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## II Spanish Gathering Report

### XXI Roma Women Student Gathering of Catalonia

Organization in charge of co-implementing the activity: **Romani Association of Women Drom Kotar Mestipen**

Date of the Gathering: **28th May 2022**

Place: **Amposta, Spain**

Hosting institution: **La Lira Ampostina (professional school of musical studies in the city of Amposta).**

In this edition of the Roma Women Student Gathering of Catalonia, the Roma women who were part of the organizing group decided that La Lira Ampostina was the best place to hold the Gathering for two reasons. The first is that it is a place located in the center of the city, easily accessible, and because the venue has the necessary facilities for the proper development of the event. On the other hand, La Lira Ampostina is an educational institution of reference in the area, not only for those who study music, but for the city in general.

#### 1- PREPARATION PHASE BEFORE THE GATHERING

In order to organize and plan the Gathering, a total of 3 meetings were held between staff members of Drom Kotar Mestipen, the participating women and representatives from Amposta city council.



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It is worth noting that the organizing group of preparation for this Gathering was born after the celebration of the previous Gathering, which had been held on October 23 in the city of Tarragona. After attending this Gathering, a group of women from Amposta decided to organize the next edition of the activity in their city.

These meetings, which were held in person and also through digital platforms, were attended by women members of the organizing group, members of the National Coordination Committee, staff of the DKM organization, and representatives of the municipality of Amposta.

#### **DATES OF THE MEETINGS:**

**Meeting 1.** 24th April 2022

**Meeting 2.** 22nd April 2022

**Meeting 3.** 27th April 2022

#### **STAFF MEMBERS INVOLVED:**

**Meeting 1.** Maria Cortés, Ana contreras

**Meeting 2.** Maripaz Anderson, Maria Cortés

**Meeting 3.** María Cortés, María Paz Anderson

#### **ORGANIZING GROUP MEMBERS INVOLVED:**

**Meeting 1.** María Alegría Gabarri, Mila Amaya, Paqui Cortés (role model), Vanesa Cortés

**Meeting 2.** María Alegría Gabarri, Mila Amaya, Paqui Cortés

**Meeting 3.** María Alegría Gabarri



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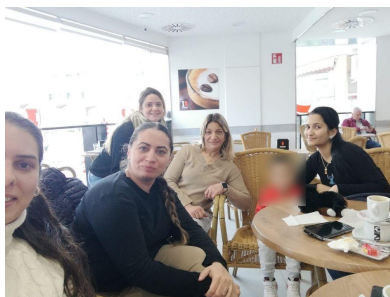

## LOCATIONS:

**Meeting 1.** online via zoom

**Meeting 2.** Amposta

**Meeting 3.** online via zoom

## EVIDENCES

Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3
		

## MAIN POINTS

### Meeting 1

Information is provided about what the Gatherings are, what parts a Gathering has, what the functions of the organizing group are.

The women who attend the meeting feel motivated and want to be part of the organizing group.

### Meeting 2

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In this meeting the attendees agree on issues such as the place where the Gathering will be held, what will be the theme of the inaugural conference, what will be the composition of the table of reference, and what poster will be used to disseminate the event.

### Meeting 3

Meeting held with representatives of the city council of Amposta (Núria Ferrer councilor for social rights and citizenship and Nuria Marco, Councilor for Education), where we present the entity, the Gatherings and the RTransform project.

The representatives of the city council are interested in the project and willing to collaborate on logistical issues.

## 2- ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION: THE GATHERING

This was the XXI edition of the Roma Women Student Gathering of Catalonia, and it was the first time that this activity was held in the Catalan region of "Las Terres de l'Ebre". This region, located in the south of Catalonia and at a distance of more than two hours by car from the city of Barcelona, is an area where educational activities of this type are not very frequent. Thanks to the mobilization of the Roma women of the area, it has been possible to implement the activity successfully and in compliance with all the quality standards.

The Gathering was held on Saturday, 28 May 2022, in La Lira Ampostina, a public center which provides professional musical training. The event, which took place between 16.00h to 20.00h CET, was attended by around 60 grassroots Roma women and girls from all over Catalonia and Valencia. Women from the cities of Tarragona, Tortosa, Reus, Amposta, different neighborhoods of Barcelona, and Castellón attended the Gathering.

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For a better development of the activity, staff members of Drom Kotar Mestipen, and non Roma volunteers were present at the event to undertake technical and organizational tasks. It should also be mentioned that during the Trobada, a childcare service was in operation. This space, run by members of the organization team and volunteers, was designed so that the little ones could enjoy themselves by doing different activities while their mothers took part in the Trobada.

We will now describe two of the most relevant moments of the day: the main conference, and the role model table

The **main conference** of the Gathering was delivered by Dr. Carme García Yeste, Professor of the Department of Pedagogy at the University Rovira i Virgili, and director of the Consolidated Group recognised by the Catalan government, Methodology of Educational Research with Social Impact (MEDIS).

The theme of the conference was Family Education. Dr. Carme Garcia Yeste spoke about the importance of the implementation of this Successful Educational Action, and what its impact is, both at a personal and community level.

"The participation of families in schools is essential for academic success and the transformation of neighborhoods." Carme García Yeste



Opening conference at the 21st Roma Women Student Gathering of Catalonia

**The role model table** was composed of 3 Roma women of different ages, profiles and backgrounds. These women were chosen as role models because they are an example of success in their respective educational paths. This is a brief description of these 3 women.

Ms. Trini Heredia González, Technician in Social Integration at the Salvador Seguí Institute, Barcelona.

Ms. Eli Lucena Cortés, Graduated in compulsory secondary education in adult education, currently preparing for the university entrance exam.

Ms. Andrea Khalfaoui Larrañaga holds a PhD in Education from the University of Deusto with the thesis "Keys to intercultural coexistence in early childhood education." She is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Edinburgh.



### Role model table

These are some of the messages participants were able to hear during the role model table:

"As a little girl I loved school. My grandmother would ask me every day what I had learned. She learned to read when she grew up, but it was always clear to her that education was important. My message: It is never too late" Andrea Khalfaoui, role model

"I have always been involved in the flea market. I understood that the flea market was not a business for my children to inherit. Now we have to renew ourselves. I went back to school after 30 years and now I have a high school diploma".Eli Lucena, role model

"When I was 12 years old I had to stay with my sister so that my family could go to the market. When I was 17 they didn't want me in high school. I wanted to go to school. My parents were told very clearly that without school it would be very hard to go on. I just graduated two days ago. My cousin and I are the first in my family to have studied post-compulsory education and to have graduated" Trini Heredia, role model



After the role model table, the women who participated in the Gathering were divided into small **working groups** to discuss and contribute ideas about what they had just heard, both at the table of references and at the inaugural conference. The main idea of these discussion groups, facilitated by Roma women, is to find solutions to overcome the obstacles encountered by Roma women in their respective educational paths. The working groups are safe and egalitarian spaces, where the active participation of all women is encouraged.



Roma Women sharing the conclusions reached in their working groups

"We want schools to open their doors to families. We want the schools to be also Roma." conclusions of one of the groups

Finally, before the end of the activity, all the participants met again in the main hall to share the **conclusions reached by each of the groups**. This is an especially enriching space, as ideas, proposals and experiences are shared that will be useful to the women in their educational path, as well as in their personal life.





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These conclusions are contained in a document, which will serve to guide the work of DKM in the coming months and to disseminate the message of the participants among representatives of the public administration and other relevant agents.

### 3- IMPACT OF THE GATHERING

The Roma Women Student Gatherings of Catalonia are not only an important event for Roma women, but for society in general. Thus, representatives of public administrations were present at the event. The Gathering held in Amposta counted with the presence of Ms. Cesca Domènech i Ruera, General Director of Civic and Community Action of the Catalan Government and Mr. Adam Tomàs i Roiget, Mayor of Amposta.

In addition, other entities such as the Virtual Museum of the Roma People were interested in the event, and have shared information about it through their networks, [find more information here](#)

#### Conclusions of the Gathering:

Below we present the conclusions document of the XXI Roma Women Student Gatherings of Catalonia, in which the participating women claim the following

#### 1.- Educational resources

- Reinforcement spaces are needed, with trained staff at all levels of compulsory education.
- It is necessary to implement actions such as a tutoring library, where the support of the school and the community is visible.
- It is necessary to ensure that all students reach the same level with the necessary tools, if they need more support they should have it, students should not be separate by levels.



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## 2.- Educational Centers:

- We, Roma women, are aware that we take our children to school to build their future and not as a hobby, we want quality education and equality.
- We claim for more interest and concern on the part of teachers.
- We ask for monthly motivational talks where Roma referents participate. The presence of Roma role models is needed in educational centers.
- Schools should provide information on educational itineraries
- Schools, associations or anywhere where there are Roma women, must implement: family education activities
- Educational centers must use an understandable vocabulary to facilitate dialogue and the relationship between both parties.
- Families, fathers and mothers must be given a place in school. As a result they will get more involved.
- More information is needed about what children do at school.
- Schools should remain an open space to the community.
- It is necessary that SEAs (Successful Educational Actions) are implemented: interactive groups, family education, tutored library... they could influence the improvement of boys and girls.

## 3.- Participation

- Activities such as The Roma Women Student Gatherings are necessary to promote and empower girls and women, and encourage them to continue, or rejoin studies.



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- Face-to-face meetings, where teachers and families of students can meet, are necessary so that communication between both parties exists and improves. Families and teachers should agree on meeting times.
- Active participation in the school council should be facilitated. Roma families being part of the AMPAs is essential for the school to be diverse and for all of us to feel that we are part of it.
- Both parts, schools and families must be involved in ending absenteeism.
- Educational centers are closer to mothers than to fathers, the school must insist more and create more spaces in which parents are more involved and informed.

#### 4.- Role models:

- Mothers who have an educational background are role models for their daughters and for the whole community. Children are motivated when they see their fathers and mothers involved at school.
- Roma internship students could sponsor other Roma students in the educational centers, to support them and to establish bonds that help them to continue in the educational path.
- More representation of Roma people in the school is needed: at least one Roma promoter in each town.
- The fact that there are Roma people working in schools generates referents for children

#### 5.- Other support:

- Grants for daycare services are necessary, so that mothers can reconcile family life with education. There are mothers who are not eligible for training because their economic level does not allow them to pay for daycare.
- Scholarships need to be granted at an earlier point in time.

- It is necessary to ensure that education is public, people cannot be left out because they cannot afford to pay tuition for post-compulsory studies.



Roma Women at the XXI Roma Women Student Gathering of Catalonia