SEDRIN

"School Education for Roma Integration"

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www.sedrin.eu

"Empowering marginalised groups through education and training
in the Danube Region"
Workshop 4 – Awareness Raising and Networks focusing on Roma

Vienna, 2/10/2014

The project

SEDRIN-*School Education for Roma Integration*
was implemented in **7 countries** (Greece, Cyprus,
Romania, Hungary, Italy & Spain,) and
co-financed by the Lifelong Learning-Comenius
Programme of the European Commission

Some facts

According to research data, about 50% of the Roma children around Europe do not complete their primary education. Some of the main reasons identified for this are that Roma parents may lack information about school and parenting skills to support their children's language and social development.
In addition, the social environment in which the Roma children live is often very different from the social environment they have to work within at school.

The SEDRIN consortium aimed to improve pre-school preparation that Roma children receive. In addition, through the empowerment of Roma women by providing them with relevant training this preparation and support will continue into the first classes of elementary school.
Roma women were selected because they live in the same environment with the children, and so they can better understand the constraints faced by the children.

These Roma women received training in order to acquire the skills, tools and methods required for them to be able to effectively prepare Roma children to attend elementary school.

The partnership

- Action Synergy S.A. – GREECE
- European University of Cyprus-CYPRUS
- Roma Women Association in Romania-ROMANIA
- Idea Rom Onlus - ITALY
- Federación Maranatha De Asociaciones Gitanas - SPAIN
- The Former State Fostered Children's Association – HUNGARY
- SDL (Secretariado Diocesano de Lisboa da Obra Pastoral dos Ciganos)-PORTUGAL

OBJECTIVES & AIM

General Objective:
To prevent early school "dropout" of Roma children

Specific Objective:
The empowerment of the Roma women to prepare their children in order to go to school (both social and practical preparation)

OBJECTIVES & AIM

More specifically:

➢ The SEDRIN project aimed to develop and implement in practice a methodology for the training of the Roma women on how to prepare better their children to make them better cope with their school environment.

➢ After the end of the training, these Roma women were able to practically implement the skills acquired by providing training to Roma children.

TARGET GROUPS

- ➢ Roma Women (5 in each country)
- ➢ Roma children (20 in each country)
- ➢ Intermediary organizations (such as Roma associations, Roma women associations, NGOs working in the field) : 3 in each country
- ➢ Other stakeholders (educational authorities (1), local and regional authorities (1), training institutions (3), pedagogical experts (3))

BENEFICIARIES

The project benefited two main communities of users:
- the **final beneficiaries** (**Roma women, Roma children**) and
- the **other stakeholders** (**schools, training organizations, local authorities etc**.).

The Roma women benefited since they developed their parental skills and their ability to support effectively the Roma children in their school environment. This increased their active role in the community and their ability to support their children. The Roma children also benefited since they were able to receive support from members of the community that are very close to them and thus the support was more direct and more efficient.

The schools are also benefited since they were able to establish a better communication with the Roma mothers. They were also made available a methodological tool that could be used for the organisation of more training activities for the Roma women. In addition to that they received support in their effort to increase the school performance of the Roma children.

OUTPUTS

➢ Methodology for training Roma women & children

➢ Organisation of training for Roma women

➢ Organisation of training for Roma children

➢ Practical implementation of the skills acquired by the Roma women by organizing training of Roma children sessions. The training of the Roma children are going to be performed by the Roma women.

IMPACT

- ➢ Roma women acquired practical skills and knowledge in order to prepare their children to attend school.
- ➢ Increased the potential of the Roma children to cope better with the school environment

WORK PROGRAMME

➢ 1st Phase: Initial Research and Development of Methodology

➢ 2nd Phase: Training workshops for Roma women

➢ 3rd Phase: Organisation of training for Roma children

RESEARCH

Desk Research

focused on the **history** and the **education** of Roma
in each partner country

Findings:

- **Historically, it appears that the Roma population in Europe arrived from Asia Minor and passed to Europe through the Balkans, most possible from Greece, Serbia, and Moldova.**

▪ With regards the Roma language, the Greek & Romanian research highlighted one important element reflecting the Roma language: that the **Roma language is characterised by a strong oral status, as a result to the absent of a writing status**. Consequently, the lack of a written language may have resulted in a limited general interest for formal education.

▪ In Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Hungary and Portugal **the Roma are referred to mainly as "Gypsies"**. The 'Gypsy' terminology comes from the **Greek word 'ατσίγγανος' (atsiganos)**, whose original meaning is "untouchable". In Romania, the Government agreed to modify the Roma population name from "Gypsy" to "Roma" due to the fact that the word "Gypsy" is consider as a pejorative name. Similarly, in Hungary there is a tendency to avoid the word 'Gypsy' too, as a negative reference.

Desk Research

General conclusions:

▪ Educational inclusion of Roma: **educational marginalisation**, along with **strong discrimination** are the most important themes derived from each country's research report.

▪ The majority of Roma children bring in the school their family main **adopted values**.
However, it seems that **these values are not the ones required to succeed in school and they are not the ones expected in order to adjust properly in the school system**.

Field Research

Purpose:
To identify the main real-life educational needs of the Roma women and the Roma children (pre-school age up to the first classes of the elementary school).

By exploring the educational needs of each of these two target groups, the research aimed to support Roma women in improving their children's pre-school preparation with the intention to attend school in the long term.

Research Design:
Multiple research methods such as
- Individual interviews
- Focus groups interviews
- Observation (pre-school centers, Rom bazar, Roma settlements, neighbourhood, primary schools, etc.)

Field Research

Research Questions:

Question 1-What are the training needs of the Roma children?

This research question investigates the factors relating to the early school drop-out of the Roma children, revealing the needs of the Roma children in correlation to their regular school attendance.

Question 2-What are the training needs of the Roma women?

This question investigates the Roma women real needs in order to support their children to systematically attend school. The purpose is to identify all the information, support and guidance needed in order to assist the Roma women towards the support of their children's school attendance.

Desk & Field Research
summarised common findings

Five common pillars were identified, based on each country's Roma context:

1) school issues
2) health and living conditions issues
3) financial issues
4) cultural issues
5) language issues

Desk & Field Research
summarised common findings

1) school issues

▪Roma parents seem to have a negative approach towards their children's school education, thus resulting in poor levels of academic achievement (Greece, Romania, Cyprus)

▪Roma children in most countries are dealing with discrimination and racist attitudes, affecting their school adjustment (Greece, Italy, Cyprus)

▪In some countries significant measures have been adopted and the school enrolment rates of Roma children are very high (Hungary, Portugal)

▪ Roma parents commence to understand the importance of the school education and are willing to address new ways for their children to attend the school and for them personally to get involved in the school (Spain)

Desk & Field Research
summarised common findings

2) health and living conditions issues

▪ Roma face difficult living conditions and deal with various health issues

▪ Low living quality conditions, marginalization, health matters, and the general social life in their local community affect the children's school attendance (Romania, Spain, Cyprus)

▪ Lack of specific instructions with regards to Roma's children vaccinations is widely present (Greece)

▪ The Roma are discouraged of seeing school as a priority also due to the unpleasant experience of living in a camp, under insecure conditions (Italy)

3) financial issues

- Poverty is a major negative factor affecting all Roma in all the countries

- Roma children in a very young age often assist their parents in their job in order to survive financially, thus neglecting the importance of school education (Greece)

- Most of the Roma parents cannot acquire all the necessary school supplies (uniforms, schools, general supplies) for their children (Greece, Spain, Italy, Romania, Cyprus)

Desk & Field Research
summarised common findings

4) cultural issues

- Early marriage custom, a familiar cultural tradition amongst the Roma

- Early marriage is a clear obstacle for Roma's school attendance, leading to school abandonment (Greece, Portugal)

- Roma parents seem to avoid to send their girls to school in the fear of an attack either by insult or harassment

- Lack of Roma's cultural knowledge leads to deteriorating relationships between Roma students and their teachers. In most countries, teachers lack knowledge of the social background and the culture of their Roma students

Desk & Field Research
summarised common findings

5) language issues

▪ Roma parents are facing linguistic difficulties

▪ Roma parents' low educational level relates to their children's non-systematic school attendance

▪ The Roma uneducated parents who lived their lives on the society's margins have not developed educational aspirations and do not easily acknowledge the importance of the school role

▪ Roma parents' illiteracy influences their school communication and their contacts with the school staff and the rest of the parents (Portugal, Spain)

Lifelong Learning

Conclusions

▪Financial difficulties lead to the discouragement of seeing school as a priority for Roma children

▪ Roma families are living in poor conditions

▪ Children lack necessary studying space at home

▪ Low living conditions lead to various hygiene problems

▪ Roma are marginalised and face discrimination in the school setting

▪ Teachers and classmates share low or wrong background information on the culture of Roma

▪Marginalisation along with some signs of discrimination leads to early school abandonment

▪Roma parents do not send their children, and especially girls, (due to the fear of an attack or harassment, custom of early marriage)

Conclusions

Nowadays, Roma parents:

- commence to understand the importance of education and are willing to participate in programmes like the SEDRIN!

- are in favour of their children's education!

TRAINING METHODOLOGY

Training Methodology Manual basic aspects

- Basic literacy and other skills
- School necessary procedures and obligations
- Directions and information for specific services
- Directions and information on parents' involvement in school
- Information on how to deal with stress and anxiety as well as how to recognise and overcome discrimination
- Increase students' self learning
- Activation and empowerment of Roma parents

Training Methodology Manual

Ccomposed of 2 workshops:

Workshop I- ACTIVATION AND EMPOWERMENT OF ROMA WOMEN

- **Provided Roma woman with all the information, directions and assistance to support their children to go to school, as well as to acknowledge Roma women's necessary presence in the school involvement process if aiming to ensure longer term retention of Roma children in school.**

Module 1: Basic and general skills and support
Basic skills (set of cards)
Directions and information for specific services (set of cards)

Module 2: School support
School procedures and obligations (booklet)
Involvement in school (booklet)

Training Methodology Manual

Workshop II- EMPOWERMENT OF ROMA CHILDREN

- **Enhanced Roma children school attendance by praising the school importance and increasing students' self-learning through games and stories.**

Module 1: Appraisal of school importance
Attending school regularly (story, pictures, games)
Reading and homework (games)
Pressure management (tips)
Discrimination and bullying (stories, tips)

Module 2: Increase of students' self learning
Students' self learning (tips)

- The Training Methodology manual was used **selectively**, in a **flexible** way and the trainers were encouraged to select modules and topics which best suited Roma needs in each of the countries' context.

- Choices between some activities/and or adaptations of those that do not apply in the country context were applied.

Training Methodology Manual

More analytically:

The Training Methodology manual was based on the example of Cyprus, however it was not necessary to be followed blindly. On the contrary during the piloting the trainers used **alternative approaches** depending on the needs and particularities of each partner country.

Partners created and applied in some cases their **own information-training contents and methods.**

The training suggested in the manual took place in various locations depending on the facilities of the partners, and in most cases not in schools.

All alternative approaches were recorded, justified and incorporated in the Final Methodology Manual-Handbook.

PILOTING

Training Roma Women
Workshops for Trainers

In order to better prepare the Roma women to support the Roma children in staying in school and successfully attending classes, the following activities took place:

1. Based on the training methodology developed a training session with the participation of all trainers from partner counties was initially held in Lisbon. The methodology was thoroughly presented and explained. The trainers were given the opportunity to question and apprehend the training approach suggested.

2. The trainers trained in Lisbon then trained others. Workshops for trainers were held in all partner countries.
This maximized the impact of training.

Trainers workshop
(Greece)

Training Roma Women

The project was targeting different categories of Roma in order to be able to implement the results in different settings and draw useful conclusions from this diversification.
Therefore, in **Greece,** in **Romania,** in **Portugal** and in **Hungary**, the emphasis was given to established Roma communities with low socioeconomic status, in **Spain** the focus was given to more integrated Roma communities and in **Italy**, the focus was given to immigrant Roma communities living in camps.

The training of the Roma women was successfully completed by the whole partnership. The partners started the training activities in all the partner countries and organised special workshops for this purpose around the same.
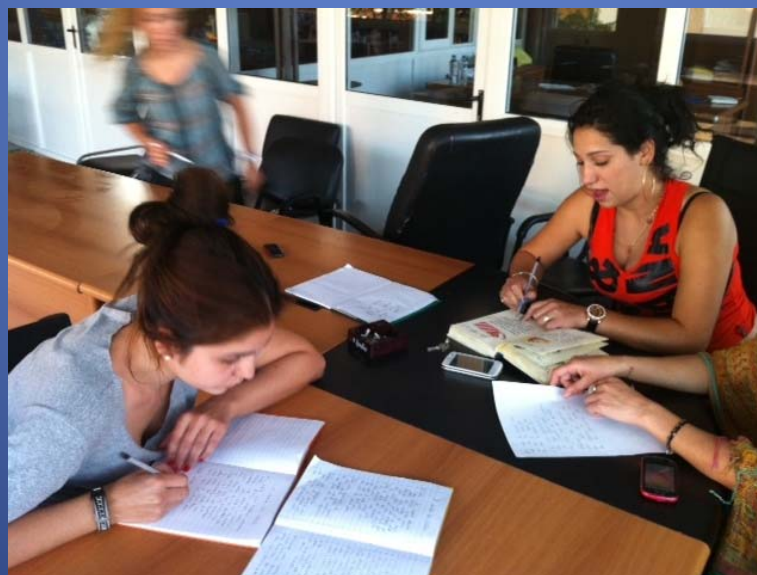
Training Roma Women

In some countries, such as Greece, an emphasis was given to increase the literacy skills of the Roma women since this is a main precondition in order for them to be able to support their children in school and the results were very positive.

Training Roma Women

interesting facts

- Across the partnership **77 Roma women** successfully completed the training programme.
- Minimum 30 hours training sessions per partner country
- Partners could adapt and add materials and tasks. The training programme aimed to increase the confidence of the Roma women who participated
- The training sessions were evidenced by videos and photos
- The training period mostly coincided with the school year in order to make the Roma women able to communicate better with school teachers, to deal effectively with the teacher.
- Romania: The Roma women will be both from traditional community and non traditional community.
- Spain: The training was realized in a place near the community. The training was mainly focused on young women (20-25 years).
- Italy: Roma women were both literate and illiterate, traditional and non traditional.
- Portugal: The training is going to take place in SDL. The women trained were literate, mothers of kindergarten children.
- Hungary: The training sessions were organised in the community house by experienced teachers. The Roma women who were trained were illiterate and became literate.
- Greece: The workshops started earlier in order to motivate the women to register their children in school. They were illiterate or partly literate. The training sessions were held in a school (in collaboration with the municipality).

Action

SEDRIN

Lifelong Learning

Training Roma Women

Spain

Hungary

Italy

Romania

Portugal

Greece

Organisation of training for Roma children

- Across the partnership the **77** Roma women that successfully completed the training programme resulted in **144 children registering in schools** and currently **125** still attending.
- The training was based again of the developed Training Methodology Manual
- The training activities carried out, depended on the needs and conditions at a national/social context.
- The training sessions were held in schools, recreational centers, Roma association centers, outdoors etc.
- School Attendance during the piloting was 84%
- School Retention after pilot: 75%

Training activities for Roma women & children

History lesson

Museum visit

Mother & child working together

Obtaining ICT skills

Outdoor activity

Training activities for Roma women & children

Ready for class!

Outdoor activity

Crafting

Happy to be in class!

Went to the cinema

Health issues training

DISSEMINATION & EXPLOITATION

Dissemination and exploitation are a very important part of the project:

- The project has developed a website (**www.sedrin.eu**) and has linked the project's website with major websites related with Roma education and Roma Integration
- The project is using for dissemination purposes a **Facebook page** (**https://www.facebook.com/pages/About-Roma/184914831665003**)
- Another online dissemination tool used by the project is the blog (**http://aboutroma.blogspot.gr**) which, following the model of the Facebook page is also shared between these 3 projects.
- It has been presented in international Conferences by project partners and in transnational meetings of other project the partners participate in.
- In the Project SEDRIN (along with TERNO) has obtained the patronage of the Italian Ministry of Education (July 2013).
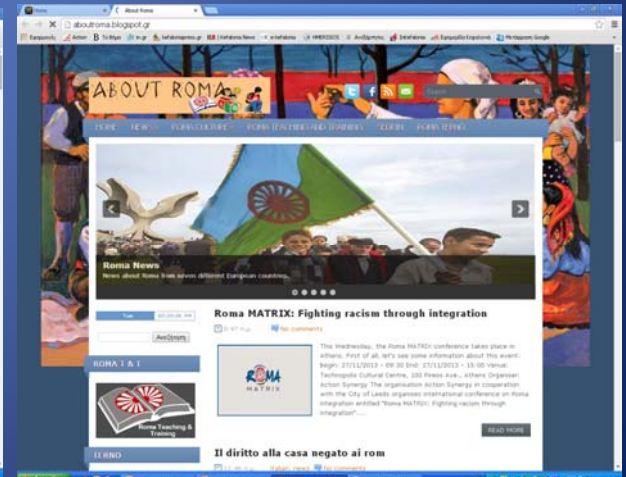
To conclude

The multilateral Comenius SEDRIN project is really making a difference. The project recognises the Roma communities as equal partners in the project, and that using their assets can only add value to what the school and the wider community is able to offer.
The SEDRIN project has developed and piloted a new training programme to train Roma women to support their children in being registered at school, attending school and adhering to their learning in and outside of school.

The training programme also helps mums to address racism and bullying that might take place, and have the confidence to be able to address such issues with the relevant authorities in school. The ultimate aim is to ensure as many Roma children as is possible attend and are retained in primary school and are then able to successfully move into secondary level.

Thank you for your attention

For more information you may also contact:

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