



Generalitat de Catalunya
Departament d'Educació

LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL COHESION PLAN

Annex 1: pupils from the Gypsy community

Contents

<u>Introduction</u>	3
<u>The curriculum and the Gypsy community</u>	4
<u>Local Plans with specific action and the Gypsy community</u>	5
<u>Training staff at the Department of Education</u>	8
<u>Specific projects in schools</u>	9
<u>Working with other organisations and setting up networks</u>	11
<u>Language: Romani / Calo</u>	13
<u>Immigrant Gypsy pupils</u>	14

Introduction

Although the Gypsy community has been present in Catalonia for over 500 years, relations and communication have not always been smooth and even today, stereotyping and social prejudice, largely due to ignorance, can be found in our society. Clearly, the upshot of this is that members of this community face social exclusion.

Over the years the Gypsies have preserved their own characteristics and shared values as a community. However, they have also changed, finding ways of forging bonds in order to live in varying social contexts and fitting in to new situations and environments without losing their own identity.

Nevertheless, the major changes that our society is undergoing are having a knock-on effect on the Gypsy community; society is becoming more complex and there are new forms of social exclusion and inequality. Large gaps and differences within the Gypsy community are arising because of disappearing cultural traditions and mounting poverty among their community in general. Any action taken must therefore be universal and, at the same time, specific to each and every situation.

In full knowledge of this, the Department of Education believes that resolute action must be taken in the field of education. Intercultural education in the classroom can help to create the right educational opportunities for all pupils, in a context of dialogue and coexistence, thereby contributing to breaking down stereotypes. Education can prove to be a powerful tool in bringing about equality and social cohesion and can make a positive contribution to getting the Gypsy community fully involved in social life and able to enrich it with their own values.

To this end, the Department of Education is planning the following action in relation to the Gypsy community:

- Encourage non-Gypsies to learn about the Gypsy culture
- Enable all segments of the Gypsy community who live in poverty and marginalisation to fully integrate in society
- Foster participation among both Gypsy pupils and their families
- Work directly with the Gypsy community to help them preserve their identity and values
- Set up training for teachers on intercultural education, research and innovative teaching

This action is part of the Department of Education's **Language and Social Cohesion Plan**, which aims to achieve educational, social and cultural integration for all pupils in Catalonia regardless of their origin or social condition. It also falls within the wider universal framework of the **Comprehensive Plan for the Gypsy Community**, which has been set up by the Generalitat (regional government) of Catalonia.

It is important to note that all of this will only be possible with full participation, collaboration and input from the Gypsy community.

The curriculum and the Gypsy community

Despite having lived side by side for many years, there is still a lack of knowledge among most Catalan people regarding the cultural wealth inherent to Gypsies. Unfortunately, a culturally-exclusive approach to teaching has in the past prevented any part of Gypsy culture from appearing on the national curriculum. Today, however, new intercultural perspectives on teaching have shown us the importance of including the Gypsy culture on the curriculum if we wish to achieve quality in education and an all-embracing system which fosters dialogue, participation and real coexistence that will pave the way for successful social cohesion in the future.

General aim:

Increase knowledge of the Gypsy community among the entire Catalan population.

Specific aims:

Include the cultural wealth of the Gypsy community on school curricula and dissipate all related prejudice and stereotypes.

Ensure that the specific needs of Gypsy children are catered for as part of providing intercultural education.

Make sure that school insertion schemes cater for the specific needs of Gypsy children.

Supply schools with materials to teach relevant aspects of the wealth of Gypsy culture.

Promote teaching materials and textbooks that include aspects of Gypsy culture and do not reinforce stereotypical ideas.

Areas of work:

Draw up standards and guidelines for the curriculum.

Draw up standards and guidelines for intercultural education.

Draw up guidelines on insertion schemes aimed at the entire educational community (teachers, families, auxiliary staff, non-teaching staff, etc.) and monitor such schemes.

Draw up and supply specific materials for curricular areas (for both pupils and staff).

Draw up a protocol for publishers.

Local Plans with specific action and the Gypsy community

The major changes taking place in our society that are giving rise to new causes for social exclusion and widening social gaps are most keenly felt by the members of the Gypsy community who live in poverty and marginalisation.

In particularly poverty-stricken areas, the social fabric of the Gypsy community has been broken down by a societal structure that has marginalised it on the basis of antiquated prejudice and stereotypes. Direct action on all fronts is therefore called for in order to meet the learning needs of children in these socio-culturally depressed communities, in addition to specially designed Local Plans in areas where the percentage of Gypsy pupils is high.

General aim:

Foster the integration of members of the Gypsy community who live in poverty and marginalisation.

Specific aims:

Carry out a diagnosis of educational action undertaken in the context of the Gypsy community in order to establish best practices and share successful experiences.

Ascertain what life is really like for Gypsy pupils at school in order to define an action map and areas of work.

Promote specially designed Local Plans in socio-culturally depressed areas where the percentage of Gypsy pupils is high.

Tackle specific issues that lead to exclusion from school and society and that have a significant bearing on pupils from the Gypsy community:

- Truancy and dropping out of school
- Gender discrimination
- Difficulties of continuing into further education
- Obstacles to joining the employment market
- Financial strain
- Low level of education in the family
- Deprived surroundings

Areas of work:

Knowledge and analysis of any teaching schemes undertaken and of the bodies and institutions involved in each. Various information points within the Gypsy community and schools will be used to disseminate experiences and best practices.

Ascertain the real situation in towns, regions and schools where there is a significant number of Gypsy pupils.

Promote operative structures that enable specific Local Plans to be set up in collaboration with other departments, local authorities, county councils, Gypsy organisations, etc.

- Phase one: ascertain and diagnose the situation and plan action accordingly
- Phase two: implement system of participation
- Phase three: devise proposals and action to improve the situation
- Phase four: assessment and conclusions

Prevent and tackle truancy and dropping out amongst pupils from the Gypsy community:

- Research data, analyse indicators, put forward proposals for action
- Collaborate and coordinate on local truancy schemes
- Work with Gypsy organisations
- LIC advisors participate and collaborate on planned action in the region and schools
- Train members of the Gypsy community to work in the area as mediators
- Give advice and guidelines to schools
- Foster agreements and/or conventions with associations and bodies aimed at increasing schooling, particularly at compulsory secondary level (ESO)

Encourage Gypsy girls at school:

- Compile statistics on schooling to analyse and propose new action
- Monitor Gypsy girls' progress through school focusing particularly on whether studies are continued and on their academic success
- Allow Gypsy associations, especially those concerning women, access to school premises in order to guide and monitor girls' progress at school
- Set up work and exchange sessions in conjunction with Gypsy women's associations on learning in school
- Put forward proposals on joint action with the Institut Català de la Dona (Catalan Women's Institute)

Promote programmes to help those continuing into further education.

Promote programmes to help pupils who have failed at school join and adapt to the employment market.

Give pupils from socio-economically deprived Gypsy families access to grants:

- Set up ordinary and/or specific award schemes for:
 - Grants to buy materials and textbooks
 - Subsidised school dinners
 - Grants for schools to offer complementary and extracurricular activities
 - Grants to continue into further education
- Monitoring by LIC advisors and EAP (psycho-educational advice team) social workers to ensure that information on award schemes reaches all families

- Liaise with Gypsy associations and bodies to follow up this issue
- Reinforce extracurricular activities that favour the socio-educational inclusion of boys and girls from the Gypsy community.

Promote specific programmes on family education (literacy, professional careers workshops, Catalan classes, household economics, food, teaching children, conflict resolution, etc.).

Work with other departments, local authorities, county councils, Gypsy bodies, etc. with regard to programmes to prevent and tackle deprivation in the area:

- Hygiene/sanitation programmes and health education
- Stopping abuse
- Crime prevention
- Monitoring cases of family abandonment
- Others

Training staff at the Department of Education

Training teachers and other professionals involved in education who provide schools with guidelines and advice is unarguably one of the keys to meeting the learning needs of not only pupils from the Gypsy community but indeed all pupils.

This will enable an inclusive approach to teaching based on fostering interaction between all pupils, on relationships, coexistence, dialogue, tutorial mentoring and so forth. It also entails providing intercultural education that is underpinned by respect for minority cultures and giving all pupils an equal opportunity to achieve academic success.

General aim:

Boost training on intercultural affairs for education professionals, increase their knowledge of the wealth of culture in the Gypsy community, provide them with tools to break down prejudice and stereotypes and give them strategies and instruments to help them give all pupils an equal opportunity to achieve academic success.

Specific aims:

Ensure training for LIC advisors on the wealth of culture in the Gypsy community and on any specific issues that must be considered within schools.

Advise teachers in areas with high numbers of pupils from the Gypsy community.

Promote training and awareness among social workers and other education professionals from the Department of Education.

Areas of work:

Awareness-raising and training workshops.

Offer courses as part of the ongoing training scheme in the area.

Devise and implement training schemes.

Specific projects in schools

It is incumbent upon schools to fit education plans to the needs of their own pupils. In order to do so, they must look at the unique nature of their students and actively involve the entire education community, particularly the parents.

For this reason, the Department of Education is aiming to back specific innovative projects within schools that increase schooling among Gypsy children. This contributes to both the children and the families having greater involvement with the school and to them achieving similar results at school as their non-Gypsy classmates.

General aim:

Promote academic success and the involvement of Gypsy pupils and their families in the school environment.

Specific aims:

Foster strategies and specific innovative projects in schools that increase schooling among Gypsy children.

Promote ways of getting Gypsy families to participate and be involved with the school and of taking the school closer to the Gypsy community.

Cultivate meetings for families in schools with pupils from various backgrounds that encourage schooling among Gypsy children.

Encourage training for Gypsy parents so that they can raise awareness within their community on the importance of school and motivate others.

Areas of work:

Push forward school projects for community action and/or an inclusive approach to teaching that will have a positive impact on motivation and classroom learning among Gypsy pupils.

Draw up strategies to address and curtail failure at school: adapt lesson contents, patterns for school organisation, alternative methodologies, tutoring, etc.

Forge ties and collaboration with task forces among education professionals, associations, universities, and so on, who undertake studies and research that help to increase academic success and Gypsy pupil and family involvement in the school environment.

Set up workshop-courses aimed at furthering relations between Gypsy and non-Gypsy parents and at them addressing certain school-related issues together.

Set up training courses for particularly supportive Gypsy parents so that they can motivate others:

- Parent-teacher relations in the Gypsy community
- Importance of school to achieve social inclusion
- Schooling and gender (specific focus on Gypsy girls)
- Participation and collaboration of Gypsy parents with the school, reinforcing communication and dialogue
- Conflict management

Working with other organisations and setting up networks

There would be little sense in attempting to set out guidelines on school education for Gypsy boys and girls without seeking collaboration and input from Gypsy organisations. We believe therefore that the Department of Education should be in permanent contact with Gypsy organisations to draw up joint plans of action which contribute to raising awareness among Gypsy families on the importance of school for their children and which ensure that schools themselves adapt to the needs of these children.

On this issue it is important to bear in mind the geographical proximity of the Gypsy community, which is the product of alliances between families, and therefore to make contact with the closest organisations that will have the most direct impact. However, we must also seek out collaboration from Gypsy organisations and associations from further afield that are active in the rest of Europe and include organisations that may not belong to the Gypsy community but are renowned for their research and work with it.

General aim:

Set up interactive networks of coordination and collaboration with Gypsy organisations or others that work in this field.

Specific aims:

Promote regular working sessions involving the Department of Education and Gypsy organisations.

Promote the creation of networks with organisations and associations from the Gypsy community and non-Gypsy organisations working in this area.

Promote collaboration with organisations on a European level with regard to promoting the Gypsy community.

Areas of work:

Set up regular working sessions involving the most representative organisations and associations from the Gypsy community in order to analyse, assess and monitor schooling of Gypsy children.

Set up networks over the Internet to disseminate educational programmes in this field and to promote knowledge exchange and information transfer.

Promote the creation of permanent communication channels via the Internet with regard to teaching pupils from the Gypsy community.

Set up regular sessions with professionals from universities, experienced members of the Gypsy community, foundations (Pere Closa, Jaume Bofill, etc.) and others, aimed at addressing school-related issues in the Gypsy community.

Define specific areas of collaboration with the Yehudi Menuhin Foundation, the FAGIC (Federation of Gypsy Associations of Catalonia), the Pere Closa Foundation and other Gypsy associations.

Language: Romani / Calo

Recognising and valuing one's own identity is the foundation for interaction – one of the core elements in a framework of intercultural education.

The Department of Education, highly sensitive to recognising and valuing pupils' mother tongues, believes it important to support Gypsy associations and bodies that promote knowledge of the Gypsy language: Romani / Calo.

General aim:

Contribute to the Gypsy community being able to preserve its own identity and values by implementing direct action.

Specific aim:

Promote knowledge of the Romani / Calo language among pupils from the Gypsy community.

Areas of work:

Help to set up extracurricular Romani language classes for pupils from the Gypsy community.

Immigrant Gypsy pupils

Mobility amongst the Gypsy community has been greatly increased since the recent enlargement of the European Union which has enabled some families from Eastern Europe to move to Catalonia.

These immigrant Gypsy families often face a barrage of difficulties related to a lack of familiarity with their new environment, communication problems and their deprived social and financial situation. Specific action is therefore called for to welcome pupils from these families into our schools, in collaboration with Gypsy bodies and associations.

General aim:

Favour optimum socio-educational insertion for immigrant Gypsy boys and girls.

Specific aim:

Set up insertion and schooling schemes for immigrant Gypsy children and monitor their progress.

Areas of work:

Implement specific insertion schemes in areas that are host to large numbers of immigrant Gypsies.

Provide interpreters/guides in areas where these collectives live.

Set up local working tables wherever necessary, led by the education inspector with education technicians, local authorities and immigrant associations or representatives.

Targeted monitoring carried out by advisors and education technicians in the area in order to detect, prevent and address possible shortfalls related to specific learning needs.

Award grants in cases deemed necessary.