



Erasmus+, KA3: Initiatives for policy innovation –
Social inclusion through education, training and youth
Project number: 580228-EPP-1-2016-1-SI-EPPKA3-IPI-SOC-IN
3-year project: 31 December 2016–31 December 2019.
Project countries: Slovenia, Germany, Spain, Italy, FYR of Macedonia, Turkey

RoMigSc – WP2 Initial Study - National Reports

National Report Spain – Executive Summary

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About the Project.

The main aim of the RoMigSc project is to support a better integration of Roma and migrant children in education through various activities that stimulate innovative policy development, policy dialogue and implementation, as well as the exchange of knowledge in the fields of education, training and youth.

Project Goals. The project, which is funded by the European Union in the scope of the Erasmus + programme, aims to contribute to:

- creating inclusive and democratic learning environments.
- encouraging youth participation, developing inclusion and outreach practices for young people.
- preventing and combating any form of discrimination and segregation in education.
- fostering mutual understanding and respect among people.
- enhancing the quality of non-formal learning activities, youth work practices and volunteering.

It does so through a number of Key Activities, such as Initial Study, Training for Volunteers, Volunteering Activity, E-Platform on Inclusion in Schools and Intercultural Topics, Training for Teachers, National Seminars for Different Stakeholders.

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These aims are particularly relevant in Spain, because, on the one hand, the inflow of migrant families and individuals from Africa and South America, particularly unaccompanied minors, in more or less legalized situations; and, on the other hand, the presence of a large, stable population of Spanish Roma as well as a number of migrant Roma people from Eastern Europe, have made it necessary to bring in a multicultural/transcultural and progressive perspective to the Spanish educational system in order to provide for the different needs of a quite heterogeneous cluster of pupils. Even though schools are considering this cultural pluralism in a positive way as an enriching value for coexistence, tolerance and respect, they are also mindful of the educational challenge this may pose.

The summary of the initial study at hand points out some main results of the initial study in Spain. A second summary paper will discuss the relevance of the overall findings in all of the partner



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countries, including policy recommendations, for the situation in Spain. The full reports, which provide the information for these summaries, are available through the website of the project.

The main findings from studying the relevant literature and good practices as well as from discussing the topic with a number of key informants (practitioners from schools, relevant administrations, social workers and volunteer organisation staff) are:

- There are over 724,000 foreign students in the education system originally from Latin America and other areas, however their presence has been decreased since 2008 due to the economic crisis that hit Spain and which led the families to return to their countries of origin. This tendency is turning since 2014 (INE, 2016)
- The lack of resources and concepts for vocational education and integration of young migrant adults is tied to a dearth of employment perspectives and weak educational prerequisites. The insecure status of migrants and refugees and weak transition systems to employment contribute to problematic outcomes as dropout and getting involved sometimes illegal activities.
- Unaccompanied asylum seeker children, despite their lately decreasing arrival to Spain, is one of the most relevant and discussed group. While unaccompanied migrant children are taken care of within the general system of youth care and educational support for disadvantaged groups, the situation when they become young adults is more challenging due to the gap between the existing provisions for minors and the adult system and their legal status.
- There is a large Roma population in Spain, made up of traditional, settled Roma families plus immigrants that arrive from Eastern countries. They face a number of challenges regarding the education of their children resulting in absenteeism and dropout, such as a high mobility (nomadism), extreme poverty, unemployment of parents, migration, lack of documentation, ghetto accommodations and the persistence of certain traditional patterns like early marriage.
- Access to this group is perceived as difficult by the professionals. In spite of their generally problematic social situation, progress has been visible in the last years at the primary schooling levels (and some at the secondary levels). Female dropout rates are higher during adolescence.
- The current education laws proclaim universal equality, favoring inclusive education in the schools and the attention to special educational needs, but no distinct policy for Roma other than the generally used social and education policies are reported.
- Access to mandatory education is free. However, there is a need to increase the expenditure on public education, scholarships, pre-schools, school texts and materials, as well as free school lunch (Save the children, 2016).
- There is a general scarcity of resources for primary and secondary education, considering the expenditure is below average in regards to OECD and EU, and training on intercultural issues dependent on individual initiative. This means that, although progress is visible, especially in terms of improvements, the system is weak in terms of actual multicultural orientation and shows a lack of awareness for Roma culture on the side of educational staff.
- Involving the disadvantaged groups in inclusion initiatives is a precondition to success, even though there is a distinctive shortage of Roma and migrant role models in schools for the children to refer to. Promoting the presence of Roma professionals in the schooling system is now a priority.
- Volunteering in Spain is a growing phenomenon, with over 29000 organizations offering support, including universities, public sector and NGOs. Volunteering is getting a qualified



Inclusion of Roma and Migrants in Schools
Trainings, Open Discussions
and Youth Volunteering Activities

<https://romigsc.eu>



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and qualifying perspective, as a means for acquiring work competencies and experience in a country where the unemployment rate is still high.

- Fighting social exclusion is a less popular field of volunteering engagement vs human rights, ecology, etc. Innovative forms like “cyber volunteering” are also in high demand.

Good Practices. The initial study has identified a number of good practices targeted at building good contact to migrant parents, forming inter-professional and inter-agency support networks and volunteer engagement to assist migrant, refugee and Roma children. **Good practices presented in the report include:**

- **“A cuatro bandas” (“Four way Mediation”):** Its aim is to create a working and living climate that may improve educational performance and human formation of the students, particularly those in higher risk of social exclusion. It targets the improvement of social integration of Roma and migrant children in school through a multi-sided approach. By IES Virgen del remedio, IES Gran Vía, Asociación Labor (management), Obra Social CAM and Obra social La Caixa.
- **“El colegio de la Reina” (“The Queen’s school”):** The goal of this gaming/storytelling activity is to make children realize that learning/studying will allow them to gain access to a better future. By the Social Services of the Alicante city hall.
- **“Vol+ skills”:** A certification program of the skills acquired while volunteering, together with volunteering organisations in a triangular partnership (institutions, volunteers and tutors) in order to promote, among other things, the employability of those who volunteer. By the Spanish Platform for Volunteering.
- **“Programa Promociona” (“Promote Program”):** Its aim is to ensure that Roma youths complete compulsory education and continue to study in order to reduce the number of early school dropouts and improve access to the labor market of the Roma community by promoting equal opportunities and educational standardization. By Fundación Secretariado Gitano (Gypsy Secretariat Foundation).