PEDRO AGUILERA CORTES

1.-Roma as a Pan-European Community

Let me start this speech by asking a few question to the participants.

       1.-How long have been living Roma people in Europe

       2.-How many different Roma groups do you know?

       3.- Do you know our languages,, are you able to say any word in Romani?

       4.- What do you know about Roma in the society, in the art, in owner culture?

I don´t lie you if I say that 90 % of European people aren´t able to answer at least 2 of this questions. Roma People are the most unknowledge group in Europe, in addition this lack of knowledge is based on a total lack of respect about Roma in cities, regions or even like here Countries. But how are Roma? Roma is a community who has been living in Europe since the beginning of the 10th century. We have been recognized as no land people by the United Nations from 1979. May be if there are a community who could call themselves real Europeans that's Roma. There are thousand of legends about the origin of Roma people, all of them are false and far away from the real origin of Roma. Roma (gipsy, tziganes, travellers, sinti, Kale, kaalos, manouches, lovari, kalderesh, gitanos etc,,) come from India, concretely from Punjab, there are some studies that prove this procedence and demonstrate the coincidence between Romani language and Sanscrito. Roma have a common heritage in our cultural background whatever their nationality, roam group and personal background. According to the writer Joaquin Albaicin, there are 2 common points in all the roma groups, the first one is the priority of the heart over the brain (Passion) and the other one is the lack of interest about "time" our time measure is how we feel at the moment things happen.

2.- Roma People today.

Roma people are present in all the E.U Countries, but there is one common characteristic in all the Roma people around Europe, this is the lack of respect about our culture, and the constant discrimination that roma people are suffered. The challenges remain enormous but in my opinion the most important challenge during this period is to fight against racism and racist attitudes, this attitudes are building on the framework of a full lack of knowledge and the absence of a real intercultural dialogue, if we created bridges to join both cultures, we would get over this situation, because people use to be afraid about things that they don´t know well. We need only a couple of minutes watching TV, listening to the radio or reading newspapers to realize what I want to tell you. But this is not the topic of my speech, even tough I think it's previous diagnostic completely necessary and useful to discover how culture, arts and promoting key competences in this field could improve the intercultural dialogue and also coexistence between communities. As Spanish Old roma people use to say "no se ama lo que no se conoce" you can´t love what you don´t know

3.- Roma Culture or Romani Cultures

What's the definition of Roma culture that I would like to share with you? My idea is both arts, and cultural expression are two of the sub-areas of CULTURE in a community, but what does

culture mean? I use to say that culture is a set of rules and values which help a group to survive. I find this definition very interesting for Roma communities around Europe.

In my opinion there is a huge group of common things and values in all the different Roma groups, I use to separate them in 2 groups, the firs one is the most tangible. Language, family as a vital group, respect for old member of the community, religion etc. and also there is an intangible common values as solidarity, non write rules of the group, respect for others roma groups, etc. The Roma people learn this rules and values during their first socialization when they are younger than 9 years old, and of course, women take care of this aspect.

But Roma people don`t live in a cristal room, without any contact with the dominant culture and society and during this centuries roma culture have been in contact with local cultures, creating a local Roma culture as a mix between local culture and Roma culture. So in this case we could talk about romani cultures, romani cultures in my opinion is when Roma Culture find local culture, it's happen when roma communities gave up their traveler way of life and stayed in a community for ever.

The spannish exemple:

 Perhaps, one of the best examples of this racial mixing between local and roma people. Gitanos (name that Spanish Roma people want to be called), have been living in Spain since 1412 even before the creation of Spain as a State-Nation. In Spain nobody doubts that Gitanos are Spanish citizen, well not all there are some racist groups who refuse gitanos as a citizens, but this is not my problem, however it is their problem. (I do apologizes for this personal note).

The first place where we could find this mix is Language, Gitanos have our own language neither Spanish not Romani, it's called Caló, and the main characteristic is that we use some romani words mixed with Spanish idiom grammatical rules. For instance in Spain I sue this sentence "Yo Sinelo calo" to say I'm Roma, for the same sentence a Roma from Europe will say Me Sam Roma.

 The other important cultural thing where Gitano culture is completely mixed with local culture is music, specify Flamenco Music, which is one of the most famous Spanish kind of music, I would like to emphasize that level of mixing race, in Spain, is higher than in any others countries, concretely in the South in Andalucia region. Cinema, Theatre and Painting are fields where mixing activities between roma and no roma people often happen. The main problems is that it happen with a fewer Roma, artist who are in the top of the society and where the contact point between Roma and not Roma is many times, business is behind art.

But what happen in the undeserserved areas? What happens with Roma people who lives in marginal neibourghood, with a complete lack of opportunities in this "art bussines world"? how art,, cante, dancing, painting could become an opportunity to this group.

First of all, we need to consider that the possibility of "social mobility" from the button of the society to the top, is itself a good challenge for this target, because they can see in the most Roma famous artist a way to get over this situation. So I think that its good to have an artist Roma Elite in Spain, sometimes the problem is the behavior of a part of this group. When they

success they forget about roots and refuse doing activities with Roma people. But in my opinion this is a collateral action and we can´t consider this point as a real key competence, otherwise, it should be a result of improving key competence.

Acording to the European Comission, key competences should provided through lifelong learning. This framework should cover ICT, technological culture, foreign languages, entrepreneurship and social skills. Also and continuous with Europena Comission working papers a 'key competence' is one crucial for three aspects of life:

a. personal fulfilment and development throughout life (cultural capital): key competences must enable people to pursue individual objectives in life, driven by personal interests, aspirations and the desire to continue learning throughout life.
b. active citizenship and inclusion (social capital): key competences should allow everybody to participate as an active citizen in society;
c. employability (human capital): the capacity of each and every person to obtain a decent job in the labour market.

But in my opinion the main **goal of providing key competence t**o Roma Community should be reduce the acces gap between Roma and Non Roma in the acces to services, education, labour market, housing, social participation, etc. in one word, provide equal access and Opportunites. Equality should encompass four central aims

1.- To break the cycle of disadvantage associated with mermbership of a particular group
2.- To promote respect for equal dignity and worth of all persons, redressing stigma,stereotypes, hulillation, based on membership of the group
3.-To provide positive affirmation of individuals as a members of the group
4.-to facilitate full participation in society.

Regarding both goals if we will work in the Key competences main aspects also we have been working in the equality aspects. The results should be citizens, from all the cultures, more engaged with the civic society and more actives in the local issues.

In my personal opinion there are some points to catch up this goals (key competence + Equality) in the Roma community and their acces in the labour market. I would like describing this possibilities talking about the four employability corners.

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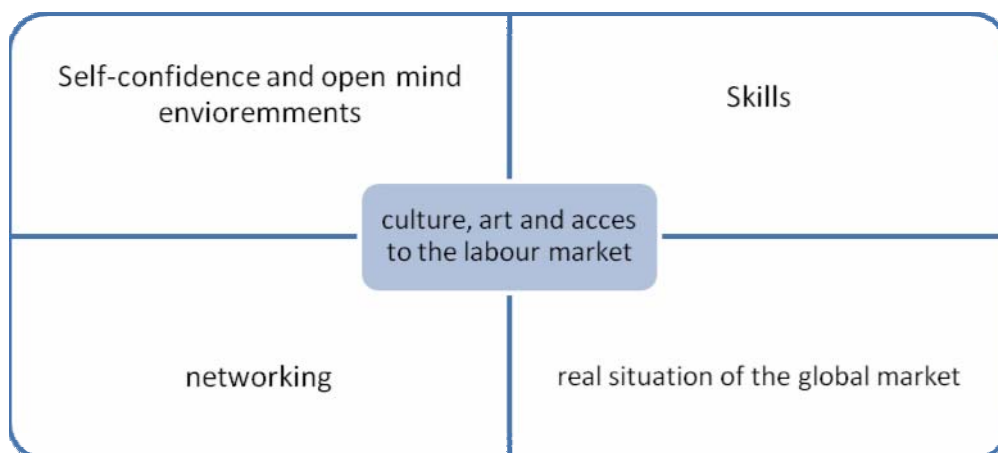
Self-confidence and open mind environments

In my opinion this is the most important key to promote cultural skills as a means to include people. We need to increase the self-confidence of all the actors. The Public Administration should promote fair policies in order to support the promotion at all levels (local, regional and National) of the romani culture in order to show all the society the values of Romani culture. Governnaments in cooperation with NGO's and others stakeholders should promote targeting activities to promote young roma artists in all the fields (music, dance, writing, painting, theatre) and support this group to join in mainstreaming activities, companies, exhibitions, etc. Besides, this kind of policies will improve the intercultural dialogue and the mutual knowledge between roma and non roma communities.

Creating self- confidence environments is a tool to offer roma young people an opportunity to get over their marginal situation. If we create this environment in marginalised neighboruhoods we will open a window to the world to people who have not any hope about their future. Few years ago I promoted a music group of percussion in one of the most poorest and marginalized Roma neighbourhood in Barcelona. The first thing we did with the young roma was to promote self-confidence in the group, showing their powerful and good skills in music, and inviting politics and well recognized artists to hear and play with them. On the other hand, we put in contact this group with African percussionists, our strategy was to mix percussions styles and mix both cultures, promoting intercultural dialogue and the possibility to meet each other. They discover their potential very soon and even played together in some festivals.

Real Situation of the global Market

We should be careful when we support Roma artists, giving them a real picture of the pportiunities they might have. When we work with roma people in marginal neighbousrhood they use to think that in a short time them become high level artist and win a lot of money, etc. Some people might believe that they could be vey successful with any kind of personal effort.

Skills

In this neighborhoods we would rather to offer young artist some skills in order to prepare his/her future. They have to learn a bunch of skill to become a real artist, apart of his/her talent, Skills as public relations, working in group, finances, how to prepare a exhibition, performance, communication skills etc.

Networking

This is one of the most important key points to improve the potential of roma artists who are social excluded. A network of stakeholders should be set up, including Public Administration, partners, sponsors, etc,

Impoverished neighbourhoods use to be a micro cosmos inside the cities, with his own rules and values. They are use to stablish a lot of relations between people who lives close them, but they haven't got any contact with the majority society. Create spaces to meet and know other cultures and rules of the society is one of the main questions to solve.

How we can do it?

Self-confidence and open mind environments

Focus on the target.
It is necessary to focus, dedicate money and resources, on people who are not completely excluded and could access to others resources. The project should be thought according to a "targeting approach" not to a mainstreaming. one Mainstreaming will be other phase of this kind of projects. Working with people thinking in the long term, we should not focus on isolated activities which will not have any impact in their lives or future. We should not create wrong expectations; we should tell them the truth ever.

Real Situation of the global Market

Create partnerships with public administrations, create public spaces to show their performaces, paints, dance, concerts. Theaching them to draft good projects, to find out real opportunities.

Skills

To provide good skills to the members of the community, teaching them in different subjects as financial issues, reporting, planification, etc, Public Administrations should provide this kind of learning in specific and complementary courses

Networking

To provide spaces to meet each others. To promote public cultural centres, with a permanent exhibition art of Roma and people from social excluded neighborhood. To create street festivals to express themselves and others specific exhibitions

In order to cacht this point we should:

- Advocacy before governments
- Looking for fundraising with sponsors and enterprises
- Establishing a real negotiation without exclusion with the people from social excluded neighbourhood
- Be Realistic and think on real goals
- Never create wrong expectations in the community
- Promoting positive references, promoting people who could add value in all the levels of society. Not only high level artist

- Working in the basis, with the people from the roots

- Promoting cultural centers in the neighbourhood