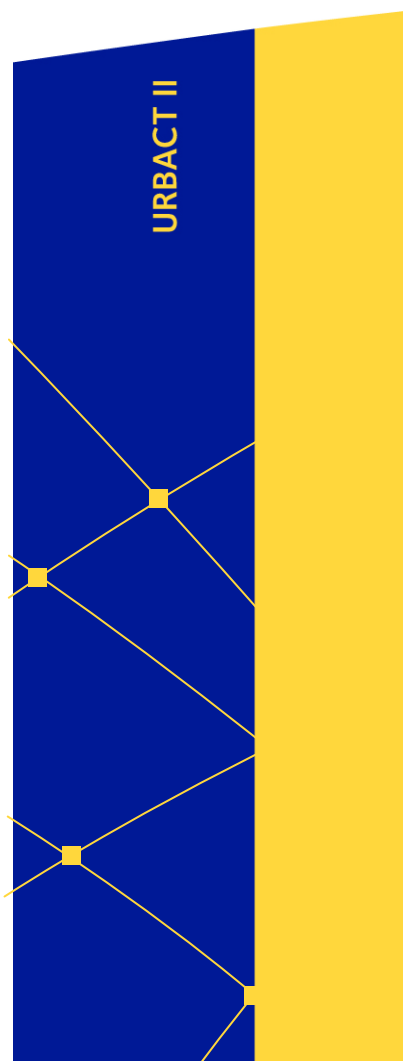




# ROMA-NeT

## Newsletter N°3

January 2012



Bologna - Italy



Bologna-Italy

## LEARNING CLUSTER EVENT IN BOLOGNA 27-29 September 2011

### Building a transitional labour market

#### Dear Reader,

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This is the third newsletter of ROMA-NeT URBACT II project. The central theme of learning cluster 3 meeting in Bologna was: **Building a transitional labour market** – creating, supporting and using an intermediate labour market; the role of the social economy/ social firms; social accounting. The questionnaire filled by partners before the meeting showed a diverse picture: some cities knew what an intermediate or transitional labour market was and had applied it; but some cities had never heard the term but had experience in delivering employment and training initiatives, but only a few stated that these initiatives had been inclusive and successful at getting the Roma people into sustainable work.

As for social accounting only two partners knew what it was and only one city stated that social accounting was built into the majority of programmes developed at city level.

City representatives arrived with many interesting questions about the cooperation and role of the public and private sector, the role of social incentives, the effectiveness of repressive measures, and how to motivate Roma people towards work and to make employers more accepting, etc. This is how we tried to find answers to our questions.

### Roma mass exclusion from the labour market

**Ann Morton Hyde, Lead Expert**

It is a combination of complex factors that are responsible for the very high and concentrated levels of Roma unemployment. Low education no qualifications; out of date skills; living in settlements with poor transport links; isolated communities with limited access to jobs or information about jobs. Individually each one is a real barrier and obstacle to entering the labour market. But many working

age Roma face a combination of these barriers which makes them virtually unemployable and unable to secure any type of formal employment. On top there is the added impact of direct and indirect discrimination and the negative stereotyping about Roma which makes unemployment and labour market exclusion an insurmountable problem for many working age Roma.



**Roma unemployment is a complex phenomenon, it is difficult to remedy given the multi-layered and inter-generational elements<sup>1</sup>, but Cities cannot afford to ignore the problem.**

In 2004 the development economist Hector McNeill reported that 'Roma-specific unemployment, or underemployment, has created endemic economic under-performance of the economies of Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia. Since then things have not improved and whole communities of Roma people are negatively affected by mass unemployment, poverty and poor living conditions. All of which are intensified by the ongoing economic crisis, the rise in general unemployment, increased discrimination and negative press attention on Roma. The added pressures on social service, welfare benefits and training for employment budgets all significantly increase the risk for Roma of remaining unemployed and living in poverty.

Often Roma people are held responsible for their own situation, the Draft Joint Employment Report 2004/2005,<sup>2</sup> recognises this –

*“The burden is often placed on individuals to adapt rather than addressing wider issues of discrimination in society at large. The Roma or migrants often seem to be portrayed largely as responsible for their labour market exclusion”.*

This situation results in even worse treatment of Roma people and the lack of encouraging policies on the national level.

Roma people living in the ROMA-NeT partner cities are seriously affected by unemployment, often long term unemployment and systemic exclusion from the labour market and from jobs. Practitioners from the Partner cities who have experience and learning to share in this field were invited to participate in the third ROMA-NeT transnational learning cluster and to work with experts on the following overall theme of **Building a transitional labour market** – creating, supporting and using an intermediate labour market; the role of the social economy/ social firms ; justification using social accounting and audit.

<sup>1</sup> European Roma Rights Centre, The Glass Box - Exclusion of Roma from employment, 2007, <http://www.errc.org/db/02/14/m00000214.pdf>

<sup>2</sup>Communication from the Commission to the Council - Draft Joint Employment Report 2004/2005 {SEC(2005)67} <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2005:0013:FIN:EN:DOC>

#### **Key Information about Roma Labour Market Exclusion :**

- The vast majority of working Roma, men and women, operate in the segment of the labour market which provides low skilled, low paid - menial work.
- Historically Roma men did hard labouring jobs, in the construction industry and the like, but without good quality employment data there is no way of knowing, apart from the visible evidence of Roma men digging the roads, if this is still that case.
- Qualified employed Roma don't have access to the same range of job opportunities as their non-Roma counterparts. Even when Roma are well educated with good qualifications, the employment opportunities open to them tend to be within a relatively narrow field of Roma related public service opportunities or in the NGO sector.
- In many instances formal mainstream employment is not an option for Roma people. Roma are liable to suffer discrimination regardless of how well qualified they are for the job.
- Discrimination impacts on the employment opportunities of qualified Roma, many are trapped in their current positions, and feel they would not be considered for any other position except another Roma related job.
- In the same way that the 'Glass Ceiling' was used to describe the invisible factors that limited the progress of women and ethnic minorities into senior positions, it would seem that the Roma predicament is even worse. Roma who are in work find their opportunities to progress upwards or in a new direction are severely limited. Almost like they are restricted by an invisible 'Glass Box'.
- A glass box excludes Roma from gainful employment, denies Roma access to major segments of the labour market, blocks Roma from having access to well-remunerated work, isolates Roma at the workplace, and secludes Roma into segregated work arrangements dealing solely with Roma issues.

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## Bologna hosts ROMA-NeT's third cluster meeting - 27 to 29 September 2011

ROMA-NeT is a European project, financed by the URBACT II programme. It promotes the transfer of policies, project-making, planning and good practices on integration of Roma populations.

Participation in ROMA\_NeT has definite "capacity building" results for operators working in the field of inclusion and integration. The trans-national exchange activities provide learning and help partner Cities to develop local actions that meet local need by drawing on shared good practice and development experience of other members. It also encourages Cities to co-produce a Local Action Plan with a focus towards EU structural funds or other European funds relevant for the implementation of the actions identified.

ROMA-NeT Cities have already set up their Local Support Group (LSG) which includes the local players already working in various ways on Roma-related matters. They are responsible for co-production of the Local Action Plan which brings together and builds on their existing expertise. The plan should also be accepted at a political level.

A total of ten European cities participate in ROMA-NeT which is coordinated by the Municipality of Budapest; Budapest itself and Bologna are joined by Karvina(CZ), Kosice (SK), Almeria and Torrent (ES), Udine (IT), Glasgow (UK) Nagikallo (HU) and Bobigny (FR) as an associate member.

The Municipality of Bologna is taking part in the project in partnership with the Don Paolo Serra Zanetti Institution for Social and Community Inclusion and the European Projects Office.

ROMA-NeT is dealing in depth with three macro-subjects: the theme of employment, the theme of the involvement of Roma and Sinti populations in order to combat stereotypes, and the theme of housing. The overarching theme for the three days in Bologna was Roma employability and the relevance of an intermediary market for training and development.



After greetings from the Councillor for Social Services, Voluntary Work, Associations and Participation, Amelia Frascaroli and from the President of the Don Paolo Serra Zanetti Institution for Social and Community Inclusion, Prof. Matilde Callari Galli, the city of Bologna illustrated projects in progress on the territory targeted at Roma and Sinti populations. The speeches were at institutional and tertiary sector level.

After examining the situation in Bologna, the real trans-national work began on the theme of the inclusion of Roma people in the labour market. Numerous presentations and laboratories filled the three days of our event.

Bologna organised two study-visits, one to the temporary stay camp in the Savena zone and the other to the CEFAL training centre, to allow foreign guests to see at first hand two representative city entities.

The whole event was very well received with satisfaction by both guests and city operators. Those present were able to work together, to share and compare experiences around one of the central themes – unemployment and discrimination, which remains a strong challenge and a key obstacle to successful integration and inclusion of Roma population in many European cities.

*Manuela Marsano and Viviana Verzieri  
Bologna Municipality and Don Paolo Serra Zanetti  
Institution for Social and Community Inclusion*

## Introduction of Don Paolo Serra Zanetti Institution for Social and Community Inclusion

Our participation, as the “Don Paolo Serra Zanetti Institution for Social Inclusion” of the Municipality of Bologna, in the ROMA-NeT project and in this “Newsletter” in particular, is an important opportunity for us. Important because it is not only fully in line with the institutional aims of the project, it also enables us to test our potential and develop on an international level, to confirm our capacities in the field of communication and research.

A project such as ROMA-NeT, with its strong accent on the processes of social/employment inclusion and on the importance of facilitating the access of young Roma people to the services, is fully within the mandate of our institution. We expect to achieve, from the implementation of the European programme, results that will improve the living conditions of the Roma communities present in the nine cities taking part in the project. In particular those of young adults and their families, together with greater efficiency on the part of the Entities and Associations operating on behalf of Roma populations.

We also expect to receive, from the experiences analysed and the dialogue opened on many different situations, suggestions and stimuli for the more general work done by the Institute in the interests of social inclusion and the fight against discrimination on behalf of the many groups – foreigners and Italians – living on the Bologna territory.

There is only one place where the contemporary world can grasp the dynamics of the transformations that human groups – all of them, rich, poor, nomadic or sedentary – are experiencing, even if in profoundly different ways. This is a place of contradictions, not of the “centres” but of the outskirts, where people negotiate, day by day, their relations with diversities, where practices and policies are compelled to change and redefine themselves. These places display double identities and today’s cultural protagonists are those who cross them, who traverse them, who alternate permanence with nomadism. And the groups of migrants, exiles and refugees constitute, all over the world, the “place” where we can identify these difficult and sometimes antagonistic contradictions.

It is also where we can grasp unexpected cross-fertilisation, new relations of exchange and trust. For there are many peoples that speak more than one language, know and are conversant with more than one culture, are able to dialogue with the differences they continually meet during their lives. People that experience differences by continually relating them to their own identity.

The programmes of a cultural project for Europe should give ample space to an in-depth and direct awareness of the many cultures present today within its borders. Relationships that link the European destiny to that of the entire planet; they should speak of the mergers, of the cross-fertilisation at all levels – from that of communication to those that are biological and those regarding customs and values.

The relationship between ROMA-NeT and URBACT is a guarantee that this programme of “inter-understanding” between the many groups animating the social scene of contemporary Europe will find the means for a comparison and dialogue based upon active participation in the general problems as part of the Local Plan of Action.

In my opinion, one of the greatest problems afflicting the administrators of a city – and hence of its services and ultimately of its citizens – is that they increasingly find themselves compelled to respond locally to global problems. Problems generated by globalization, processes that are determined globally but which require responses that are *also* local. The economic and financial crisis we are undergoing, environmental devastation, unemployment with the consequent social exclusion of large groups, have origins far distant from our cities, but it is within our cities that all this is translated into suffering, unease and discrimination.

I believe that the URBACT programme, with its project to include 181 cities with themes on which to open dialogue and reflections, can be a highly important tool with which to respond to the manifold challenges awaiting us. If we stop to think, the European cultural progress has always drawn on cross-fertilisation on the need for reciprocal actions.

The Europe we must look to now is the Europe that is producing a culture able to mediate between the differences and to make them productive: not the Europe of the “singularities” and the “nations” but





the Europe that has created a culture of humanity because it has been crossed by humanity. Today, in the face of so many phenomena of intolerance, of so many theoretical constructions aimed at making us forget the historical development of Europe, I would like to take leave of this "Newsletter" with the words of Gunther Grass: "When Heinrich Boll was buried there was a gypsy band accompanying his pallbearers. This was his wish.

*M. Callari Galli  
President of Don Paolo Serra Zanetti  
Institution for Social and Community Inclusion*

***"Let a million Roma and Sinti people live among us. We need them.***

***They may help us break down our rigid order a little.***

***They may teach us how meaningless our borders are: careless of borders, Roma and Sinti people are at home everywhere in Europe. They are what we declare we want to be: citizens of Europe".***

## Action learning with the Social Enterprise Academy!

Alan Kay and Jackie Scutt from Scotland's Social Enterprise Academy were the "thematic experts" selected to facilitate the learning.

The Social Enterprise Academy, which was launched in 2004, specialises in professional learning and development programmes focused on leadership, enterprise and social impact measurement. One of its flagship courses, tutored by Alan and Jackie, is an MSc in Social Enterprise delivered in partnership with Glasgow Caledonian University.

Delegations from the ten participating cities came together in the grand surroundings of the Sala Borsa, Bologna's central library, to explore new pathways to employment for the Roma people in their own city. The two thematic experts helped them to consider the benefits of intermediate labour markets and social enterprise for creating these new solutions.

The Social Enterprise Academy team brought its signature style of interactive peer learning to Italy. Delegates were invited to start their learning event by working in a "cafe" style mode making "graffiti" on the walls as they formulated their key questions and made a picture of the issues in their city.

Over the first two days, Alan Kay, a specialist in the field of social accounting, presented three case studies to demonstrate the working model and stimulate thinking about how it could be applied at a local level for Roma people. Alan explained:



***"The problems for minority people who are excluded from the labour market are deeply complex. It is crucial to find solutions that involve people and fit with the local culture. A community led approach is the only way to make a difference in the long term."***

The highlight of the event for delegates was their introduction to "action learning sets". Groups of six participants from different cities worked together to explore and share solutions for the specific issues that were live and current for them in relation to the overall theme of *Building a Transitional Labour Market*.

The action learning methodology involves each person in turn sharing an issue then listening in turn to the insights and deeper questions offered by the other members of their set. It can be described as a structured dialogue. It is a more reflective and thoughtful process than an open discussion and delegates were enthusiastic about using it again.

Jackie Scutt, who is the former Director of the Social Enterprise Academy, said:

*"It proved quite a challenge to run the sets and keep pace with the translation into four or five different tongues but, in spite of these realities, there were plenty of light bulb moments and blue sky thinking. If there's one thing the Roma-Net members will remember about Bologna, alongside its famous tortellini, it was the power of peer learning."*



Peer learning and sharing continued formally and informally with delegates collecting and writing up their ideas. This culminated in the final session

where the "wall of insights" was reviewed and transformed into a timeline for action in each city. The actions will be reviewed in a follow Learning Cluster event in Torrent next June.

Bologna was the Academy's first experience of delivering learning outside the UK and this is likely to be the start of a new era. Jackie will be travelling to Capetown in November to run a two day learning event for African NGOs and Fairtrade organisations. She said:

*"We are keen to go further afield to share our expertise and our passion for helping people to learn through the exchange of ideas and experience."*

Social Enterprise Academy website: [www.theacademy-ssea.org](http://www.theacademy-ssea.org)

Cities have learnt a lot during this meeting and returned home with new energies even if we know that some issues cannot be resolved locally and need a higher level of intervention, a policy change. We think and hope that the National Roma Integration Strategies will bring this change, while we will start working on the ground and address this issue in our Local Action Plans.

Presentations and case studies of the meeting can be downloaded from our website: [www.urbact.eu/roma-net](http://www.urbact.eu/roma-net)

## THE "HISTORICAL" and CONTEXTUAL SITUATION of the Roma and Sinti populations in Bologna

### Analysis of the context

Three areas exist in the Bologna territory for the local (Italian) Sinti community to reside, set up by Regional Law 47/88. Around 63 families live in these with a presence of some 70 minors. The areas are administrated by the zones in which they are located. Of these three staying areas, one consists entirely of caravans, campers and mobile homes; two have constructions in masonry completed with mobile structures. These are projects for the modernizing of pre-existing staying areas, in line with the provisions of regional resolution no.

157/2005, which stated "that the need was not to increase the number of staying areas but [...] to bring an end to the unauthorized camps and [...] modernize the structures and bring the energy plants of the camps into line with regulations".

Also present in Bologna are Sinti family groups living in agricultural fields purchased regularly but made illegal by unauthorized building work and the installation of mobile homes. During the last few months the existing data and mapping of these family groups have been checked and meetings have been held with the people living in these areas in order to discover their employment, dwelling and social situations.

Apart from two families, the others are self-sufficient, with a modest economic capacity that they would risk losing if evicted. At present there

appear to be 17 extended family groups relating to this phenomenon.

In addition some families have been long-present in Bologna and have been living in campers for years. These come from reception camps and, earlier still, from the expropriation of agricultural land, purchased by them, for the purpose of building a residential area. The Roma population present in Bologna consists mainly of Romanian immigrants and former refugees from ex-Yugoslavia. Those who succeeded over the years in entering an equipped camp (First Reception Centre for refugees or transit camps known as Temporary Social Residences) were then inserted in programmes of social inclusion and integration, culminating in the Extraordinary plan of action to overcome emergency reception situations set up in 2007-08. Those excluded from this circuit set up camp in unauthorized settlements on the outskirts, near the ring road, along the banks of the River Reno, in unused areas of countryside. A large number of baracchine (the Roma people's own name for these encampments) can still be seen today in these areas. At present this phenomenon appears to involve 11 extended family groups.



*ROI project: one of the houses restructured in Romania with the help of micro-credit  
(photo by Matteo Martino)*

where each single family has a private space and suitable services. They are not marginal in relation to the inhabited area and its services. Micro-areas are not guarded, but entrusted to the responsibility of those occupying them, like any other rented flat. There may be a contract for use and contracts for the related services.

Micro-areas are the best dwelling solution for many Sinti people since they intensify their sense of responsibility (regarding cleaning, hygiene, payment of services, etc.), being inhabited by a single family: their own extended family.

It should also be pointed out that building a micro-area results in reduced costs for the municipality, since the micro-area is run by the family itself, which pays for electricity, water, gas and rent, deals with maintenance, etc., as in a normal condominium.

It is fundamental that the families who will go to live in that area should be involved in the planning stage of the micro-areas:

- Regarding the family nuclei present in agricultural areas, the possibility is being assessed of dealing with the situation by reserving these areas for special use, thereby allowing a permit based on the present situations.

- Regarding the families long-present who have been living in campers for years,

the hypothesis is being considered of analyzing the single situations, identifying those for which evolutionary programmes can be set in motion.

## **Description of ongoing actions and possible future interventions**

A preliminary assessment is being made of the most urgent works to be carried out with Regional funds within the 3 staying areas. Present in these are some families that would be ready to stay in a micro-area and for which it would be possible, after evaluating their single situations, to envisage a programme of increased autonomy.

A micro-area is a smaller area than a nomad camp, inhabited by a single extended family. It is an area

## **Conclusions**

There are no easy solutions when dealing with the question of dwelling places for Roma families; the various housing experiences in Italy have shown over the years that there is no single solution suitable for all cases. The range of proposals has extended from the staying area to public building, micro-areas, multi-service centres and so on. This array of experiences, some more successful than others, has not led to the identification of one specific solution. On the contrary, it has underlined the need for solutions that are diversified on the



basis of the requirements of the individuals, coming as they do from specific situations, with specific histories and individualized needs. In short, housing projects are successful when they produce a real meeting between individuals' needs and the solutions that the social network can offer. This means, first and foremost, that before proceeding with projects of this kind, a real analysis must be made of the requirements with the participation and involvement of the Roma people themselves. Though their needs may differ from individual to individual, their multi-dimensionality is nevertheless a common factor. The operator's task is to gather together this complex mass of histories and needs and to undertake the most complete solution possible, using an approach that integrates skills and proposals.

In dealing with Roma people, two other aspects should be borne in mind: the pattern of their social networks and their processes of identity-building. Socially disadvantaged individuals often have only assistance networks, which need to be identified in order to be able to reconstruct/substitute them when

a change of dwelling context is proposed. Social work should take into account the need to build networks that insert individuals effectively in new social contexts. Consideration should be made of Roma people's capacity to form relations with the "neighbourhood", marked by modest reciprocity with the individuals they meet. This is to be noted in their relations at many existential levels, as well as in the schools.

The stumbling-block to their identity-building is the so-called "stigma", the negative image cast on them by society. Reaction against the stigma may assume various forms (self-identification, re-transferral to those considered inferior, interiorizing the bringer of help) which in the end merely confirm it.

The work of integration therefore has the task of facilitating disadvantaged individuals in building new roles which reinforce the multi-dimensionality of their identities (citizen, tenant, bearer of rights and duties, etc.) and of using their individual skills as a means for promoting growth and change.

## Work with Roma families in Bologna

### "La Piccola Carovana"

During the days of the Roma-Net project, held in Bologna from 26 to 29 September 2011, "La Piccola Carovana" illustrated its projects with Roma families in the territory. The Cooperative has been working with Roma people in Bologna since 2007 and has overseen the closure of the Municipal authorized temporary camps. Bologna has decided to pursue a policy of accommodation for Roma people that goes beyond the equipped campsite, conceived as a transitory solution, to achieve consolidated dwelling conditions through the rental of flats on the private market. The project, set up in 2008, envisaged that the families, after a period of accommodation in equipped campsites, could have a letting contract at reduced rent for four years. At the end of four years the Roma families were expected to have developed the economic and social capacity to find accommodation in the private market. Between 2008 and today many things have changed in both the labour and the housing markets, as well as in the capacity of "La Piccola Carovana" and the Municipality of Bologna to understand Roma

people's needs. Alongside consolidation on the private market, therefore, a further work-tool has been added: "ROI-Ritorno operativo imprenditoriale [Operative Entrepreneurial Return]". This is a voluntary project for assisted repatriation and reinsertion in the labour market of the beneficiaries' country of origin. Reinsertion in the labour market is understood to mean the activation, in a suitable living area, of employment opportunities or sustainable forms of small family-run enterprises.



At present the Cooperative has activated eight repatriation projects towards Romania, the country of origin of most of the Roma people present in the

Bologna territory: each programme is based on co-planning, micro-credit and on accompanying the individuals concerned throughout all phases of the project.

In conclusion, during the ROMA-NET project, "La Piccola Carovana" illustrated another project that involved the Roma people of Bologna without being directly activated by the Municipal authorities: the project entitled "La Città Invisibile [The Invisible City]". Between June 2010 and December 2010 this programme involved the cooperative and other

tertiary sector entities in a discovery of those zones on the city outskirts where Roma people from Romania arriving in Bologna camp while seeking survival through begging and undeclared work. "La Piccola Carovana" chose to speak about "La Città Invisibile" as a reminder that a project envisaging the involvement of Roma people in inclusion programmes needs to find space for those living in the city, not only as Roma people, but also those present illegally and without shelter for the night.

## Monitoring illegal occupation of property in Bologna from 2003 to 2011

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The Municipality of Bologna has been implementing, since around 2003, a constant monitoring of illegal occupation of property in the city territory.

This activity has been carried out in particular by operators of the Urban Security Policies Office, with the aim of gathering constant information on the living conditions of people in marginal dwelling situations. This information has been extremely important for the work of the other administrative sectors. The activity has been of a continuous nature in order to obtain updated data management and a directly obtained "real" photograph of the situation in which people dwelling in improvised huts, tents, abandoned building, etc. were living.

As a result of this activity it has been observed that in recent years illegal occupation of property, whether of land or of abandoned buildings, has been largely carried out by individuals of Roma ethnic origin and Romanian nationality.

This allowed a detailed analysis of the living conditions of the Romanian Roma community in Bologna. An attempt has been made to trace their way of life, to understand their problems as individuals and as groups and to resolve the

situations of tension that continually arise with citizens residing near the settlements.

At the present time the number of people living in such conditions has fallen notably; while a few years ago around 700 people were present in illegal contexts, the territory can now count some 150. The figure has fallen for a number of reasons. Various

individuals have returned to their native country, programmes set up for social inclusion have modified dwelling situations, a number have autonomously improved their living conditions and some have moved to other cities, not least as a result of policies carried out by the forces of law and order in recent years to combat illegal occupation of property.



The current situation induces us to note the presence of two distinct targets of individuals living in such conditions: 1) individuals residing sporadically in the city because involved in seasonal work; 2) groups of individuals not easily inserted in programmes for inclusion, even regarding housing, principally as a consequence of the particular structure of their culture of origin which results in their having little trust in, and opening towards, channels of help.

Presentations of the meeting can be downloaded from our website: [www.urbact.eu/roma-net/our-outputs/](http://www.urbact.eu/roma-net/our-outputs/)

## The Bologna meeting through the eyes of an LSG member

*Margaret Linton, Equality and Diversity Coordinator, Glasgow Works, Glasgow City Council*

**The learning cluster in Bologna was very useful and interesting - I profited a lot from my participation. Both the format of the meeting (series of showcase presentations, structured own/joint city shared learning work groups and site visits) and the informal exchanges among the 10 participating cities enriched my knowledge and will have an impact on my future work.**

All of the ROMA-NeT cities identified unemployment as a major issue for Roma individuals and across communities and cited education, skill levels, language, motivation, stigma and discrimination as the key barriers to their inclusion and progression in the workplace. Glasgow has identified similar issues and we are aware that tackling these barriers will be critical if we are to successfully support the Roma community into education and employment

message I took away was not to allow the Roma community to become isolated and effectively creating a ghetto within the city.

Through working with colleagues from Budapest I learned that previously in Eastern Europe, when countries were under a communist regime, all working age Roma people were in employment, albeit low skilled employment often hard labour, they were all expected to work. After the change to a capitalist economy and the decline of heavy industry there was a dramatic rise in the number of unemployed and disengaged Roma. What changed? How did the indigenous Hungarian population continue to work and re-train in new skills and the Roma didn't? Was it a cultural work ethic of the Roma; a return to traditional but outdated work practices; or is it discrimination by employers? Maybe a combination of all these – but this is certainly a topic I would like to discuss more and understand better.

All ROMA-NeT Cities reported about the challenges that Roma people have when entering and sustaining employment and as we move into an even tighter labour market it is anticipated these challenges will grow. A key task for us working in this field will be employer engagement; how to support employers to identify areas of unconscious bias; how can we challenge and dispel the myths surrounding Roma and their attitudes to work.

A major area of concern is employer discrimination. Our colleagues from Budapest have experienced some success in working with employers on workplace discrimination using a de-sensitising programme. This is an area I would like to explore further, to better understand how employer discrimination differentiates between disengaged groups? Is it direct discrimination or an unconscious bias?



By sharing experience we discovered that different approaches have been applied using different versions of well established models of employability including: pre-employment interventions; social and personal development; training and skills development; and social enterprises and variations of the Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) model.

Although there were similar barriers to employment identified between the ROMA-NeT cities there are also marked differences in the size of the population, the years of residency. I discovered that in some countries we are talking of a cultural heritage that has evolved over hundreds of years.

There is an abundance of experience that Glasgow can and should tap into and learn from. One key





Anecdotally, we heard from our partners cities with long standing Roma communities that Roma people do want to work, but conversely that the support services are still confronting major barriers in communicating and engaging effectively across Roma communities - on issues about health, education and employment.

It was evident through the learning groups that there is still a huge amount of work to be done to engage Roma people in their communities and to provide support along the employability pathway from early engagement to entering and sustaining employment.

There are definitely lessons that other Cities can learn from experiences in Spain and Hungary. I will continue to work closely with our colleagues from these countries to learn from their experience to discover successful examples of employer engagement. Also how to emphasise cultural diversity and the importance of respecting the Roma culture when working towards mainstream integration.

By the end of our three days we had drawn the landscape of Roma unemployment - we identified the obstacles that prevent access to the labour market; we explored the challenges that exist for individuals and for serviced providers working to improve employability; and we compared examples that had been tried in in partner cities.

Most importantly we recognised that our services need to be constructed to meet the real needs of Roma and that employer participation is essential if we are to find genuine work opportunities and overcome negative stereotyping that exists.

Glasgow has decades of experience of working with long term unemployed people, many of whom present complex needs, which although not the same is highly relevant for us now in our as we start to work with the Roma community. For us it's now about how we can best use our expertise and adapt it to suit the needs of this new community. Also for Cities with less experience in the employability field to share with us and make effective use of our experience and working knowledge.



## Jobs for Roma – good practice from the Fundación Secretariado Gitano



It really is true that the the proof of the pudding is in the eating – good ingredients are not enough, commitment and dedication are also needed to deliver success.

The Fundación Secretariado Gitano manage the ACCEDER Programme, which reached out to more than 63 thousand, mainly Roma, beneficiaries and has resulted so far in almost 43 thousand labour contracts. They are a non-profit intercultural social organisation which provides services for the development of the Roma community both in Spain and at European level. Their mission is to strive for integral advancement of the Roma population by first acknowledging their cultural identity. Here are the keys of their success:

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- Integrated approach
- Individualised employment itineraries (training and employment)
- Involvement and empowerment of the Roma
- Long term Planning
- Equal balance between social and economic perspective
- Professional and Multicultural working teams
- Targeted but non-segregated services
- Flexibility
- Fight against discrimination: multidimensional approach
- Nation – wide dimension
- Strong partnership: network

We know and recognise these ingredients from our previous learning cluster events, the Fundación Secretariado Gitano have given us the proof that they work, now its up to us ROMA-NeT partners to use this evidence to combine them all together, add our commitment and start development and implementation of successful labour market programmes for our Roma communities.

Thanks to Alvaro Gutierrez for sharing with us this success story. You can find more about the organisation and the programme: [www.gitanos.org/english](http://www.gitanos.org/english) You can view a video about the Accedder programme here <http://www.gitanos.org/iguales/campana/>



## Avvocato di strada: ROMA-NET project-intervention

26.09.2011

“Avvocato di strada” [Street Lawyer] is an association of lawyers aimed at ensuring free and qualified legal aid to the homeless, who are often deprived of their fundamental rights. The association has brought its experience to the ROMA-NET project through the testimony of its founder, the lawyer Antonio Mumolo, who illustrated its birth, aims and first successes. The lawyer explained the importance of adequate legal protection for those who, homeless and without rights, wish to pursue the path of social reinstatement, with particular regard to new and increasingly complex legal proceedings concerning homelessness.

The project, born in Bologna in 2001, was strengthened by an important sentence obtained on behalf of a homeless person accommodated in a dormitory. This was repeated in other cities of Emilia-Romagna and in other regions

until the national association “Avvocato di Strada Onlus” was constituted in 2007 for the purpose of gathering and coordinating experiences from all over Italy and creating an observatory on the subject of rights and poverty. As of today the association has some six hundred voluntary lawyers throughout Italy, with offices in twenty-two cities including Rome, Naples, Bari and Milan. Offices are to be opened in Venice and Palermo. The lawyer Mumolo explained how and why the homeless apply to lawyers and the way in which the helpdesk works, to all effects a solicitors’ office set up in places and structures dedicated to accommodating the homeless, such as canteens and dormitories, and where these people can be heard, advised and, when necessary, defended in court.



It was to one of these helpdesks, as the lawyer Aurora De Dominicis, a solicitor of the association, related, that Mr. M.S. and his wife D.J. came. This Serbian couple, of Roma ethnic origin, had two under-age children and were resident in a nomad camp just outside Bologna. The couple were visiting a relative in a camp in Padua when, as part of a police operation, they were stopped, identified and issued with a compulsory order to leave, a prevention measure taken against persons considered socially dangerous. This measure involves immediate return to the municipality of residence and prohibition to come back to the place where the individual was stopped for three years. In the case in question the measure was issued without the regular temporal guarantees envisaged by law for administrative procedures since, according to the police officers, there was “particular

need for a swift procedure, as any delay”, would have been “prejudicial to public order and security”. The couple, who had regular staying permits and were simply visiting relatives, complained that the order to leave would have hampered the commercial activities they

had recently begun and which also regarded the Padua area. The lawyer De Dominicis related how she was able, with a memorandum pointing out the extreme arbitrariness with which the Police Station had described the couple as socially dangerous, to have the order revoked.

The case of the Serbian couple, concluded the lawyer Mumolo, is just one of over two thousand cases dealt with during 2010 by solicitors of “Avvocato di Strada”. Their free legal aid activities are the subject of an annual report which the association publishes and which can be viewed, together with laws, sentences, novelties and initiatives concerning the rights of the homeless, on the association’s website [www.avvocatodistrada.it](http://www.avvocatodistrada.it).





Nagykálló - Hungary

## OTHER NEWS AND NEWS FROM PARTNERS

New Roma-Net Partner: Nagykálló  
URBACT Summer University - 28-31 August 2011, Krakow

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### "New kid in town" – Nagykálló Fact sheet

Nagykálló recently joined the Roma-Net partnership. Although we have already introduced our town to the other partners in Bologna, we thought it might be a good idea to provide some information this way as well.



#### **Who we are?**

Nagykálló is a small town, located in the North-Eastern corner of Hungary, not far from the Romanian and the Ukrainian border.

#### **Key facts about Nagykálló**

Population: 10.151;

Our Micro-regional centre is in the immediate neighbourhood of the county capital, Nyíregyháza which has 120.000 inhabitants and is the economic and administrative centre.

Our economy is dominated by agriculture, food processing and light industry. Unemployment and low activity levels are serious problems with nearly 2/3rds of the population categories is economically inactive and 1/6th of the active population is unemployed. The quality of public services is high, public infrastructure is well-developed;

The town has gone through dynamic development in recent years and over 40 development projects have been carried out, with a total value exceeding EUR 15 Million;

#### **Challenges of Roma integration**

Approximately 13-15% of the total population of Nagykálló are Roma, or between 1300 and 1500 people. Their general quality of life is well below the town average. The key challenges the Roma population face are as follows:

- Poor living conditions
- Segregated dwellings
- Low level of education
- Very high unemployment

## Very high levels of unemployment - well above the town average.

The main source of income for many Roma in Nagykálló is social assistance and occasional work on the informal labour market.

As the income from work is comparable with the income from social assistance and occasional work (working in some cases may even lead to a loss of the transfers) there is very limited incentive to work.

For those Roma who want to work, they:

- lack the necessary knowledge, skills and work experience;
- have become more disengaged from work than the rest of the local population;
- face *major discrimination from the part of the potential employers*

The low level of education is reproduced in the consecutive generations and children grown up in families with without working adults.



### Need further information?

Visit our website at <http://nagykallo.hu>, or contact our project assistant, Marianna Diósi at [diomar7@gmail.com](mailto:diomar7@gmail.com)

## URBACT Summer University – personal thoughts



Krakow is one of my favourite Eastern European cities. I was here for the first time 20 years ago then again 16 years ago. Comparing the old and the new city was not easy as it had changed a lot for the better. There was also the lovely weather; Krakow somehow evaded the cold enveloping Europe.

I was very lucky to be asked to coordinate one of the local support groups by the URBACT secretariat. It was obvious I had to accept as I was very much interested in the inner workings of these groups.

The whole system operated so smoothly. Despite not attending the preliminary briefings, I understood perfectly the rules, goals and expected results based on the plans and background materials I received beforehand.

During my career I have taken part in many similar events but I have never seen one go so smoothly, even with 300 participants requiring constant direction.

I had two colleagues with me, both of whom are members of the Budapest Roma Net Local Support Group. Although communicating in English posed a significant challenge for one of them, in the end they did well. We helped each other to overcome all challenges with ease. Both of them learned something new and they had a greater understanding of how URBACT operates, its organisation and its short, medium and long-term goals. On the trip home one of my colleagues expressed that the event was “worth it just for that!”

My job in coordinating the group turned out to be much easier than I anticipated. My group included some very experienced individuals and the management style I adopted was more of a following and orientating style. The results, in my opinion, were excellent.

One thing is certain, the fictitious city of our case study, Rheinstadt, benefitted a great deal from taking part in URBACT. Thinking about the flying carpet, which became sort of a symbol of our action plan - with the mayor of Rheinstadt looking for a solution for the problems of Muslim immigrants - will always evoke thoughts of the Krakow summer university.

And who, or what will always remind me of these three days above all else? As it turned out later,

there were not three, but rather, four of us on the trip. The youngest participant of the summer university undoubtedly came with the delegation of Budapest and that baby will be born sometime around the spring of 2012, so she/he will be about the same age as the URBACT summer university. May both live long!

*Attila Molnár, Budapest*



To know more about our project please visit us at: [www.urbact.eu/roma-net](http://www.urbact.eu/roma-net)

Subscribe for the Roma-Net Newsletter: please send an e-mail to [bordacse@budapest.hu](mailto:bordacse@budapest.hu)



## URBACT II

**URBACT** is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development.

It enables cities to work together to develop solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal challenges. It helps them to develop pragmatic solutions that are new and sustainable, and that integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to share good practices and lessons learned with all professionals involved in urban policy throughout Europe. URBACT is 300 cities, 29 countries, and 5,000 active participants

[www.urbact.eu/project](http://www.urbact.eu/project)