinti have little or no participation in the Dutch society
- There is a great deal of mutual bias and mistrust between these population groups and the Dutch people
- They live and work mainly in their own community and use their own language
- There is a very limited contact with Dutch citizens
- Very few families are capable of supporting themselves financially
- They suffer from isolation and exclusion and there is insufficient self-organisation to solve this.
- And most of the people have little faith in a good future.



## Integration measures of Veldhoven municipality (the Netherlands)

Femke van Schaik, the Customer Manager of Efficiency at the *Employment, Income and Care department* of the municipality of Veldhoven presented some municipal integration policy measures for Sinti and Roma.

In 2005 Veldhoven municipality, together with other educational institutions and NGOs launched a literacy and activation program for young Roma. The program aims to provide social participation opportunities for young Roma. The main element in this project is literacy, and in addition to computer skills and practical skills, classes to prepare them for work-placement positions so that these young people may be educated about all of the elements involved in finding work, and informed of the opportunities available for them on the job market.

Young people are attending school in 3 blocks of 12 weeks of classes, 10 hours

per week. They receive lessons in Dutch in which they will work on different methods, depending on their language skills level. There is also a section on math and reading skills. A section on computer education is also offered, as well as components involving Social Skills, during which individual possibilities and skills will be examined, providing them with insight into what they want and are capable of. They are also participating in classes to prepare them for work-placement positions.

The students also attend classes in an elective subject. This is a subject which allows the young people to learn about a wide variety of topics such as cooking, making jewellery and clothing, health, sports etc. By offering these sections, trainers are trying to give this group better prospects for the future, hopefully resulting in paid employment for some of Roma.

*“Their motivation is increasing once they see what they are learning”*



**Seminar participants**



Raúl Bermúdez and Dolores Villarrubia, Fundacion Secretariado Gitano

## SOCIAL AWARENESS-RAISING CAMPAIGNS



CAMPAIGN ( 2004-2005)  
Get to know them before judging them



CAMPAIGN ( 2005-2006)  
Prejudice means letting others put words in our mouths



CAMPAIGN ( 2006-2007)  
Employment makes us equal

## Social inclusion of the Roma through labour integration: Programme ACCEDER (Spain)

Fundation Secretariado Gitano is a nonprofit inter-cultural social organisation which provides services for the development of the Roma community throughout the whole Spain. The representatives of the organisation were invited to the seminar by the Human Rights Monitoring Institute and supported by Spanish.....

At the seminar Raúl Bermúdez and Dolores Villarrubia presented program ACCEDER run under the European Multi-regional Operational Programme Fight Against Discrimination. From year 2000, 48 Work Centres in 13 Spanish Communities were established. Work centers had work teams each consisting of team coordinator, 1 or 2 labour counsellors, social worker, la-

bour market intermediary, intercultural mediator. Total 260 team workers works all around the Spain.

The methodology used by work teams was based on:

- **The individualised approach:** initial diagnosis of each person's employability. Personal labour market integration pathway
- **Intercultural approach:** Action mostly (but not exclusively) target the Roma population (70% Roma and 30% non Roman)
- **The mainstreaming approach:** mainstreaming is the ultimate goal meaning that specific actions are implemented targeting the use of mainstream services both in terms of employment and vocational training resources

## Some quantitative and qualitative results of the program ACCEDER (2000- 2007)

- 35,304 beneficiaries of the program
- 26,014 jobs found (3,227 people who found their first job)
- 13,902 people trained by the FSG
- change of mentality regarding the roma population's access to salaried employment (from the side of beneficiaries, employers and the society at large)
- increased level of training and professional qualification of the beneficiaries
- increased degree of employability of the beneficiaries
- improved living standard of the roma population (access to mainstream services)
- impact of the programme's complementary actions and products (the monitoring report, survey-research, and the awareness-raising campaign etc.)
- the eradication of stereotypes and the improvement of social perception of the roma community
- created partnership network (management systems, mutual learning and experience sharing / national, regional, local, administrations, businesses etc.)
- sustainability (financial support from administrations and private entities)
- guidelines for labour insertion methodologies and tools adapted to the target group designed and elaborated.

## Vilnius Roma Community Center



The public institution Vilnius Roma Community Centre was founded in 2001, as a result of implementation of the State Programme of Roma Integration to Lithuanian Society for 2000-2004. Founders of RCC are Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad to the Government of Republic of Lithuania, Vilnius City Municipality, NGOs Lithuanian Chil-

dren's Fund and Lithuanian Roma Organisation "Gypsy Fire."

The whole spectrum of activities is offered which serve the interests of children and adults: for example, language courses of Lithuanian and English, as well as computer literacy are available at the Centre. The special attention is given to develop art abilities of Roma - there are music and art lessons. Sports, holidays and parties for children and parents take place at the Centre.

The Centre implements the Day Centre programme, the Crime Prevention Programme for Children and Teenagers, arranges summer camps. Due to these state programmes workers, teachers and specialists try to improve social status of young Roma.

At the moment there are two pre-school classes for children at the age of 5 to 10, in which Roma assistants help children and teenagers. Great attention is paid on consulting and information of adults. Consultations on legal issues have begun since May 2002. At the Centre, Roma community members receive support on social questions.

From March 2004 the sanitation block (shower cabins, laundry) has opened near the Centre. The Centre helps to solve variety of daily problems which occur between Roma and the mainstream society.

Work that is being done at the Centre is a living example of struggle against discrimination and intolerance.



**Concert at Roma Community Centre**

*Population of Roma in Lithuania is up to 3000 people*

### Situation of Roma in Lithuania

In 2001, 2,571 persons declared themselves to be Roma/Gypsies. However, the census may not have reached all Roma and the actual number could be higher, at around 3,000. Roma live throughout the country, but the largest and most impoverished group of settlements (population approximately 670) is located in the outskirts of Vilnius, near Kirtimai. There are some Roma who, for various reasons, do not have official papers and who therefore experience difficulties in obtaining full citizenship rights. However, the vast majority of Roma have citizenship and their employment problems are not caused by the lack of formal rights.

## Kirtimai Settlement

Located in the outskirts of industrial district of Kirtimai, behind the Vilnius airport, Roma settlement consists of about 500 inhabitants in nearly 100 scattered houses, most of which are wooden, have no sanitation, and water is only available from a few outdoor pumps. The population here suffers from poor housing standards, unemployment, and lack of opportunities to find alternatives to crime, such as drug-trade.



Vilnius Kirtimai Roma settlement

*About 500 Roma live  
in Vilnius Kirtimai  
Roma settlement*

The formation of this Roma settlement is believed to date back to the 1950s. However, there is only one building which has legal registration that is used as an official address of all the Roma living around. Persistent housing problems and unregulated status of the settlement have been criticized by international observers such as ECRI. In a declared attempt to prevent the growth of a drug-trading settlement, Vilnius municipality demolished a few buildings in December 2004 – an act that is still being disputed in courts.

The Grundtvig partners discussed the role played by active municipal policies in partner countries, and debated how Vilnius municipality could find ways for positive contribution in solving the problems caused by a long-term social exclusion. With regard to employability, active mediation and increased participation of social workers was seen as a priority.



Vilnius Kirtimai Roma settlement



Roma from Kirtimai settlement meet international delegation

## The Law on Support for Employment

The Law on Support for Employment took effect on August 1st, 2006. The basic rationale for this law is Lithuanian, as well as the European Union, labour market policy which seeks „full employment of the population, to reduce their social exclusion and to strengthen social cohesion“. The main institution responsible for oversight and funding of this law is Lithuanian Government.

Although the law targets the whole population it recognizes various groups and individuals which are disadvantaged in the labour market and are considered „additionally supported“, such as the disabled, long-term unemployed, pregnant women, those addicted to drugs, people over 50 years of age and so on. In terms of Roma employment the law could be applied under several categories, such as long-term unemployed or people released from the imprisonment facilities. Various social support programmes that the law intends to implement includes provision for integration of ethnic minorities into the labour market. However, in practice, such programme did not materialize yet.

The implementation of the law largely falls under jurisdiction of the Ministry of Social Security and Labour as well as various national and local agencies. The main institution which directly deals with the unemployed is the Lithuanian Labour Exchange and its local offices. In order to use the benefits of the law a person must register at the local labour

exchange. The Labour Exchange, as well as other relevant institutions, informs employment seekers about their options and offers, if needed, various services such as provision of information, counselling, and employment intermediation.

In regard to employers, the law provides incentive system. Various subsidies are offered to employers who employ unemployed or create additional workplaces, depending on form of contract employers are able to offer. The law in particular encourages creation of workplaces that are suited for the disabled and could offer open-ended contracts. Subsidies cannot be larger than official minimum wage and are offered for a period of up to one year. Other measures of supported employment include professional training and public works.

The law also provides support for self-employment. The labour exchanges offer necessary information and training in establishing small business. Subsidies are offered when new workplace is being created.

Although Roma are not specified in this law, it allows numerous opportunities for their employment. Whether through contract employment or self – employment subsidies offered by the government and local municipalities, as well as recognition of people who are socially excluded, allows the legal and financial support in seeking and maintaining Roma employment.

**“Lithuanian labour market policy which seeks full employment of the population, to reduce their social exclusion and to strengthen social cohesion.”**



Public institution SOPA is a non profit organisation, active since 2006. The mission of the organisation is to ensure equal opportunities for socially excluded people to participate in work and social life. The core activity is job mediation services for people from socially vulnerable groups (such

as people with disabilities, long term unemployed, Roma). The mediation is organised according to the Supported Employment model which consist of skills assessment, job search, job analysis and matching, job coaching and after care when the person is employed. The individual counselling of the unemployed and mediation between the person and employer/ working environment is of the great concern for better insurance that the person not only get a job but also maintain there.

### **Pilot Test of Supported Employment Model for Unemployed Roma**

During the project SOPA tried to use model of supported employment to help unemployed Roma to enter labour market. It was partially based on the experiences learned from the partnership meetings. Supported Employment is a process consisting of the following stages:



## 1. Engagement

The core values of this stage are to provide accessible information in an appropriate manner and to support the individual to use the information and experiential learning to make informed choices.



### *Example*

Job mediator met 26 years old unemployed Roma who had difficulties to find officially paid work. He had only informal work experience in construction. Because he never attended school he could hardly read and write, and had very limited imagination about the range of possible job places for him. For the meeting job mediator brought about 10 job ads printed from the Internet. Together with the client they looked through the proposals, and this helped to clarify what kind of jobs the client wants to try. This activity also engaged the Roma himself because he saw range of job offers available in the labour market, real possibilities for him, requirements etc.

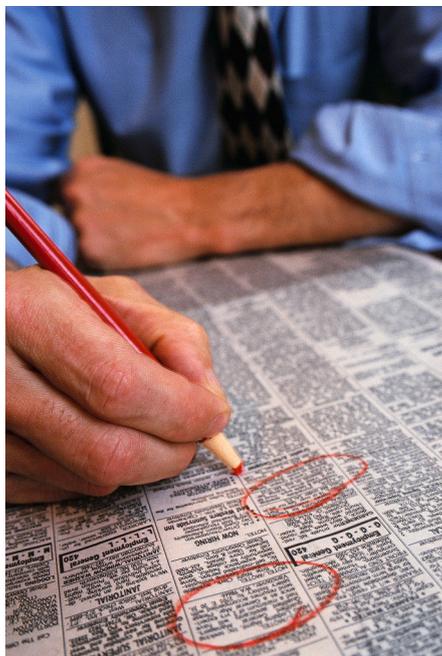
## 2. Vocational Profiling

The activities in this stage will provide an insight into aspects of the individual's skills, abilities, strengths and weaknesses and will produce a detailed profile of employment related issues that will influence the remainder of the process. Supported employment gives job seekers the opportunity of actively selecting a job compatible with their interests, aspirations, needs, conditions and background experience. This planning process is based on an empowerment approach, in which participants are encouraged to make their own career choices and participate in the design of their own work project, in accordance with their interests and vocational aspirations.

### *Example*

Job mediator was called by the Roma woman who was looking for work. At the first meeting it was clarified that Roma woman is looking for job, but doesn't want to work as a cleaner or dish washer as it is offered by the labour office. She was recently released from prison with the condition that she would register at the labour office and look for job. Roma woman is very keen to be hairdressers, but doesn't have minimum level of education to attend hairdressing courses offered by the labour office. The job mediator helped to contact with the labour office and find appropriate hairdresser courses. Job place at the supermarket was offered to the client as well. Roma woman was highly motivated to learn hairdressing and successfully

### 3. Job finding and analysis of job place



Job finding is a key stage where the activities involved can influence employers and secure employment for job seekers. There is no one best way to job search and Supported Employment providers must consider a range of activities that best suit the needs of the parties concerned.

Different methods of job search were used trying to employ Roma: compiling CV, responding to job advertisements, going for job interviews, calling employers directly.

### 4. Employer Engagement and job matching

The activities in this stage depends on what format the engagement or meeting with the employer takes. Potential areas to be discussed include:

- ◆ Skills/experience required by employer
- ◆ Hours of work
- ◆ Terms and Conditions of employment
- ◆ Workplace culture
- ◆ Support required by job seeker
- ◆ Support available from Supported Employment provider
- ◆ Support available from employer / co-workers
- ◆ Awareness training for employer and co-workers
- ◆ Health and Safety requirements
- ◆ Availability of funding and support through Government Programmes
- ◆ Guidance and advice to employers regarding their obligations / responsibilities under legislation.

#### EXAMPLE

Job mediator, together with the unemployed Roma went to a job interview for the work of dish washer in a cafe. Job interview was held by the owner of the cafe who presented the nature of work, explained that the dish washer is also responsible for cleaning of premises. Roma woman has only 1 month of work experience as a dish washer. Nevertheless the owner showed the kitchen, introduced the staff. Roma woman was offered to come tomorrow to see and try the job for half a day.

At the interview job mediator helped to clarify details about the work and introduced job seeker. Also potential support from the Labour Office according to the Law for Supported Employment was introduced to the employer by the job mediator.

## 5. On/Off Job Support

The levels, amount and forms of support to be provided will depend upon the individual's needs, abilities and employment situation. Support is a key feature of supported employment and is present at all stages of the process. Professional support should gradually fade and be replaced by support from co-workers. The levels of support and fading strategy should be planned and reviewed with co-workers, employer and the individual. The provision of On or Off the job support enables the individual the opportunity to learn and perform appropriately, to be part of the work team, contribute to the company culture and also assists with career progression. It also provides the employer with a support mechanism and provides co-workers with knowledge and understanding, this in turn assists the development of natural support in the workplace.

### EXAMPLE

Roma woman with the help of job mediator found job at the supermarket as a helper in the kitchen.

On job support was provided by the employment mediator:

- Help to get medical book

- Contact with bookkeeping department regarding salary

- Communication (direct and by phone) with the boss about the problems at work, cases of absence

- Supporting the client to adapt to the workplace and keep motivated

- Identifying opportunities for career progression





## New Project "Face Roma: Innovative Measures for Roma Participation in Labour Market"

The concrete outcome of the Grundtvig learning partnership seminar was established partnership with UNDP Lithuania resulted in large ESF project

### Aim of the project

To improve employment situation of Roma in Lithuania by providing individual support for Roma community members to get job and maintain at the working place or to start own business.

### Project activities

- Integration of Roma into open labour market (engagement, individual support and employment, job support, after care)
- Support to start own business: individual counselling, registration, documentation, after care
- Social work with community/family members: children care, documentation, development of social skills
- Promotion of positive image of Roma
- Development of the model of employment of Roma based on the experience of three countries (Lithuania, Netherlands, Spain )



First seminar for project staff



### Project partners



## Final partnership meeting

12th-15th July the sixth and the final Grundtvig partnership meeting was held in Vilnius. 13th July the seminar in Vilnius Social Support Center **Reduction of social exclusion of Roma: international experience** was organised where partners introduced their partnership experience to the social workers and job mediators. Representatives from Vilnius Labour Exchange and the Department of National Minorities and Lithuanians Living Abroad under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania were also invited to the seminar.



14th July the meeting at Roma Community Center was organised where partners finalised the project. New projects for Roma employment were presented. Partners also discussed roma.lt website and measures of Roma self-employment.



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## Grundtvig Learning Partnership

The Grundtvig Learning Partnership is a framework for small-scale co-operation activities between organisations working in the field of adult education in the broadest sense. The partnerships focus more on process, and aim to broaden the participation of smaller organisations that want to include European cooperation in their educa-

tion activities.

In a Grundtvig Learning Partnership trainers and learners from at least three participating countries work together on one or more topics of common interest to the co-operating organisations. This exchange of experiences, practices and methods contributes to an increased

awareness of the varied European cultural, social and economic scene, and to a better understanding of areas of common interest.



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