DIGITAL SKILLS
Exchange of best practices between digital mediation players !

Guide to "Inclusion" | Fact Sheet 6

ACTUALÍZA_TEC   FACT SHEET 6

Reducing the digital divide affecting the Roma community

ACTUALÍZA _TEC

Igualdad Digital para la Comunidad Gitana_

PRESENTATION

Actualíza_TEC is a project led by the Fundación Secretariado Gitano aimed at combating digital exclusion, which affects a significant portion of the Roma community. Recognizing that access to digital tools and associated skills is essential for education, employment, and social inclusion, the program offers personalized support, practical training, and the provision of technological equipment. By targeting primarily those in the Roma community who are most excluded from digital technology, Actualíza_TEC helps reduce inequalities, strengthen the autonomy of beneficiaries, and promote their full participation in contemporary society.

Digital transformation is one of the greatest challenges facing society. However, it can also pose a threat to the most vulnerable groups if it exacerbates structural conditions of exclusion, inequality, and discrimination. Roma people must not be left behind, but must have equal access to digital services and position themselves as protagonists in digitalization processes.

ACTUALÍZA TEC

IN A FEW WORDS

Actualíza_TEC is a project of the Gypsy Secretarial Foundation that aims to bridge the digital divide within the Roma community. It offers personalized support, training, and access to materials to promote social and professional inclusion.

IN A FEW NUMBERS

The Council of Europe estimates that between 10 and 12 million Roma live on the European continent, representing around 1% of the total population.

Would you like to know more?

https://www.gitanos.org/actualiza_tec

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

The "Actualíza_TEC" project of the Gypsy Secretariat Foundation receives support from several public and private entities. The Foundation collaborates with more than 60 NGOs and has established over 300 collaboration agreements with various public and private entities.

These alliances are essential for the development and success of initiatives such as "Actualíza_TEC," as they allow for the pooling of efforts and resources to promote the digital inclusion of the Roma community.

At the local level, institutions such as the Ciudad Real City Council have expressed their support for the project. During the Foundation's annual open day, the digital room located at its headquarters in the capital was presented, equipped with eight workstations to meet the needs of its users.

OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

Limited access to the internet and devices, with a significant percentage of Roma families lacking an internet connection or adequate devices.

The lack of digital skills and abilities hinders the full participation of the Roma community in an increasingly digital society.
Educational inequalities, with schools with a high proportion of Roma students tending to have fewer digital resources.

To overcome these challenges, the "Actualíza_TEC" project implemented the following solutions:

- Creation of Digital Rooms in 66 of the foundation's units across Spain, equipped with laptops and audiovisual equipment, to facilitate access to digital resources and devices for learning and completing tasks;
- Creation of an application to improve management and communication with program participants, facilitating more efficient access to services and resources;
- Implementation of a digital training plan for staff, volunteers, and participants.

VISION OF THE FUTURE

The ambition is to create a Roma community fully integrated into the digital world, where everyone has access to the tools and knowledge necessary to actively participate in modern society. The goal is to bridge the digital divide by providing continuing education, equipping the Roma population with digital skills, and promoting social and economic inclusion.

Over time, the project is expected to expand, reaching more people, utilizing new technologies, and promoting equal opportunities in a constantly evolving digital environment.

POSTURE OF THE DIGITAL MEDIATOR

The digital mediator supporting the Roma community must adopt a listening stance, display humility, and deep respect for the realities experienced by individuals.

It's not just about imparting skills, but also about building a bond of trust, often weakened by past experiences of discrimination or exclusion.

The mediator must avoid any overbearing or moralizing stance and, instead, start from the concrete needs expressed by the beneficiaries, without judgment.

It is essential to value existing expertise, even if it is not formal, and to offer accessible, progressive, and patient support.

Recognition of the rhythms of life, cultural codes, and the priority given to human relationships over administrative procedures is central.

The mediator then becomes a facilitator, a translator of digital technology in the service of autonomy, and not a mere technician.

Working with community contacts, adapting to the media used (often smartphones), and demonstrating great flexibility are essential keys to effective and respectful support.

SPECIFICITIES TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT

Education levels are often low, with a significant proportion of people experiencing illiteracy, complicating access to digital tools based on writing.

Furthermore, a historical distrust of institutions can hamper the use of online government services. Many families live in significant economic insecurity, which limits access to digital equipment (computer, internet connection) and makes digital technology a secondary priority.

Homes are sometimes unstable or mobile, further complicating subscriptions to fixed-line services or continuing education. Smartphones are often the only digital tool available, used primarily for calls or social media, with little or no mastery of online procedures.

Furthermore, traditional training courses are rarely adapted in terms of pace, level, or language, with some individuals lacking fluency in the local language.

Women in the community may be even more isolated from digital technology due to cultural or domestic constraints. Finally, Gypsy culture values oral transmission, which makes traditional educational approaches based on writing ineffective.