



# The Acamp'Arte project




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# Background



- Roma, also known as “Calon/Kale” or “Ciganos/Gitanos”, are the second biggest ethnic minority group on the Iberian Peninsula.
- Since their arrival, about 500 years ago, till the end of Salazar dictatorship in 1974, Roma had to face inhabitants’ discrimination, intolerance and prejudice because of their ethnicity.
- They also had to struggle against laws that didn’t allow them to access fundamental rights, for instance: Education.



## Background – Constraints



- Here, in *Paredes* schools, we acknowledged several problems that were affecting Roma children and teenagers, mainly due to:
  - Extreme poor housing conditions;
  - Poor healthy lifestyle habits;
  - Poor sense of belonging to school;
  - School parental distrust;
  - Divergent aspirations or expectations;
  - Lack of foreseeing their inclusion in the labour market.



## Background – Constraints



- As result, both Roma students and their families tended to disregard school, bringing therefore low educational standards among them.
- As consequence, there were further social segregation and a fertile soil to prejudice based on ignorance by lack of early intercultural sharing.



## ACAMP'ARTE - ITS BIRTH



- Hereupon, *Paredes* schools have implemented a project that tries to minimise all the previous mentioned constraints.
- The *Acamp'Arte project* (a Portuguese pun which means camp with art) started in 2008 and is still being promoted by our school organisation (Agrupamento de Escolas de Paredes) as a non-profit educational project.
- This educational and intercultural project started its work by promoting intercultural knowledge and creating intercultural sharing events within the heterogeneous class groups, the *Paredes* educational community and even within other organisations across the country.

## AIMS AND GOALS



- *Acamp'Arte* project aims to mitigate several negative indicators of the Roma school population assisting them to improve their educational/school development and social integration.
- We still have a significant number of Roma students who need specific educational and sociocultural measures and families that require a proper guidance to help them establish and convey school values to their children.



## AIMS AND GOALS



- Therefore *Acamp'Arte* still focus on the improvement of Roma children school integration aiming to prevent and restrain the following problems:
  - Low school performance;
  - School absenteeism and early abandon;
  - Discrimination and segregation in the educational community;
  - Indiscipline and social problems;
  - Low self-esteem and amotivational syndrome;
  - School and everyday life parental low skills;
  - Vocational misfit or professional scepticism.



## RESULTS



- The *Acamp'Arte* efforts are recognised, not only by the school community and co-working organisations, but also by other national Roma communities and associations, mainly because these local Roma had never before seen this kind of achievements as they are starting seeing nowadays:
  - More solid educational levels;
  - Overall school trust and sense of belonging;
  - Decrease of school absenteeism and 0% school abandon in almost every school year;
  - Better-quality problem solving skills and low indiscipline levels;
  - Earliest Roma students (including Roma girls) who completed successfully their high school level degree;
  - Roma families more trustful and participative in school life.



## CONCLUSIONS



- To sum up, in our point of view, this project brought into light a community which was often “condemned” to illiteracy, poverty and social exclusion.
- We consider that this Educational and Intercultural project makes all the difference in so many families lives, merely by implementing practices which brought more interaction and knowledge about Roma culture and vice-versus.
- We believe that the most powerful weapon against discrimination and prejudice is undoubtedly Education. However, there’s still a way ahead.

## THANK YOU



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