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4.5 VETs Inclusion

Empowerment Guidebook

NAME OF THE PROJECT PARTNER:

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Introduction

The *VETs Inclusion Empowerment Guidebook* is the final deliverable of the MIRANDA project. It brings together, in a single reference document, the material produced across three work packages and turns it into something a vocational education and training (VET) provider can actually use: a catalogue of best practices for making VET accessible, welcoming and effective for Roma learners, and a set of techniques for combining those practices into an inclusive learning environment.

What it compiles. The guidebook draws on the full set of MIRANDA outputs. Every best practice in Part 2 has been extracted from, and takes into account, the following eleven project results:

Work Package 2 — Raising the attractiveness of VET schools for Roma learners

- Activity 2.1 — Roma Stakeholders Database
- Activity 2.2 — Engagement Methodology with the Roma Community
- Activity 2.3 — Outreach Strategies for Roma Learners
- Activity 2.4 — Adaptation Action Plan of VET Schools to Attract Roma Learners

Work Package 3 — Inclusion empowerment of the VET schools

- Activity 3.1 — Guidebook: Supporting and Empowerment Services for Roma Learners
- Activity 3.2 — Guidebook: Intervention Mechanism for Tackling Dropouts of Roma Learners
- Activity 3.3 — Short-term “Power-Up” Courses for the Upskilling of Roma Learners

Work Package 4 — Enhancing trainers and staff inclusion skills

- Activity 4.1 — Identification of Learning Objectives
- Activity 4.2 — Development of the Curriculum Outline
- Activity 4.3 — Development of the Training Material
- Activity 4.4 — Short-Term Joint Trainers/Staff Training Activity (LTTA)

Who it is for. VET trainers and teaching staff; learner support staff, mentors and mediators; programme leaders, quality managers and school directors; Roma learners themselves; and the employers, Roma-led organisations, families and public authorities that VET providers work with. It is written for VET schools in general, not only for the schools in the consortium.

How it is organised. The guidebook has three parts.



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Part 1 — Why best practices? explains why the project chose the best-practice format rather than a conventional narrative handbook, and what that choice does for microlearning, adult education, learner engagement and the cognitive load carried by trainers.

Part 2 — The best practices is the catalogue itself: 89 practices, clustered by audience. Cluster A holds 28 practices addressed to Roma learners. Cluster B holds 61 practices addressed to trainers, VET professionals and the institutions they work in, organised into eight themes and tagged by level — classroom, institution or system.

Part 3 — Making an inclusive learning environment is the synthesis. It sets out what an inclusive learning environment consists of, describes the techniques that produce it, and shows which best practices combine to deliver each one. Nothing in Part 3 is new content; it is a map for using Part 2.

How to use it. Nobody needs to read this document from cover to cover. A trainer preparing a session can go straight to Part 3, find the technique they need, and follow the cross-references into Part 2. A quality manager can work through a theme in Cluster B as an audit checklist. A staff development lead can take one practice per team meeting. A learner or a mentor can work through Cluster A on its own. The practices are numbered (L01–L28, T01–T61) so that they can be cited, assigned and tracked.

Part 1 — Why best practices? The rationale for the format

A guidebook can be written in many ways. MIRANDA chose to organise almost all of its content as a numbered catalogue of discrete best practices rather than as continuous chapters. That was a deliberate instructional decision, and this part explains it. The format is not packaging; it determines whether trainers actually use the material.

1.1 What a “best practice” is in this guidebook

Every practice in Part 2 follows the same four-element template:

- **A title that states the action.** “Read learner behaviour through a barrier lens, not a motivation lens” is a title a trainer can act on. “Socio-economic determinants of participation” is not.
- **Key points.** Two to four bullets that carry the operational core of the practice. A reader in a hurry can stop here.
- **What it means.** A short explanatory section that supplies the reasoning, the evidence and the worked detail.
- **Provenance and counterpart.** The source document and original number the practice came from, and — where one exists — the practice on the other side of the learner/provider relationship.

The template never varies. That consistency is doing more work than it appears to, for the reasons set out below.



1.2 Best practices work as microlearning

Microlearning delivers content in short, self-contained units built around a single objective, and it is well suited to workplace and professional learning where uninterrupted study time is scarce (Leong et al., 2021). Each practice in Part 2 is one such unit. It can be read in three to eight minutes, it is complete in itself, and it requires no preceding chapter to make sense.

For a VET provider this has three practical consequences:

- **It fits the working week.** A practice can be read between classes, opened on a phone, or used as the ten-minute item at the start of a team meeting. A 40-page chapter cannot.
- **It survives interruption.** A trainer who stops halfway through the catalogue loses nothing, because the units are not sequentially dependent.
- **It is retrievable.** When a specific problem appears — a learner has stopped attending, an employer has made a discriminatory remark, an assessment looks unfair — the relevant practice can be found and read in the moment the need arises. Learning attached to an immediate problem is far more likely to be applied than learning delivered in advance of one.

1.3 Best practices match how adults learn

Adult learners are self-directing, bring substantial experience to the task, become ready to learn when a role demands it, and are oriented to problems rather than to subjects (Knowles et al., 2015). A best-practice catalogue is built for exactly that learner.

Adult learning

principle	How the format responds
Self-direction	The reader chooses the entry point, the order and the pace. There is no prescribed route.
Experience as a resource	Each practice states a position that the reader can test against what they already do. Disagreement is a usable response.
Readiness tied to role	Level tags (CLASSROOM, INSTITUTION, SYSTEM) let readers filter to the practices that belong to their own job.
Problem-centred orientation	Practices are framed as actions and decisions, not as topics.



Adult learning

principle

How the format responds

Internal motivation

The provider counterpart shown under each learner practice makes visible why the work matters to somebody other than the reader.

Merrill's (2002) first principles of instruction point the same way: learning is promoted when it is problem-centred, when existing knowledge is activated, when new knowledge is demonstrated and applied, and when it is integrated into the learner's world. The practice template moves through those stages in miniature.

1.4 Best practices support learner engagement

The format also affects Roma learners directly, not only through the trainer.

Cluster A is written in the second person and addressed to learners themselves. That is not a stylistic flourish. A learner who can read "Know your safety rights and responsibilities" and see exactly what is expected has been given information that is normally transmitted informally — and informal transmission is precisely the channel that excludes people who lack prior familiarity with the institution. Making the expectation explicit and portable removes a hidden barrier.

The paired structure reinforces this. Every learner practice that has a provider counterpart names it. A learner reading L27, "Manage money: budget, save and avoid debt", can see that the institution has a reciprocal obligation under T33 and T61. The catalogue therefore does not place the whole burden of change on the learner, which is the failure mode of most "employability skills" material.

1.5 Best practices manage the trainer's cognitive load

Working memory is severely limited, and instructional material that imposes unnecessary processing demands reduces how much is learned and applied (Sweller et al., 2019). Three kinds of load are usually distinguished: the intrinsic difficulty of the material, the extraneous load created by how it is presented, and the germane load involved in building usable mental structures. Design can do little about the first, a great deal about the second, and should protect the third.

The best-practice format attacks extraneous load in five ways:

- **One concept per unit.** No practice asks the reader to hold two unrelated ideas at once.
- **A predictable template.** Once a reader has read three practices, they know where the actionable core sits, where the reasoning sits and where the cross-reference sits. Navigation stops costing attention (Mayer, 2021).



- **Segmentation.** Content arrives in reader-controlled chunks rather than in a continuous stream, which is one of the more reliable ways to reduce processing demand.
- **Signalling.** Numbers, level tags and audience labels tell the reader what is relevant before they read it, so nothing is processed unnecessarily.
- **No redundancy.** The de-duplication described in section 1.7 means a reader does not encounter the same practice three times under different names and spend effort deciding whether they are the same thing.

The germane benefit is that the numbering itself becomes a shared professional vocabulary. “We are weak on T29 and T38” is a faster and more precise conversation than “we should probably do more outreach and personalisation.”

1.6 One format, six uses

A single well-structured catalogue can do the work of several documents. Part 2 is designed to be used in all of the following ways without modification:

- **A self-study path.** One practice per session, worked through in theme order.
- **Paired staff development.** A learner practice read against its provider counterpart, showing simultaneously what is asked of the learner and what the institution must supply.
- **An audit checklist.** Practice by practice, recording what exists, what is partial and what is missing.
- **A planning tool.** Each practice converts directly into an improvement action with an owner and a deadline.
- **Ready-made training material.** Each practice is already the outline of a short workshop or team discussion.
- **A dissemination asset.** Discrete, numbered, self-contained units transfer between institutions, sectors and languages far more easily than a narrative handbook does.

1.7 How the 89 practices were produced

The catalogue is a compilation of eleven project outputs listed in the Introduction, yielding **111 candidate practices**.

Audience clustering. Every practice was assigned to one of two audiences: Cluster A for Roma learners (L01–L28) and Cluster B for trainers, VET professionals and institutions (T01–T61).

Level tagging. Because Cluster B spans very different kinds of work, each practice carries a tag — CLASSROOM for the trainer’s own practice, INSTITUTION for the provider’s structures and services, SYSTEM for policy, funding and law — so that a classroom trainer can find what is theirs without reading the institutional material.



Provenance preservation. Every practice is tagged with the source document and original number it came from. Counterpart practices that look similar but are the same subject seen from opposite sides — the learner builds a skill, the provider makes it possible — were reviewed and deliberately kept, not deleted, and are mapped to each other in Part 3.

1.8 Format limits

A catalogue **does not set priorities**. Eighty-nine practices are not eighty-nine equally urgent tasks. Part 3 exists partly to solve this, by grouping practices into starter, developing and advanced bundles.

A catalogue **does not adapt itself**. Every practice has to be tested against national law, qualification rules, safeguarding duties, data protection requirements and — above all — the judgement of local Roma communities. A practice adopted without that testing is a template, not an improvement.

A catalogue **is not a substitute for resourcing**. A significant number of the Cluster B practices require paid mediation, paid community expertise, staff time and leadership commitment. Reading them costs nothing; implementing them does not.

Part 2 — The best practices

This part is the catalogue: 89 consolidated best practices, clustered by the audience they address. Cluster A holds 28 practices written for Roma learners themselves. Cluster B holds 61 practices written for trainers, VET professionals and the institutions they work in, grouped into eight themes and tagged by level — [CLASSROOM] for the trainer's own practice in the room, [INSTITUTION] for the provider's structures, services and partnerships, and [SYSTEM] for policy, funding and law.

Each practice carries its source reference so that any statement can be traced back to the project deliverable it came from. Part 3 shows how the practices combine.

Overview of the 89 practices

CLUSTER A — 28 PRACTICES FOR ROMA LEARNERS

#	Practice
L01	Master computer fundamentals



#	Practice
L02	Organise files and folders systematically
L03	Search the internet effectively and evaluate information
L04	Protect yourself online
L05	Communicate professionally by email
L06	Know your safety rights and responsibilities
L07	Distinguish hazards from risks
L08	Follow safe working practices
L09	Use personal protective equipment (PPE) correctly
L10	Be ready for emergencies and report everything
L11	Explore vocational sectors before choosing a path
L12	Put the customer at the centre of service
L13	Communicate clearly and empathetically with customers
L14	Handle complaints and resolve conflict constructively
L15	Apply safe food-handling principles
L16	Deliver remarkable hospitality service
L17	Maintain housekeeping standards and respect guest privacy
L18	Work effectively in teams
L19	Manage your time and prioritise effectively
L20	Set SMART goals
L21	Act with integrity and accountability
L22	Practise professional etiquette, communication and appearance
L23	Prepare strong application documents (CV, cover letter, forms)
L24	Prepare thoroughly for interviews
L25	Network and build a professional online presence
L26	Search for jobs strategically and avoid scams
L27	Manage money: budget, save and avoid debt



#	Practice
L28	Reflect, seek feedback and plan your lifelong development

CLUSTER B — 61 PRACTICES FOR TRAINERS, VET PROFESSIONALS AND INSTITUTIONS

B1 — Knowing Roma learners, context and bias (5)

#	Practice	Level
T01	Build cultural competence: accurate knowledge, self-awareness and cross-cultural skill	Classroom
T02	Read learner behaviour through a barrier lens, not a motivation lens	Classroom
T03	Recognise and counter bias in perception, expectations and assessment	Classroom / Institution
T04	Reflect systematically on professional practice	Classroom
T05	Cultivate collective professional learning	Institution

B2 — Inclusive pedagogy, assessment and learning design (9)

#	Practice	Level
T06	Make learning accessible, clear and relevant	Classroom
T07	Build flexibility and multiple pathways into learning design, scheduling and delivery	Institution
T08	Scaffold learning toward independence	Classroom
T09	Facilitate active, safe participation for every learner	Classroom
T10	Assess formatively with transparent criteria and constructive feedback	Classroom
T11	Accept varied evidence of learning and support progression	Classroom
T12	Adapt support without stigmatising learners	Classroom
T13	Recognise and validate prior learning (RPL)	Institution
T14	Provide academic support that closes formal-education gaps	Institution

B3 — Communication, trust and relationships (7 + 1 checklist)



#	Practice	Level
T15	Communicate in plain, multimodal, culturally adapted language	Classroom
T16	Manage and read non-verbal and extraverbal signals	Classroom
T17	Practise empathy, active listening and the learner's voice	Classroom
T18	Structure questioning: open, then focused, then closed	Classroom
T19	Use silence strategically	Classroom
T20	Manage difficult conversations and repair trust professionally	Classroom
T21	Build trust: know the history of exclusion, act with transparency, consistency and safe spaces	Classroom / Institution
—	<i>Staff checklist: the nine-point communication protocol</i>	Classroom
B4 — Non-discrimination, rights and legal anchoring (5)		
#	Practice	Level
T22	Distinguish and identify all forms of discrimination	Classroom / Institution
T23	Eliminate exclusionary language and microaggressions	Institution
T24	Audit institutional rules for hidden, indirect exclusion	Institution
T25	Anchor practice and interventions in legal and policy frameworks — and close the enforcement gap	System
T26	Enforce anti-discrimination: mandatory teacher training, reporting systems and professional accountability	Institution / System
B5 — Learner support and empowerment services (14)		
#	Practice	Level
T27	Ground every service in triangulated, evidence-based needs assessment	Institution
T28	Coordinate wraparound, multi-stakeholder support around the learner	Institution
T29	Remove barriers to support uptake through proactive outreach	Institution
T30	Deliver multilingual, culturally responsive language support and language accommodation	Institution



#	Practice	Level
T31	Bridge the digital divide	Institution
T32	Offer psychosocial and emotional support	Institution
T33	Build life skills and financial literacy	Classroom / Institution
T34	Train self-advocacy, leadership and rights awareness	Classroom
T35	Foster social inclusion and civic engagement	Institution
T36	Deliver gender-sensitive services for Roma girls and young mothers	Institution
T37	Connect learners with Roma role models, mentors and peer networks	Institution
T38	Personalise services through tailored implementation and individual learning plans	Institution
T39	Evaluate services and institutionalise evidence-based self-review and development planning	Institution
T40	Learn from proven programmes	Institution

B6 — Institutional design, leadership and partnerships (8)

#	Practice	Level
T41	Design inclusion into the institution from the outset	Institution
T42	Cultivate a visibly inclusive institutional culture	Institution
T43	Secure committed leadership and shared responsibility	Institution
T44	Partner with employers: co-design, mentoring, apprenticeships and inclusive workplaces	Institution
T45	Provide Roma-specific career guidance, real work experience and mentor networks	Institution
T46	Engage and empower families and communities as partners in learning and retention	Institution
T47	Deploy Roma mediators as the first point of contact	Institution
T48	Institutionalise services and interventions — from project to state-owned, funded, legally protected system	System

B7 — Community engagement and dialogue (9)



#	Practice	Level
T49	Prepare a six-category community information base before any engagement	Institution
T50	Agree a formal cooperation protocol with the Roma Community Centre and mediators	Institution
T51	Run the community dialogue with explicit ground rules	Institution
T52	Design and run the dialogue: agenda-setting, facilitated exchange, partnership-building	Institution
T53	Use participatory and creative methods to maximise Roma participation	Institution
T54	Sustain the dialogue: standing platform, documented action points and closing the loop	Institution / System
T55	Make VET visible: open days, site visits and real-life success stories	Institution
T56	Support civil registration and administrative integration	Institution
T57	Enable cultural empowerment and co-decision — learners as designers, not recipients	Institution

B8 — Dropout prevention (4)

#	Practice	Level
T58	Diagnose dropout with data on its structural causes	Institution
T59	Operate an Early Warning and Monitoring System (EWMS)	Institution
T60	Operationalise the EWMS with concrete thresholds and tools	Institution
T61	Provide tailored financial support	Institution / System

Cluster A — Best practices for Roma learners

Source: S1 — MIRANDA Power-Up Courses. Audience: Roma learners themselves. These 28 practices cover work readiness and career development — digital foundations, workplace health and safety, vocational knowledge and customer service, soft skills and professional conduct, career planning and job search, and financial well-being and lifelong growth. Where a provider-side counterpart exists, it is named under the practice.

A1 — DIGITAL FOUNDATIONS



L01 — Master computer fundamentals



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 1

Key points

- Understand the difference between hardware (the physical machine) and software (the programs that run on it).
- Navigate the operating system, desktop, icons and taskbar with confidence.
- Recognise that the operating system is what makes a computer usable in the first place.

What it means: Digital confidence begins with understanding how a computer actually works. Hardware refers to the physical parts you can touch — the case, monitor, keyboard and mouse — while software comprises the programs and applications that tell that hardware what to do. At the centre of it all is the operating system (such as Windows, macOS or Linux), which manages the machine and allows every other program to run. Learners should be able to identify the main components of a computer, move around the desktop, open applications from their icons and use the taskbar. This foundational literacy removes the fear of technology and prepares learners for every subsequent digital task, from searching the web to drafting a CV.

Provider counterpart: **T31 — Bridge the digital divide**

L02 — Organise files and folders systematically



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 2

Key points

- Understand the difference between a file (a single digital item) and a folder (a container that groups files).



- Create a clear, named folder structure and save work there consistently.
- Use descriptive file names and appropriate file types (e.g. .docx to edit, .pdf to share).

What it means: Digital organisation is the equivalent of a tidy filing cabinet. A file is a single item — a document, photo or song — while a folder is a container that groups related files together, and folders can hold other folders. Without a system, digital work quickly becomes impossible to find. Best practice is to create purpose-built folders (for example a course folder), use descriptive names such as CV_for_Hospital_Job rather than Document1, and save work to the correct location from the very first save. Choosing the right file type also matters: .docx is ideal for editable documents, while .pdf is preferred when a file must be shared and viewed but not easily changed. Good organisation saves time, reduces stress and projects professionalism.

Provider counterpart: T31 — Bridge the digital divide

L03 — Search the internet effectively and evaluate information



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 3

Key points

- Use specific keywords and quotation marks to target exact phrases.
- Assess the credibility, currency and purpose of online information.
- Cross-check findings against reliable official sources.

What it means: Searching well is a skill, not luck. Using specific keywords — “how to make Windows run faster” instead of “my computer is slow” — and quotation marks for exact phrases dramatically improves results. Equally important is evaluating what you find, because not everything online is true. Learners should ask who wrote the information, why it was written and whether it is recent, then cross-check against official government, educational or established news sources. This critical approach is essential both for everyday decisions and for professional research, protecting learners from misinformation and low-quality sources.

Provider counterpart: T31 — Bridge the digital divide



L04 — Protect yourself online



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 4

Key points

- Use strong, unique passwords (or passphrases) and never share personal details carelessly.
- Think before clicking links or opening attachments from unknown senders.
- Keep personal and financial information private.

What it means: Online safety is a non-negotiable part of digital literacy. Strong passwords should mix upper- and lower-case letters, numbers and symbols — or better yet, use a memorable passphrase — and should never include obvious personal information such as a name or birthday. Caution with links and attachments is equally vital, as they can carry viruses or lead to phishing attempts. Learners should treat unsolicited messages with suspicion and verify the source before acting. These habits protect not only the individual's data and money but also their professional reputation, forming the foundation of responsible digital citizenship.

Provider counterpart: **T31 — Bridge the digital divide**

L05 — Communicate professionally by email



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 5

Key points

- Write a clear, specific subject line that summarises the message.
- Structure the body with a polite greeting, a concise message and a proper closing.



- Mention attachments in the text and double-check everything before sending.

What it means: Email is a primary professional communication channel, and quality matters. A clear subject line — “Application for Administrative Assistant Position — Maria Garcia” rather than “Hello” — ensures the message is opened and understood quickly. The body should follow a three-part structure: a polite greeting, a concise main message that states the purpose in the first sentence or two, and a courteous closing with your full name. Attachments deserve special care: always mention them in the body, and verify the file is actually attached before sending. A final review of the recipient’s address, subject line, tone and attachments prevents embarrassing and costly mistakes.

Provider counterparts: **T31 — Bridge the digital divide; T33 — Build life skills and financial literacy**

A2 — WORKPLACE HEALTH & SAFETY

L06 — Know your safety rights and responsibilities



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 6

Key points

- Understand the three core rights: to know, to participate and to refuse unsafe work.
- Recognise your personal duties: follow procedures, use equipment correctly and report hazards.
- Know what employers are legally required to provide.

What it means: Safety is a shared partnership built on clear rights and responsibilities. Every worker holds three fundamental rights: the right to know about hazards and receive training, the right to participate in safety matters without fear of reprisal, and the right to refuse work they reasonably believe is dangerous. Alongside these rights come duties — following procedures, using equipment as instructed and reporting hazards promptly. Employers, in turn, must provide a safe environment, control harmful agents, deliver training in a language workers understand, supply personal protective equipment at no cost, and maintain clear reporting procedures. Understanding both sides of this partnership empowers workers to protect themselves and hold employers accountable.



Provider counterpart: **T44 — Partner with employers: co-design, mentoring, apprenticeships, inclusive workplaces**

L07 — Distinguish hazards from risks



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 7

Key points

- A hazard is a potential source of harm; a risk is the likelihood and severity of that harm occurring.
- Workers report hazards; employers assess and control risks.
- Recognise common hazards such as electricity, noise, slippery floors and chemicals.

What it means: Effective prevention begins with clear concepts. A hazard is anything with the potential to cause harm — a stretched cable, a noisy machine or a slippery floor. Risk is the likelihood that the hazard will actually cause damage, combined with how severe that damage could be. The same cable stretched across a rarely used storeroom is low risk; across a busy hallway it is high risk. The worker's role is to spot and report the hazard; the employer's role is to assess and control the risk, for example by rerouting the cable or using a cable cover. This division of responsibility is the backbone of a functioning safety system and helps everyone focus their efforts where they matter most.

Provider counterpart: **T44 — Partner with employers**

L08 — Follow safe working practices



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 8

Key points

- Keep the workspace clean, clear and orderly to prevent slips, trips and fires.



- Lift correctly: bend the knees, keep the back straight and hold loads close to the body.
- Use tools only as intended and never operate equipment without training.

What it means: Daily habits prevent the majority of workplace accidents. Good housekeeping — cleaning spills immediately, keeping aisles and exits clear, storing tools after use and disposing of waste properly — removes the conditions behind most slips, trips, falls and fires. When lifting, the safe plan is to assess the load, stand close with feet shoulder-width apart, bend the knees rather than the back, lift with the legs and avoid twisting while carrying. For tools and machinery, the golden rules are to use only equipment you have been trained on, inspect it before use, use the right tool for the job and never remove safety guards. These practices turn safety from an abstract idea into everyday behaviour.

L09 — Use personal protective equipment (PPE) correctly



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 9

Key points

- PPE is the last line of defence when other safety controls are insufficient.
- Select the right PPE for the hazard — head, eye, hand, foot or high-visibility protection.
- Wear it correctly and consistently, and keep it in good condition.

What it means: Personal protective equipment is a physical barrier between the worker and a hazard, used when engineering and administrative controls cannot fully eliminate the risk. The type of PPE must match the hazard: hard hats against falling objects, safety glasses or goggles against particles and splashes, cut- or chemical-resistant gloves for the hands, steel-toed boots for the feet, and high-visibility clothing near traffic. The crucial point is that PPE only works if it is worn correctly and consistently and kept in good condition. PPE is not a substitute for safe systems of work but a vital final safeguard, and workers should treat it as part of their professional discipline.



L10 — Be ready for emergencies and report everything



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 10

Key points

- Know exits, alarms, extinguishers, first-aid locations and the assembly point from day one.
- Learn the basic procedures for fire, medical emergencies and evacuation.
- Report hazards, incidents and near-misses immediately and factually.

What it means: In an emergency, seconds count, and preparedness depends on knowledge acquired beforehand. On the first day, workers should locate all emergency exits, fire alarms, extinguishers and the assembly point; learn the sound of the alarm; find the nearest first-aid kit and trained first-aider; and understand the basic emergency procedures. Equally important is a reporting culture: “if you see something, say something.” Reporting is not about blame — it is the single most effective way to prevent future accidents. Workers should report hazards, incidents and especially near-misses, which are free lessons pointing to where a future accident may occur. Clear, factual and immediate reporting saves lives.

A3 — VOCATIONAL KNOWLEDGE & CUSTOMER SERVICE

L11 — Explore vocational sectors before choosing a path



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 11

Key points



- Understand the core characteristics, job roles and progression paths of key sectors.
- Identify the technical and transferable skills each sector demands.
- Match sectors to your own interests, strengths and values.

What it means: A well-informed career choice starts with knowledge of the landscape. Vocational fields such as hospitality, retail, construction and IT each have distinct characteristics, entry-level roles and career pathways. Hospitality centres on service — food and beverage, accommodation and tourism; retail revolves around selling goods to consumers, increasingly online; construction builds and maintains our physical world; and IT powers the modern economy through software, networks and cybersecurity. Each sector also demands a blend of technical skills and transferable skills such as communication, teamwork and problem-solving. Learners who explore these sectors systematically — and honestly match them against their own personality, strengths and interests — make more confident and sustainable career decisions.

Provider counterpart: **T45 — Provide Roma-specific career guidance, real work experience and mentor networks**

L12 — Put the customer at the centre of service



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 12

Key points

- Courtesy, helpfulness and competence shape how customers judge quality.
- Positive personal interaction drives loyalty, recommendations and repeat business.
- Staff attitude directly influences the store's or business's reputation.

What it means: Beyond products and prices, what truly shapes customer perceptions is human interaction. Research on retail service quality (RSQ) shows that staff courtesy, helpfulness and knowledge are central to how customers judge a business. A warm greeting, a genuine check-in and confident product knowledge build trust and credibility, while indifferent or discourteous service drives customers away. Positive interactions increase repeat purchases,



recommendations and loyalty, and loyal customers are also more forgiving when things go wrong. For any customer-facing worker, mastering personal interaction is therefore not a soft extra but the very heart of service quality and commercial success.

L13 — Communicate clearly and empathetically with customers



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 13

Key points

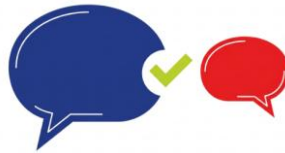
- Listen actively and confirm understanding by rephrasing.
- Explain things in plain, accessible language rather than jargon.
- Build rapport through respectful, attentive communication.

What it means: Strong communication is the foundation of customer service. It begins with active listening — giving the customer full attention, asking clarifying questions and rephrasing to confirm understanding. It also means translating specialist knowledge into accessible terms: instead of “this fabric is 80% polyester with high durability,” say “this fabric is strong and easy to clean, so it will last longer.” Building a relationship matters too, because customers who feel understood become advocates who recommend the business. When communication is clear and empathetic, misunderstandings fall away, trust grows and the entire service experience improves.

Related Cluster B practice: **T15 — Communicate in plain, multimodal, culturally adapted language** (the trainer-side version of the same plain-language discipline)



L14 — Handle complaints and resolve conflict constructively



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 14

Key points

- Stay calm, listen first without interrupting, and seek a fair solution or alternative.
- Use reflective listening, tactical empathy and clear negotiation.
- Focus on the issue, not the person, and aim for win-win outcomes.

What it means: A complaint is not a burden but an opportunity in disguise, and how a business responds is one of the strongest drivers of customer loyalty. The best response is to stay calm, let the customer speak without interruption, and seek a fair solution — such as an exchange, store credit or another alternative — rather than rigidly repeating policy. Skilful conflict resolution adds specific techniques: a self-care pause to ensure you are emotionally ready, reflective listening (summarising back what you heard), tactical empathy (acknowledging feelings even when you disagree), and negotiation that explores options while being honest when a request cannot be fully met. Throughout, focus on the issue rather than the person, avoid defensiveness and assumptions, and show gratitude for feedback — even negative feedback. Effective handling turns frustrated customers into loyal advocates.

Related Cluster B practice: **T20 — Manage difficult conversations and repair trust professionally**



L15 — Apply safe food-handling principles



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 15

Key points

- Follow the WHO five keys: keep clean, separate raw and cooked, cook thoroughly, keep at safe temperatures, use safe water and materials.
- Practise rigorous personal hygiene, including proper handwashing.
- Respect the “danger zone” (5°C–60°C) where bacteria multiply rapidly.

What it means: Food safety is the first line of defence protecting guests from foodborne illness. The World Health Organization distils best practice into five keys: keep clean; separate raw and cooked foods to prevent cross-contamination; cook thoroughly to kill harmful microorganisms; keep food at safe temperatures, avoiding the danger zone between 5°C and 60°C where bacteria grow quickly; and use safe water and materials. Personal hygiene is equally critical — washing hands for at least 20 seconds, wearing clean uniforms, tying back hair, removing jewellery and never working while ill. Food safety is everyone’s responsibility, and a strong food-safety culture, led by management and reinforced through regular training, is what guests ultimately trust.



L16 — Deliver remarkable hospitality service



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 16

Key points

- Make a strong first impression through cleanliness, appearance and a warm greeting.
- Adapt your style to the guest and read their cues.
- Exceed expectations through small, consistent gestures.

What it means: In hospitality, guests often remember how they were treated more than what they ate or where they slept. First impressions set the tone — guests immediately notice cleanliness, staff appearance and manners. Communication at the table defines comfort: make polite suggestions without being pushy, adapt your style to the setting and read the guests' pace, tone and body language. Trust is built by checking and confirming important details, especially around allergies and dietary restrictions. Finally, exceeding expectations — remembering a guest's name, correcting a mistake with courtesy and delivering consistent quality — transforms a satisfactory stay into a memorable one and earns lasting loyalty.



L17 — Maintain housekeeping standards and respect guest privacy



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 17

Key points

- Follow standardised cleaning checklists and routines consistently.
- Always knock, announce yourself and respect guest privacy and belongings.
- Keep master keys secure at all times.

What it means: The guest room is the heart of the hotel, and cleanliness is typically the guest's number-one priority. Housekeeping therefore depends on standardised procedures that ensure consistency: following cleaning checklists and schedules, respecting guest privacy and personal belongings, and always knocking and announcing before entering a room — waiting before re-entering if there is no answer. Security is also paramount: master keys must be kept secure and never left unattended. Clear roles — executive housekeepers supervising, room attendants cleaning and support staff handling linen and supplies — ensure that every space is safe, hygienic and comfortable, which is the foundation of guest satisfaction.



A4 — SOFT SKILLS & PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

L18 — Work effectively in teams



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 18

Key points

- Clarify roles early and match strengths to tasks.
- Practise active listening, constructive feedback and shared decision-making.
- Build trust through reliability, transparency and respect.

What it means: Teamwork multiplies what individuals can achieve. Effective teams pool diverse skills for faster, higher-quality results, spark creativity through different perspectives and provide mutual support that reduces stress. The foundations are clear roles — defining duties early avoids duplication and confusion — and matching responsibilities to each member's strengths. Core collaborative behaviours include active listening, open and respectful communication, constructive feedback and shared decision-making. Trust is built through reliability, honesty and transparency, and conflicts are best addressed early with calm, win-win solutions. Role-playing and reflection help learners internalise these skills, preparing them for the collaborative reality of nearly every modern workplace.

Provider counterpart: **T33 — Build life skills and financial literacy**

L19 — Manage your time and prioritise effectively



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 19



Key points

- Use tools such as to-do lists, the Eisenhower Matrix and time-blocking.
- Apply the Pomodoro technique for focused work.
- Limit distractions and review your plan regularly.

What it means: Time is the one resource everyone has in equal measure, and managing it well reduces stress, boosts productivity and improves work-life balance. Practical techniques make this concrete: to-do lists and planners organise tasks; the Eisenhower Matrix separates urgent from important work; time-blocking schedules specific tasks; and the Pomodoro technique uses short, focused intervals (typically 25 minutes) followed by breaks. Setting realistic deadlines, limiting distractions such as phone use and social media, and regularly reviewing and adjusting the plan are equally important. The goal of time management is not to do more, but to do what matters most.

Provider counterpart: **T33 — Build life skills and financial literacy**

L20 — Set SMART goals



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 20

Key points

- Make goals Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.
- Break large goals into smaller milestones and steps.
- Write goals down and review progress regularly.

What it means: Clear goals provide direction, motivation and a sense of progress, transforming vague ambitions into actionable plans. The SMART framework ensures goals are Specific (clearly defined), Measurable (progress can be tracked), Achievable (realistic given your resources), Relevant (aligned with your interests and opportunities) and Time-bound (with a clear timeframe). Large goals should be broken into smaller milestones — each a checkpoint that builds confidence and momentum. Writing goals down increases commitment and accountability, and reviewing them



regularly allows adjustment as circumstances change. Whether short-, medium- or long-term, SMART goals give learners a sense of control over their future.

Provider counterparts: **T33 — Build life skills; T38 — Personalise services through individual learning plans**

L21 — Act with integrity and accountability



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 21

Key points

- Take ownership of your actions, decisions and outcomes — positive or negative.
- Admit mistakes, report problems honestly and communicate early about delays.
- Act ethically even when no one is watching.

What it means: Integrity and accountability are what employers trust most. Accountability means owning the outcome of your work: admitting mistakes and learning from them, reporting problems honestly rather than hiding them, delivering on promises, and communicating early — with a proposed solution — when delays are likely. Integrity means acting consistently with ethical values even when no one is watching, whether that involves refusing to misuse company resources, protecting confidential information or speaking up about wrongdoing. Choosing the ethical path often requires courage, but it builds long-term trust and a strong professional reputation. Rights and responsibilities go hand in hand, and accountable, honest workers are the backbone of any healthy organisation.

Related Cluster B practice: **T26 — Enforce anti-discrimination: professional accountability** (the professional-ethics obligations that sit on the other side of this)



L22 — Practise professional etiquette, communication and appearance



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 22

Key points

- Communicate clearly and respectfully across verbal, non-verbal and digital channels.
- Be punctual — arrive on time or slightly early, and respect others' time.
- Dress and present yourself appropriately for the workplace culture.

What it means: Professionalism is communicated through everything you say and do. Verbal communication should be clear, polite and free of slang; non-verbal cues — eye contact, open posture, a friendly smile and respect for personal space — speak just as loudly. Digital communication demands professional greetings, concise and structured messages, correct spelling, and restraint with emojis or all-caps. Punctuality signals reliability and respect for others' time; while norms vary across cultures, in professional settings it is safest to be on time or slightly early. Appearance also matters: dressing and grooming appropriately for the workplace culture shapes first impressions before a single word is spoken.

Related Cluster B practices: **T16 — Manage and read non-verbal signals; T05 — Cultivate collective professional learning**



A5 — CAREER PLANNING & JOB SEARCH

L23 — Prepare strong application documents (CV, cover letter, forms)



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 23

Key points

- Use a clear CV structure and tailor skills and keywords to each job description.
- Write a cover letter that connects your skills to the role with concrete examples.
- Complete forms carefully, truthfully and consistently with your CV.

What it means: A resume is often your very first impression, and recruiters may spend only seconds scanning it. A professional CV follows an expected structure — contact details, a short personal profile, work experience, education, skills (both technical and soft) and relevant additional sections such as languages, volunteering or achievements. Tailoring matters enormously: mirroring the keywords from the job ad helps the application pass applicant tracking system (ATS) filters and shows a genuine match. Formatting should be clean and consistent — a professional font, headings, bullet points and one to two pages, free of errors and saved as a PDF. A cover letter adds a personal voice: address the recruiter by name, state the role and your motivation, link your skills to the job ad with examples, and close by thanking the employer. Application forms require equal care — follow instructions, use correct file formats, respect word limits and be truthful, as declarations are legally binding.

Provider counterparts: **T45 — Career guidance and real work experience; T13 — Recognise and validate prior learning** (the prior experience a CV draws on)



L24 — Prepare thoroughly for interviews



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 24

Key points

- Research the company, review the job description and prepare for the specific format.
- Use the STAR method (Situation, Task, Action, Result) for behavioural questions.
- Project confidence through dress, body language and a positive attitude.

What it means: Interview success is built on preparation, not luck. Before the interview, research the company, review the job description, practise your answers, plan your route or test your technology, and choose professional clothing. Different formats — in-person, telephone, video and panel — each require specific readiness, from arriving early with printed documents to testing your camera and lighting for video. For behavioural questions, the STAR method provides a clear structure: describe the Situation, your Task, the Action you took and the Result. During the interview, smile, make eye contact, maintain good posture, listen before answering, and avoid interrupting or criticising past employers. Mock interviews and recorded practice are powerful tools for improvement.

Provider counterpart: **T45 — Career guidance and real work experience**

L25 — Network and build a professional online presence



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 25

Key points



- Tap into the hidden job market through genuine, mutually beneficial relationships.
- Build a complete LinkedIn profile and use it strategically.
- Clean up personal social media and manage your digital footprint.

What it means: A large share of jobs are never advertised and are filled through connections — the “hidden job market.” Networking is not about using people but about building genuine relationships, and it can happen anywhere. Start by identifying your existing network, conduct informational interviews, state clearly what kind of work you seek and always thank people for their time. Online, LinkedIn is the essential tool: create a complete profile with a professional photo and clear headline, connect strategically, follow target companies and list your skills. At the same time, protect your reputation by reviewing privacy settings, removing unprofessional content and remembering that employers often check social media.

Provider counterpart: **T44 — Partner with employers** (opening the networks that learners are then able to enter)

L26 — Search for jobs strategically and avoid scams



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 26

Key points

- Use keywords, filters and job alerts; also apply via company pages and public employment services.
- Evaluate postings against a quality checklist and learn the red flags of fraud.
- Maintain a consistent, organised weekly search routine.

What it means: An effective job search is strategic, not random. Online platforms work best with specific keywords, location and date filters, and saved job alerts, while company career pages and public employment services offer direct, verified routes. Every posting should be evaluated against a quality checklist — a clear title and duties, an identifiable employer, a stated location and salary, and clear application instructions. Fraud is a real risk, so learn the red flags: pay or no experience required that seems too good to be true, requests for upfront payment, vague descriptions, poor



communication and unprofessional contact details. Consistency matters, so maintain an organised weekly plan — checking alerts, applying, networking and tracking progress — and treat rejection as a normal part of the process.

Provider counterpart: **T45 — Career guidance and real work experience**

A6 — FINANCIAL WELL-BEING & LIFELONG GROWTH

L27 — Manage money: budget, save and avoid debt



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 27

Key points

- Distinguish fixed, variable and savings categories, and build a realistic budget.
- Pay yourself first, automate savings and set specific goals.
- Understand interest, credit and the difference between good and bad debt.

What it means: Financial literacy is a life skill as important as any professional one. A budget is a plan that shows income, fixed expenses (rent, utilities), variable expenses (food, leisure) and savings, ensuring spending matches priorities. Basic numeracy underpins it all — calculating discounts, splitting bills, checking receipts and tracking working hours. Effective saving is built on strategy: pay yourself first, automate transfers, set specific goals such as an emergency fund and start small, since even modest regular amounts accumulate. Understanding interest is crucial — it works for you when saving and against you when borrowing — and so is avoiding debt traps such as payday loans with extreme interest, unpaid credit card balances, hidden fees and online scams. Financially literate people are less likely to fall into debt and more resilient during emergencies.

Provider counterparts: **T33 — Build life skills and financial literacy; T61 — Provide tailored financial support**



L28 — Reflect, seek feedback and plan your lifelong development



Audience: Roma learners · **Source:** S1 BP 28

Key points

- Use reflection techniques — journaling, guided questions and peer discussion — to learn from experience.
- Give and receive feedback constructively, focusing on actions and growth.
- Turn insights into a Personal Development Plan and commit to continuous learning.

What it means: Growth is a continuous loop of reflection, feedback and planning. Reflection means deliberately reviewing what you learned, what challenged you and how to apply it, using techniques such as journaling, guided questions or group discussion. Good feedback is constructive, specific and balanced; receiving it openly, without defensiveness, and turning it into action is a mark of professionalism. These insights feed a Personal Development Plan (PDP): a written roadmap with goals, actions, timelines and support, grounded in honest self-assessment such as a SWOT analysis. A PDP is not fixed — it grows as you do. Finally, learning does not end with a first qualification: further VET, apprenticeships, adult education and online courses keep you relevant, employable and fulfilled, making lifelong learning the bridge between ambition and achievement.

Provider counterparts: **T04 — Reflect systematically on professional practice** (the same discipline applied by the trainer); **T13 — Recognise and validate prior learning**

Cluster B — Best practices for trainers, VET professionals and institutions

Sources: S2 (engagement methodology), S3 (WP4 training modules), S4 (services and dropout guidebooks). *Audience:* the people who design, deliver and govern VET for Roma learners. Each practice carries a level tag — [CLASSROOM] the trainer's own practice in the room; [INSTITUTION] the provider's structures, services, culture and partnerships; [SYSTEM] policy, funding, law and national/EU frameworks.

B1 — KNOWING ROMA LEARNERS, CONTEXT AND BIAS

T01 — Build cultural competence: accurate knowledge, self-awareness and cross-cultural skill



Level: [CLASSROOM] · **Sources:** S2 BP 09 + S3 BP 1 (*merged*)

Key points

- Cultural competence is a consistent set of knowledge, behaviours and attitudes that lets staff work effectively in a culturally different environment — and it has three components that must all be developed: awareness and attitudes, knowledge, and skills and behaviour.
- Treat “Roma” as a dynamic, internally diverse identity shaped by migration, persecution and resilience — never as a fixed or homogeneous label; prioritise Roma self-representation in materials, examples and narratives.
- Knowledge must be **local**: the history, culture, education problems and family attitudes of the specific community you serve. Communication skills alone are not cultural competence.

What it is and why it works. The term “Roma” has been constructed and reconstructed over centuries, and its portrayal in public narratives has often been the product of external interpretation rather than self-representation. Educators unaware of this history risk reproducing essentialist, homogenised views of a population that is in reality highly diverse — in language, dialects, cultural practices and ways of life. Best practice therefore grounds teaching in accurate historical knowledge, including the legacy of persecution, forced assimilation and the genocide of the Holocaust, and treats that knowledge as directly relevant to practice rather than as background information.

The three components.

- **Awareness and attitudes.** Staff must first know their own culture, values and beliefs and understand how these shape their professional behaviour and their perception of others. Attitudes operate unconsciously, so self-reflection — not instruction — is the instrument for surfacing prejudices and assumptions. A frequent barrier



here is motivational rather than cognitive: policy makers, institutions and trainers must be convinced that cultural competence training matters before it can be delivered.

- **Knowledge.** This is knowledge about the local environment in which Roma students and their families actually live, and about the cultural barriers that operate in communication with them. Sources include the internet, Roma NGOs, participation in community events, and — most valuable — visiting a Roma family at home. The knowledge targets are Roma history and origin; Roma culture; the problems the community faces in education; and the attitudes of particular families towards education. Reported obstacles are the language barrier, the difficulty of obtaining reliable information on cultural characteristics, and the absence of locally relevant training programmes.
- **Skills and behaviour.** Cultural sensitisation across the whole educational staff: respect for diversity, cross-cultural trust-building, effective communication, and overcoming language barriers. **Roma educational mediators are the key accelerator at this stage.**

How to apply. Review curricula, imagery and examples for accuracy and Roma self-representation; value the Romani language and Roma cultural heritage as assets rather than deficits; avoid generalisations. Remember that identity is fluid and shaped by social context, discrimination and personal experience, so not all Roma learners openly identify as Roma — a reality that affects engagement and must be met with discretion and respect.

What to avoid. Stereotypes, which arise from generalisation that ignores the uniqueness of the individual and the dynamic nature of culture. And treating cultural difference as a barrier to be managed rather than as a bridge for building trust.

T02 — Read learner behaviour through a barrier lens



Level: [CLASSROOM] · **Source:** S3 BP 2

Key points

- Attribute irregular attendance, silence or disengagement to structural, institutional and personal/social barriers before judging motivation.



- Know the socio-economic realities — poverty, unstable housing, family responsibilities, mobility, health disparities — that shape participation.
- Replace penalty-based responses with support-based responses.

What it means: Roma learners' participation is shaped by poverty, unstable housing, labour-market exclusion, poorer health status and intergenerational disadvantage, reinforced by residential segregation, transport difficulties and digital exclusion. Within families, young people are often expected to contribute to household income or care for siblings and elders, which limits the time and energy available for training. The central professional lesson is that what looks like “low motivation” is usually the visible surface of structural, institutional or personal/social barriers.

A best-practice response therefore starts with diagnosis, not judgement: the trainer asks which barrier is operating before concluding anything about the learner's attitude. The corresponding communication behaviour can be modelled in role-play — listening without interrupting, mirroring what was heard in empathetic language (“I heard that you want to stay in education, but family responsibilities and transport problems make it difficult”), and then mobilising support such as flexible communication, mentoring, transport information or cooperation with the family. Attendance penalties and punitive rules are replaced by enabling measures, because punishment compounds the very barriers it ignores.

T03 — Recognise and counter bias in perception, expectations and assessment



Level: [CLASSROOM] / [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S3 BP 27

Key points

- Know the mechanisms: stereotypes and “othering”, selective perception, and expectancy effects such as the Pygmalion effect.
- Monitor decision points — placements, discipline, referrals, grading — for group-based disparities.
- Maintain high expectations for every learner: abilities are not fixed, and “push-to-pass” devalues qualifications.



What it means: Bias operates through stereotypes (which homogenise groups and serve as building blocks of racism and antigypsyism), selective perception (filtering information to confirm existing beliefs, reinforced by fact resistance and truth bias), and expectancy effects — the Pygmalion dynamic in which learners rise or fall toward what their teachers expect, demonstrated in activities where identical problems produce better solutions from groups primed for success.

These mechanisms translate into institutional decisions: automatic routing of struggling students toward VET, discipline applied inconsistently (a schedule change permitted for one religious observance and refused for another), and grading where ethnicity remains a predictor of scores even when other factors are controlled — an imbalance traced to systems that privilege standardised reliability over validity, measuring what is easily measurable rather than true competence.

Best practice responds at both levels: personally, by auditing one's own expectations, attributions (situational, not character-based) and language about learners; institutionally, by reviewing placement, referral, discipline and assessment data for group disparities, and by defending high expectations as the precondition of genuine achievement — because lowering the bar confirms the very stereotypes inclusion exists to defeat.

T04 — Reflect systematically on professional practice



Level: [CLASSROOM] · **Source:** S3 BP 26

Key points

- Use structured tools — journals, reflective portfolios, critical-incident analysis — on a regular rhythm.
- Follow the enhancement cycle: plan, act, evaluate, reflect, adjust — including the willingness to “unlearn” habits that conflict with inclusive values.
- Distinguish intent from impact: assess how words and actions are received, especially by learners who may feel targeted.



What it means: Reflection is the engine of professional development rather than an occasional mood. Its building blocks are specific.

- **Critical-incident analysis.** Events become “critical” only through deliberate, formal analysis — the unexpected moment that sticks in memory is mined for insight about practice, using tools such as the Critical Incident Questionnaire to examine moments of high engagement or confusion.
- **The enhancement cycle.** Practice is understood as *plan – act – evaluate – reflect – act differently*, with a crucial element being **unlearning** — habits that prove ineffective or misaligned with inclusive values must be actively discarded, not merely adjusted.
- **Professional identity work.** Reflection on the questions “who am I as a professional now?” and “who do I want to be?” links daily practice to values.
- **The intent–impact discipline.** Reflective professionals differentiate between what they meant to convey and the effect their words may have on learners who perceive themselves as targeted or insulted — a distinction that requires an explicit equity perspective so that communication does not exclude vulnerable or hard-to-reach groups.

Institutionalised, these practices turn reflection from a private virtue into a professional habit, with dedicated time, tools and peer support.

T05 — Cultivate collective professional learning



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S3 BP 28

Key points



- Normalise peer observation, collaborative feedback and a shared reflection language across teams.
- Shift attention from individual performance to “team agency” — the team’s collective capacity to change how it works.
- Use professional learning communities so that inclusive practice survives staff turnover.

What it means: Collaborative feedback and peer evaluation build a shared professional vision: learning with and alongside colleagues produces a more comprehensive view of competence than solitary self-assessment, and teams that shift their focus from individual performance to team agency become able to rethink their structures and ways of working together. A common reflection language is the practical instrument of this shift — shared questions (“what did I do well? what problems did I face? what will I improve?”) and shared tools (journals, incident analysis, portfolios) allow a team to discuss practice without defensiveness.

The institutional payoff is resilience: when inclusive competence lives in a learning community rather than in exceptional individuals, it does not leave when a colleague does. Sustainable inclusion is a property of systems, and the system’s capacity to reflect, correct and improve together is its most durable asset. Best practice therefore schedules collaborative reflection as routinely as teaching itself — through peer observation cycles, facilitated dialogue and protected time — and treats the team’s learning as a legitimate institutional output, not a by-product.

B2 — INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY, ASSESSMENT AND LEARNING DESIGN

T06 — Make learning accessible, clear and relevant



Level: [CLASSROOM] · **Source:** S3 BP 15

Key points

- Remove entry barriers with plain language, structured information and multiple ways of accessing content.
- State learning objectives, task steps and success criteria explicitly — disengagement often follows unclear expectations, not difficult content.

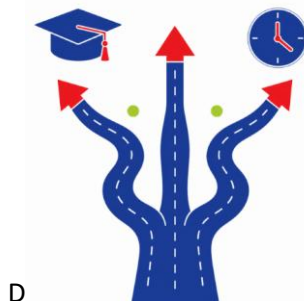


- Connect learning to learners' real professional lives and reflect diverse backgrounds in examples and materials.

What it means: Three of the six inclusive design principles — accessibility, clarity and relevance — concern the basic conditions of engagement. **Accessibility** is less about technical compliance than about removing unnecessary entry barriers: complex language, implicit assumptions about what learners already know, and reliance on a single mode of instruction all block entry before learning begins. **Clarity** addresses a frequently overlooked cause of disengagement: learners often withdraw not because content is too hard but because it is unclear what is required. Best practice therefore publishes learning objectives up front, structures tasks step by step, and makes success criteria explicit — a safeguard that matters most for learners unfamiliar with the institution's unspoken educational norms. **Relevance** anchors learning in reality: in VET especially, content tied to real professional contexts, examples that reflect diverse backgrounds, and explicit acknowledgement of learners' own experiences as a learning resource sustain engagement where abstract material fails.

A practical habit to operationalise all three: test your own materials by asking whether learners can *enter* the content, *see the destination*, and *recognise themselves* in it. If not, the design — not the learner — needs fixing.

T07 — Build flexibility and multiple pathways into learning design, scheduling and delivery



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Sources:** S3 BP 16 + S3 BP 29 + S4 BP 26 (*merged — these were one principle stated at three levels*)

Key points

- Allow variation in pace, format, mode and interaction while keeping common learning objectives: **vary the route, hold the destination.**
- Replace fixed timetables, strict deadlines and linear progression with part-time, modular, blended, evening and online options, plus legitimate study breaks with clear return routes.



- Adapt attendance, scheduling and assessment to working and caring responsibilities — and audit which barriers are institution-created, because flexibility is an institutional duty, not a favour to the learner.

Why it works: Inclusive design responds to the variation with which real learners engage and progress. Instead of assuming a single pathway — one pace, one format, one mode of interaction — it offers several routes to the same objectives: learners might access the same content in different formats, work at different speeds, or demonstrate learning through different means. The boundaries matter: objectives and standards stay constant, and flexibility must be paired with structure so that openness does not become drift.

The deeper shift is temporal and cultural. Conventional practice treats inclusion as reactive — adjustments made once a learner visibly struggles. Best practice makes anticipation the starting point, designing for diversity from the first session. Instead of asking “why is this learner struggling?”, ask “how might the design of this learning experience be contributing to that difficulty?”

How to apply. Flexible provision includes part-time and modular enrolment, blended or online delivery for days when travel or care duties intervene, legitimate study breaks with clear return routes, deadlines negotiated rather than imposed, and attendance policies that accommodate work and care without penalty. Part-time and online routes need the same quality standards, progression rules and completion pathways as full-time ones; online provision needs the connectivity and in-person support identified in **T31**. Flexibility must be engineered, not improvised.

The case that proves it. Consider Maria: a 29-year-old healthcare-assistance learner who works part-time, cares for her child, and holds prior learning from abroad that is not recognised. Her programme offers a fixed timetable, mandatory attendance, strict deadlines, linear module order, no recognition of prior learning and limited flexibility options — and Maria falls behind and considers dropping out. Inflexibility is a design choice with predictable consequences, and a learner juggling work and care is demonstrating precisely the responsibility and time-management skills VET claims to develop.

What to avoid. Lowering standards in the name of flexibility. Flexibility changes pace, place and mode; it never changes expectations or outcomes.



T08 — Scaffold learning toward independence



Level: [CLASSROOM] · **Source:** S3 BP 17

Key points

- Sequence learning with modelling, guided practice and progressive withdrawal of support.
- Keep the same learning objectives: scaffolding makes them attainable, it does not lower them.
- Build confidence step by step, so that support fades as competence grows.

What it means: Scaffolding is the bridge between expectation and attainability — the practice of structuring tasks so that learners move gradually toward independence: the trainer models a skill, guides early attempts, then progressively removes support as competence consolidates. The critical discipline is that objectives remain unchanged. This distinction matters doubly for Roma learners, who are frequently subjected to the opposite dynamic: lowered expectations dressed up as support, which quietly devalues the qualification being pursued.

Properly applied, scaffolding builds the confidence that many learners lack after histories of educational failure: each step is achievable, and each achievement justifies the next. Companion practices — breaking activities into clear stages, providing prompts and guiding questions, checking understanding during the process — show that scaffolding is also a real-time facilitation skill, not merely a course-design feature. The best-practice test is simple: does the support in place aim at the learner eventually not needing it? Support that creates permanent dependency has failed its purpose; support that retires itself has succeeded.



T09 — Facilitate active, safe participation for every learner



Level: [CLASSROOM] · **Source:** S3 BP 18

Key points

- Treat participation as designed, not spontaneous: use dialogic teaching, collaborative tasks, multimodal input and structured support.
- Create safe participation routines — thinking time, small-group work before plenary sharing, normalised mistakes.
- Monitor in real time: who speaks, who withdraws, whose knowledge is recognised.

What it means: Even well-designed learning can reproduce exclusion in delivery: who gets to speak, who feels comfortable participating and whose knowledge is recognised are shaped in real time, and informal interaction consistently privileges confident, verbally fluent learners familiar with academic norms. Best practice therefore treats participation as something to be engineered.

- **Dialogic teaching** invites questioning and building on each other's perspectives, but only with structure — without it, dialogue is dominated by a few voices.
- **Collaborative learning** distributes participation through pairs and small groups, provided tasks require contribution from all members and the facilitator monitors for exclusion *within* groups.
- **Multimodal input** lets learners engage through visual, oral, practical and interactive channels — particularly apt in VET, where hands-on learning often unlocks understanding.
- **Safe participation routines** do the quiet work: allowing thinking time before responses, using small-group discussion before plenary sharing, and normalising mistakes as part of learning.



The reflection question — “who was able to engage, and how?” — replaces “did I deliver the content?” as the measure of a session, and defines the facilitator’s core competence: reading the room and adjusting pace, phrasing and interaction formats in real time.

T10 — Assess formatively with transparent criteria and constructive feedback



Level: [CLASSROOM] · **Source:** S3 BP 19

Key points

- Embed continuous, low-stakes assessment moments that inform both learner and trainer throughout the course.
- Give feedback that is timely, specific and constructive; vague or harsh feedback reinforces disengagement.
- Publish what is being assessed, how, and what successful performance looks like.

What it means: In many VET settings assessment still operates as an end-of-process evaluation, with the consequence that struggling learners are identified too late — and often without meaningful support. Best practice reverses the sequence: formative assessment runs throughout the course through short feedback moments, guided reflection and low-stakes tasks that tell both the learner and the trainer where learning stands, giving learners the opportunity to improve before being formally evaluated.

The quality of feedback is decisive: it must arrive when it can still be acted upon (timely), say precisely what to improve (specific) and point forward rather than backward (constructive) — because feedback that is vague or merely critical often confirms the disengagement it should be correcting, particularly for learners with low confidence. Transparency completes the picture: when criteria are unclear, learners must guess what is expected, which advantages those already socialised into academic norms and disadvantages everyone else. Publishing what is assessed, how, and what success looks like removes the guessing game and lets learners concentrate on learning rather than interpretation.

T11 — Accept varied evidence of learning and support progression



Level: [CLASSROOM] · **Source:** S3 BP 20

Key points

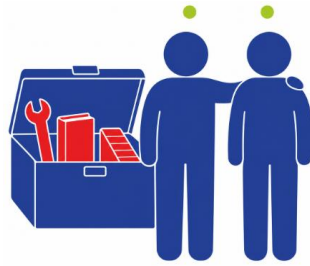
- Allow learners to demonstrate competence through practical demonstrations, oral explanations, collaborative outputs and project-based work — not only written tests.
- Build in revision, resubmission and staged assessment so that assessment opens doors rather than closing them.
- Link feedback explicitly to next steps, making assessment part of a continuous trajectory.

What it means: Learners do not all demonstrate knowledge in the same way, nor progress at the same pace. Traditional models — one format, one moment, one standard pathway — structurally disadvantage learners who struggle with formal testing formats, need more time to consolidate learning, or demonstrate competence in non-traditional ways. Best practice therefore widens the evidence base: practical demonstrations, oral explanations, collaborative outputs and visual or project-based work are accepted alongside written tests, with the objective unchanged and only the pathway diversified.

Progression support makes assessment a gateway rather than a checkpoint: opportunities for revision and resubmission, staged assessment processes, and feedback explicitly linked to next steps ensure learners understand where they are, what to improve and how to move forward. Assessment thereby becomes integrated into learning design — continuous rather than episodic, supportive rather than punitive, flexible rather than standardised.

Review habit: take a recent assessment and ask who performed well and why, who struggled and at what stage, and whether learners had genuine opportunity to improve before being evaluated.

T12 — Adapt support without stigmatising learners



Level: [CLASSROOM] · **Source:** S3 BP 21

Key points

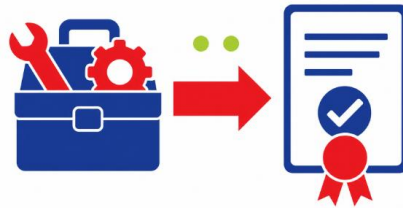
- Design support as available to all — flexibility and options built in as standard, not added visibly for some.
- When individual adjustments are necessary, make them discreet and involve the learner in the decision.
- Never lower expectations or frame difference as deficit; present support as a strategy for success.

What it means: This is inclusion's sharpest tension: how to support learners without singling them out. Even well-intentioned adaptations can stigmatise — extra support, alternative tasks or adjusted expectations, if handled visibly, signal to learners that they are “different”, “less capable” or “in need of special treatment”, with measurable costs in confidence, participation and retention. Three moves resolve it.

- **Universal design orientation.** Teaching is designed from the outset to accommodate diversity, so that multiple pathways and varied participation formats are simply how learning works, and support is not “added” for certain learners.
- **Normalised support.** Options — choices in how to complete a task, optional scaffolding materials offered to everyone, different participation formats requiring no justification — ensure no single learner is marked out; support becomes invisible in the best possible sense.
- **Respectful adaptation** where individual adjustments remain necessary: discretion in delivery, learner involvement in decisions about the adaptation, and framing that presents support as a strategy for success rather than compensation for weakness.

The underlying standard is learner dignity: the moment support costs a learner their standing among peers, it has stopped supporting.

T13 — Recognise and validate prior learning (RPL)



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S3 BP 30

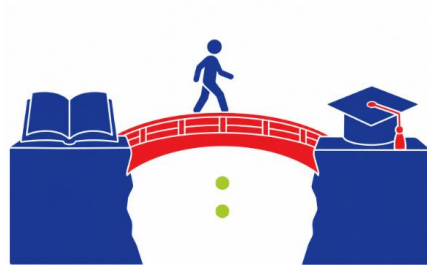
Key points

- Map learners' existing competencies — from work, informal care, projects and hobbies — against qualification requirements.
- Accept varied evidence: certificates, references, demonstrations and structured interviews.
- Use RPL to shorten pathways, avoid redundant repetition and affirm the worth of what learners already know and can do.

What it means: RPL is operationalised as a structured practice rather than a policy slogan. Learners are guided through four domains — education and training, work experience, personal projects, and hobbies and interests — recording for each what they did, which skills and knowledge they gained, and what evidence they could provide, from certificates to references and demonstrations. The exercise then links these competencies to a chosen qualification: which skills match the requirements, which could be formally recognised, and what additional learning remains.

For Roma learners, RPL carries particular weight: many hold substantial competencies — caregiving, trade skills, informal work, community roles — that formal systems have never credited, and unrecognised learning from abroad compounds every other barrier to completion. Best practice therefore treats RPL as a dignity practice as much as an efficiency one: it tells learners that what they already know counts, shortens the pathway to qualification, avoids paying twice for competence, and turns the mapping conversation itself into an act of recognition. Institutions should make RPL procedures simple, low-cost, evidence-flexible and proactively offered at entry — not a hidden option for those who ask.

T14 — Provide academic support that closes formal-education gaps



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S4 BP 2

Key points

- Offer one-to-one and group tutoring to build understanding of core subjects and study skills.
- Pair learners with mentors who provide guidance, encouragement and academic advice.
- Adapt curriculum materials to learners' needs with culturally relevant content and foundational literacy and numeracy support.

What it means: Many Roma learners carry gaps from interrupted formal education, language barriers or missing early-childhood education. Academic support services — tutoring and homework help, mentorship programmes and specialised curriculum support — are the first layer of response: they restore the foundations of literacy, numeracy and study habits on which vocational learning depends.

The quality criteria are twofold. Support must be **additional, not lowering**: it builds learners up to the standard rather than reducing the standard to the learner. And it must be **culturally relevant**: materials that reflect Roma learners' world build engagement, while content that ignores it silently teaches exclusion. Mentorship doubles as aspiration-building when mentors themselves come from the community and embody the possibility of success.



B3 — COMMUNICATION, TRUST AND RELATIONSHIPS

T15 — Communicate in plain, multimodal, culturally adapted language



Level: [CLASSROOM] · **Sources:** S2 BP 01 + S3 BP 22 (*merged*)

Key points

- Speak the standard/literary form of the national language, not a regional dialect, and strip out technical, legal and administrative vocabulary.
- Release information in small, single-idea units, check understanding, and combine verbal input with visual aids, demonstrations and simplified translations.
- Adapt register to the social and cultural position of the listener — and engage Roma mediators or interpreters where language or cultural gaps are significant.

Why it works: Verbal communication is the channel through which VET institutions recruit, inform and retain learners. Most information about VET programmes — entry conditions, curricula, certification, employment pathways — is written in administrative language that assumes a reader who already understands how public services function. Roma adults frequently do not have that background knowledge, so a message that is accurate on paper can still fail completely on arrival. Roma learners are also disproportionately affected by gaps between the language of instruction and their home languages, and by limited literacy in the instructional language.

The practice has three disciplined habits.

1. **Simplify the input.** One idea per message, short sentences, concrete nouns instead of abstractions (“a 400-hour course that ends with a certificate in welding”, not “a validated non-formal learning pathway”), short everyday words, concepts explained rather than named.
2. **Sequence the output.** Give the essential information, stop, ask for a response, and only then continue. Overloading the listener is one of the most common causes of communication breakdown and of the perception that institutions are indifferent.



3. **Adapt the register.** The same content is delivered differently to a parent, to a young learner and to a community leader, without ever being condescending.

Add multimodality. Comprehension should never depend on a single channel: combine verbal input with visual and audiovisual support, demonstrations and simplified written translations, and rephrase instructions when understanding is not confirmed.

Use mediators. Where gaps are significant, Roma cultural mediators and trained interpreters are engaged — not only to translate but to help interpret needs and create an environment in which the learner feels empowered.

Who does it. This is a skill of the whole institution, not only of front-line staff. Receptionists, admissions officers and trainers all need the same brief, because a single opaque conversation at the front desk can end a family's interest in the school. A powerful staff-training exercise: facilitators deliver a jargon-heavy sentence, learners report what they understood, and the same message is then given in plain terms — making language a shared professional responsibility rather than the learner's private problem.

T16 — Manage and read non-verbal and extraverbal signals



Level: [CLASSROOM] · **Sources:** S2 BP 02 + S2 BP 07 (*merged — the two directions of one skill*)

Key points

- Control your own signals: eye contact, open posture, nodding, and a conversational distance of roughly 1–1.5 metres (no closer than half a metre); manage volume, pace and tone.
- Read the other person's signals — avoided eye contact, tense posture, uncoordinated movements, hands in pockets, visible nervousness — as *evidence of the real barrier*.
- Decode the signal, then verify it with a gentle focused question rather than acting on an inference. Touch and other culturally coded gestures are context-dependent: ask rather than assume.



Why it works: Non-verbal behaviour carries the emotional content of an encounter, and extraverbal behaviour — the colour and volume of the voice, the speed of speech, the purity of the language, the choice of words — carries the relational message about status and respect. Where a community has a long history of being spoken down to, these signals are monitored closely and interpreted quickly. Communication does not fail only through language; it fails when the stated position and the actual position diverge.

Managing your own signals.

- **Distance.** Keeping a Roma community member at more than one to one-and-a-half metres reads as coldness; closer than half a metre reads as intrusive. The comfortable band is narrow and should be calibrated by observation.
- **Voice.** A teacher who speaks quietly may be read as sleepy or uninterested; a teacher who speaks loudly may be read as shouting. The target is an unhurried, warm, moderate volume.
- **Touch.** In some environments a hand on the shoulder is a normal sign of reassurance, but in Roma communities with a strong religious identity the same gesture can be misread. Default to verbal acknowledgement.
- **Active-listening signals** — nodding, sustained but non-staring eye contact, an occasional “yes”, “I understand”, “I can imagine that” — should be deliberate rather than incidental, because they are what tells the speaker they have been heard.

Reading theirs. The ability to decode non-verbal messages is what allows a VET counsellor to notice that “we are not interested in that school” is accompanied by a fixed gaze at the floor and a closed posture — the signature of a prior bad experience rather than of indifference. This reaches the real obstacle behind a stated one, the most common case being fear of discrimination masked as lack of interest.

The methodological limit. A signal is a hypothesis, not a conclusion. Name the hypothesis softly and check it — “Has something happened at another school that makes you hesitant?” — instead of drawing your own conclusion and acting on it. Inference without verification produces exactly the stereotyping that cultural competence exists to prevent. This matters especially in needs assessment, where the three categories of need (conscious and explicit; conscious but not expressed; and needs that are dying without ever being voiced) can only be reached by combining what people say with how they say it.

T17 — Practise empathy, active listening and the learner's voice



Level: [CLASSROOM] · **Sources:** S2 BP 03 + S2 BP 06 + S3 BP 24 (*merged*)

Key points

- Empathy means awareness of, understanding of and respect for the interlocutor's feelings, thoughts and complaints — past or present — without letting your own feelings govern the professional interaction.
- Follow the speaker, paraphrase their points back in plain language, and use the learner's or parent's name when summarising — it signals that they are known to the institution as an individual.
- Ask learners about their needs and preferences, and give their voice genuine influence over their learning.

Why it works: Active listening is the cheapest and highest-yield trust intervention available to a VET institution, because it converts a bureaucratic transaction into a personal exchange. Empathy is the skill on which the other communication skills depend, and it is the one most often confused with sympathy or with personal warmth.

Empathy as a bounded professional skill. The working definition is deliberately narrow: awareness, understanding and respect for the other person's experience, deliberately insulated from the professional's own emotional reaction. That insulation is what makes it usable in a school, where staff regularly hear accounts of exclusion that would be unbearable to absorb personally. Two operational consequences follow. First, empathy must be **trained** — it involves self-regulation; assuming it is natural is how institutions end up with well-meaning staff who become defensive under criticism. Second, empathy must be **bounded**: teachers have public roles that extend beyond the classroom, they are asked for opinions on educational policy, and those opinions are heard not as personal views but as the position of the school or the school board. Staff therefore need to know where their professional statement ends and where another body's authority begins, and to signpost accordingly. Where negative feelings arise on either side, the objective is to neutralise them — acknowledge, restate, and return to the practical question — rather than to win the exchange.

Active listening, mechanically. Attend fully to the speaker, avoid interrupting, then restate in your own words what they said and check it against their intention. Summarising performs a specific function with Roma families: when a staff member restates several of the parent's concerns in simple language, the parent concludes immediately that they were



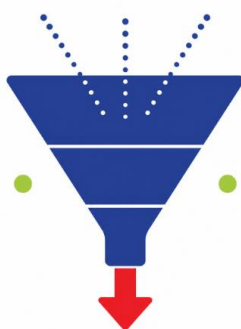
followed and taken seriously. Adding the name to that summary — “So what you are telling me, Mr X, is that the distance to the school is the real problem” — completes the effect: the institution knows who the family is.

Two cautions. Summarising is not a substitute for listening and must not become a formulaic closing ritual; a generic paraphrase signals the opposite of what it intends. And questions raised by community members should be kept within the scope of the school’s actual remit, with clear signposting to other services where the answer lies outside it.

The learner’s voice. Genuine inclusion requires asking learners about their needs and preferences — and acting on the answers. Structured formats help: the **empathy circle** is a space in which participants share responses to what they hear without judging or interrupting, making empathy a discipline of attention. In VET, where workplace hierarchies can spill into the classroom, the power imbalance between professional and learner makes listening a deliberate counterweight: the trainer’s authority is used to invite voice, not to pre-empt it. A culture in which learners are heard is one in which they learn that participation matters.

What to avoid. Cognitive empathy — taking the learner’s perspective, seeing the classroom, the institution and the task as the learner sees them — is built through structured practice, not good intentions.

T18 — Structure questioning: open, then focused, then closed



Level: [CLASSROOM] · **Source:** S2 BP 04

Key points

- Open a conversation with open questions (“How can I help you?”, “Which of our programmes interests you?”) to let the speaker set the agenda.
- After several open questions, move to focused questions (“What is the biggest difficulty for you?”) to isolate the real barrier.



- Use closed yes/no questions only to confirm facts, never to open or to close a substantive exchange.

What it means: Question sequencing is a technique, not a style. Open questions hand control of the conversation to the community member and reveal what they actually came about, which is frequently not what the institution assumed. Focused questions then narrow the field to the single obstacle worth solving — the transport, the schedule, the cost, the fear of discrimination, the family's objection. Closed questions are for verification only.

The sequence also protects staff from a common failure mode: proposing a solution before the problem is understood. A conversation that jumps straight to “we have a course in automotive repair” tells the parent that the school has a product to sell rather than a problem to solve.

Two cautions. Questions must be comprehensible both when asked and when answered — a complex question guarantees a short answer. And staff should be able to decide and assess what the real reason behind a stated objection is, because the stated reason (“I am not interested”) is often a socially safe cover for the real one (“I am afraid of being humiliated there”).

T19 — Use silence strategically



Level: [CLASSROOM] · **Source:** S2 BP 05

Key points

- Use silence after an emotionally heavy disclosure and at decision points — it is often more powerful than any spoken intervention.
- Combine silence with a short empathic framing statement (“That must be difficult to talk about... I can understand how you feel...”).
- Resist the urge to fill silence; it is the space in which the other party consolidates impressions and thinks.



What it means: Silence is listed among the six basic communication skills for a specific reason: it is the only tool that creates thinking space without adding content. Both parties need it — the community member to gather a thought, the teacher to process what has been said.

The pattern that works is a brief empathic statement followed by silence, repeated: “That must be difficult for you to discuss...” — silence — “I can understand how you feel...” — silence. At decision points the same pattern applies: “I think this is the best option for you...” — silence. The silence after a recommendation gives the parent room to accept it without feeling pushed.

What to avoid. Silence fails when it is unstructured or hostile — a long pause after a question the listener cannot answer reads as pressure. Staff should be trained to distinguish reflective silence from the silence of a stalled conversation, and to break the latter with a simpler question rather than by repeating the original one.

T20 — Manage difficult conversations and repair trust professionally



Level: [CLASSROOM] · **Source:** S3 BP 25

Key points

- Create neutral, safe settings where all parties can express concerns without fear of retaliation; use mediation and accurate summarising.
- Hold a “tolerance of ambiguity”: in conflict, more than one perspective may be valid.
- Protect your own stability — recognise triggers, practise self-care, give feedback calmly and with scaffolding — because trust repair depends on the professional’s steadiness.

What it means: Conflict, resistance and broken trust are normal features of inclusive work, and mishandling them compounds exclusion.



- **For conflict:** establish a neutral environment, listen to each perspective, summarise accurately to correct misperceptions, and use mediation to help learners — including those who have learned a defensive “victim” role — to engage without fear. A tolerance of ambiguity is a professional asset, not a weakness: high-conflict situations are rarely clear-cut.
 - **For resistance:** acknowledge that sensitive topics evoke strong emotions, provide a safe space for them, and use gentle guiding questions rather than confrontation. Techniques such as the silent written discussion slow the exchange, lower tension and give quieter participants voice.
 - **For the professional’s own sustainability:** work with marginalised groups carries a real risk of burnout and secondary traumatisation; recognising one’s triggers and practising self-care is therefore a professional requirement, not a private indulgence. Feedback during disagreements is given calmly, clearly, and with scaffolding that supports the learner’s own response — modelling exactly the communicative behaviour the professional hopes to receive.
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T21 — Build trust: know the history of exclusion, act with transparency, consistency and safe spaces



Level: [CLASSROOM] / [INSTITUTION] · **Sources:** S2 BP 10 + S3 BP 23 (*merged*)

Key points

- Mistrust is not a cultural trait; it is the predictable result of documented history — discrimination, forced assimilation, segregation, and services that were never delivered.
- Staff cannot build trust credibly without being able to name these causes; engagement that ignores the history is read as another initiative that will not deliver.
- Create predictability and invest in relationship-building routines — welcome activities, shared meals, mentoring and scholarship pathways.



Why trust is absent. Only about one in five Roma children complete primary education against roughly 90% of non-Roma children; participation in secondary and higher education falls to around 18% and 1%; Roma pupils are around thirty times more likely to drop out than the rest of the European population; only about 64% of Roma girls enrol against 96% in the non-Roma population, with roughly 75% not completing. (These UNICEF-sourced figures date from 2011 and should be re-verified against current sources before publication — see Annex 4.)

The mechanisms behind these numbers are institutional: poor or absent early-childhood services; non-registration at birth, which removes children from legal protection and from access to education and healthcare; poverty, mobility and inadequate housing; remote and crowded settlements without the amenities needed for homework; early marriage and childbearing; segregation between schools, within schools (remedial classes, rundown settings, a different curriculum) and into special-needs schools; language mismatch; poor infrastructure; curricula in which Roma culture is invisible; and negative stereotypes held by both teaching staff and other pupils, reinforced by verbal and physical mistreatment.

How to build it. Treat the list above as background knowledge that shapes how every message is received, and be able to acknowledge it explicitly: an institution that can say “we know that previous programmes did not follow through” is far more credible than one that cannot. Then work on three fronts.

- **Transparency.** Learning outcomes stated clearly so that expectations are predictable; institutional policies discussed openly — including diversity strategies, so that both learners and staff can reflect on how well they work.
- **Consistency.** Rules and routines applied predictably, because predictability is the psychological precondition of safety.
- **Relationship-building.** “Safe spaces” such as friendly icebreakers, shared meals and informal contact points where learners can open up without performance pressure; the module also points to proven structural levers such as the scholarships and mentoring programmes of the kind run by the Roma Education Fund.

The underlying insight. Trust is a cumulative asset: every transparent decision and every kept promise deposits into it, while each unexplained exception withdraws. For Roma learners, who may have spent years calibrating their expectations of institutions downward, consistency is itself a form of respect. Trust is not given automatically — it is built through consistency, transparency and genuine respect for dignity.



Staff checklist — the nine-point communication protocol

Source: S2 BP 08. Not counted as a separate practice — every point below is covered in full by T15–T21. Kept here because it works as a pre-conversation checklist, a role-play script and a debrief tool.

Prepare

1. **Be clear** — settle the goal and the message before the meeting.
2. **Choose the best time** — read the receiver's mood and the practical circumstances; a conversation at the end of a long shift will not land.
3. **Monitor your emotions** — evaluate your own state before sending or replying.

Deliver

4. **Use appropriate language** — cut technical vocabulary and idioms.
5. **Avoid giving too much information** — release only what matters and wait for feedback before sending more.
6. **Check your body language** — it conveys both intended and unintended information, so make it match the words.

Close the loop

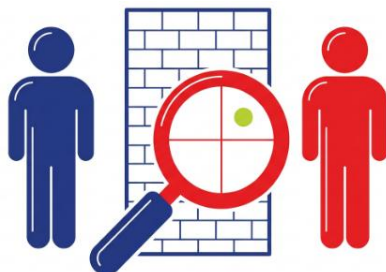
7. **Get feedback** — after conveying a message, follow up, answer questions, and clarify again where needed.
8. **Practise active listening** — do not interrupt.
9. **Develop cultural competence** — learn about the cultures you work with; it is the standing background skill.

The value of the list is that it is teachable and auditable. Institutions can use it in role-play training and in the debrief after difficult encounters, which converts individual experience into institutional learning.



B4 — NON-DISCRIMINATION, RIGHTS AND LEGAL ANCHORING

T22 — Distinguish and identify all forms of discrimination



Level: [CLASSROOM] / [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S3 BP 3

Key points

- Recognise direct discrimination — including discrimination by perception and by association — as well as indirect and structural discrimination.
- Apply a simple incident-analysis routine: gather the facts, check for a protected characteristic, examine the setting and the process.
- Remember that discrimination can occur on several grounds at once, and even from people who share the same characteristic.

What it means: VET educators need precise, operational definitions. **Direct discrimination** occurs when a person is treated differently because of a protected characteristic (ethnicity, religion, disability, age, gender and others) — including when the discriminator merely perceives the characteristic or targets someone associated with it. **Indirect discrimination** arises when a rule applied equally to everyone nonetheless disadvantages a group sharing a protected characteristic and cannot be objectively justified; the permanent-address requirement that excludes residents of informal settlements is the standard example. **Structural discrimination** refers to systemic patterns embedded in policies, practices and norms, such as ethnic profiling in police checks.

The identification routine. First, gather the facts of the incident — who was involved, what was said or written. Second, check whether a protected characteristic is in play, recalling that a Roma trainee may be targeted on several grounds simultaneously, for example as Roma, as a woman and as a Muslim. Third, examine where the incident took place and whether staff could have prevented it; if they could, it is usually a discrimination case.

Using this routine turns abstract legal categories into a workable everyday diagnostic tool and prevents incidents from being misread as personal conflicts — which is the single most common way institutions fail to respond.

T23 — Eliminate exclusionary language and microaggressions



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S3 BP 4

Key points

- Ban slurs and derogatory equivalents: used by non-Roma, terms like “Gypsy” perpetuate stereotypes of criminality and otherness, whatever their use inside communities.
- Remove dehumanising metaphors (“social burden”, “plague”), “us versus them” framing, and mockery of accent, clothing or posture from institutional language.
- Treat exclusionary language as discrimination to be corrected, not as banter to be tolerated.

What it means: Words structure the climate of an institution. The recurring forms to catalogue and eliminate are: the use of “Gypsy” and its national-language equivalents as slurs; derogatory terms that equate Roma identity with untrustworthiness or criminality; dehumanising metaphors that cast communities as a “social burden” or “public health risk”; semantic oppositions that frame Roma as outside “our” society; and non-verbal mockery of accent, clothing or posture. Notably, in-group usage by Roma people themselves is distinct from use by non-Roma, which carries the weight of the majority’s power to define.

Best practice involves explicit institutional language standards, modelled by staff in every setting — classrooms, reception desks, administrative documents and staff rooms alike. It also involves corrective action when exclusionary language occurs: naming it, explaining why it harms, and offering alternatives, rather than letting it pass. Because language normalises or delegitimises exclusion, consistent attention to words is one of the cheapest and most powerful anti-discrimination measures a VET institution can adopt.

T24 — Audit institutional rules for hidden, indirect exclusion



Level: [INSTITUTION] · Source: S3 BP 5

Key points

- Review admission, attendance, internship and communication rules for disproportionate impact on Roma learners.
- Target known exclusion mechanisms: language certification requirements, age limits, digital-only procedures, commuting costs, attendance penalties and employer gatekeeping in placements.
- Replace punitive rules with enabling measures — allowances, in-person alternatives and employer engagement.

What it means: Neutral-looking institutional rules produce exclusion in predictable ways.

- **Admission barriers:** mandatory certified national-language proficiency (often B2) that ignores technical competence, strict criteria for attractive specialisations, age limits, fees without payment facilities, fully digitised procedures without in-person alternatives, and the absence of positive measures for economically vulnerable groups.
- **Attendance regimes:** penalise learners who work or care for family members; digital or distant provision excludes those without connectivity, transport or study allowances.
- **Internship processes:** exclude through documentation requirements (fixed-line phones, postal addresses) that remote communities cannot meet, long commuting distances, and employers acting as gatekeepers who more frequently reject candidates with foreign names or minority backgrounds.
- **Communication practices** that never reach families in underserved communities, or that ignore language and cultural barriers, complete the picture.

Best practice turns this inventory into an audit checklist: institutions systematically review each rule, ask who it disadvantages and whether that disadvantage can be objectively justified, and identify the alternative that would achieve the same legitimate aim without the exclusionary effect. The audit should cover admission, attendance,

internship placement and family communication at minimum, and its findings should feed directly into institutional improvement planning (T39).

T25 — Anchor practice and interventions in legal and policy frameworks — and close the enforcement gap



Level: [SYSTEM] · **Sources:** S3 BP 6 + S4 BP 19 (*merged*)

Key points

- Know the core instruments: the Racial Equality Directive (2000/43/EC), the EU Anti-Racism Action Plan, the EU Roma Strategic Framework 2021–2030 and national Roma strategies.
- Translate policy priorities — reducing early school leaving, desegregation, equal access — into concrete institutional measures, and monitor your own compliance.
- Use the frameworks, but never mistake them for change: audit enforcement on the ground and treat the gap between law and practice as your own improvement agenda.

The architecture. The Racial Equality Directive obliges Member States to maintain equality bodies that assist victims, investigate independently and publish reports. The EU Anti-Racism Action Plan encourages national action plans against racism, including anti-Roma discrimination in education. The EU Roma Strategic Framework for equality, inclusion and participation (2021–2030) commits Member States to combat segregation in education and antigypsyism and to increase effective and equal access to quality, inclusive education. Landmark case law — notably *D.H. v. Czech Republic*, where segregated placement of Roma children in “special” schools was found discriminatory — shows that policies which look pedagogical can violate rights.

What the five-country review shows. All MIRANDA partner countries hold legal protections and Roma strategies aligned with the EU framework, but implementation varies widely. **Germany’s** federal structure disperses education policy across the Länder, with anti-discrimination protection under the General Equal Treatment Act but no binding national

education targets. **Greece** frames Roma as a vulnerable social group; the right to education is constitutionally guaranteed, yet segregated schooling and enrolment obstacles persist and enforcement is inconsistent. **Austria** recognises Roma as a national minority with constitutional protection, but its strategy sets vague educational goals. **Bulgaria** combines long-standing Roma strategies with explicit anti-discrimination law, while segregation remains widespread. **North Macedonia** — a candidate country — shows notable progress through constitutional minority status, scholarships, Roma teaching assistants and higher-education quotas, though dropout persists.

The double lesson for practitioners. Legal frameworks are minimum standards and sources of legitimacy, not paperwork — they legitimate and resource interventions. But laws alone do not include: effectiveness depends on enforcement, resources and meaningful Roma participation. Institutions must therefore audit enforcement where they actually operate, where segregated classes persist, enrolment is refused or sanctions are never applied, and treat the gap between law and practice as their own improvement agenda.

T26 — Enforce anti-discrimination: mandatory teacher training, reporting systems and professional accountability



Level: [INSTITUTION] / [SYSTEM] · **Sources:** S3 BP 7 + S4 BP 27 (*merged*)

Key points

- Introduce mandatory, state-sponsored training for all secondary and VET teachers on Roma history, culture and socio-economic realities.
- Operate a standard, visible procedure for discrimination incidents: immediate report, documented record, review with all parties, proportionate sanctions, and referral to authorities where required.
- Ground daily conduct in professional ethics — respect and integrity, duty of care, competence and role-modelling — backed by institutional accountability.



Training. Discrimination and bias inside schools are direct drivers of disengagement and dropout. Mandatory teacher training on Roma history, culture and the socio-economic challenges Roma families face aims to reduce bias and build classrooms where Roma students feel valued and understood. Cultural competence should be treated as a criterion of professional competence, assessed as any other teaching skill would be.

Procedure. Prevention is linked to response through a defined sequence: the incident is reported immediately to the school administration, recorded on a dedicated form (date, people involved, description of events), reviewed with victims, perpetrators and bystanders, sanctioned in line with the code of conduct, and, in serious cases, referred to competent authorities such as ministries, observatories or the Ombudsman.

Uptake. The existence of a procedure is not enough. Staff, students, families and communities need repeated, accessible information about where and how to report, and reassurance against retaliation. Run school-wide awareness campaigns to address the peer-level discrimination that poisons daily school life.

Ethics. The ethical responsibilities that make response credible are: educators foster pluralism and tolerance (respect and integrity), protect learners' well-being (duty of care), pursue continuous professional development for diverse groups (competence), and model democratic culture (role-modelling). Institutions, in turn, are accountable through non-discrimination frameworks, strategic inclusion goals and quality assurance that monitors whether stated commitments match learners' lived experience.

What to avoid. Policies that exist on paper but are never applied teach learners that institutions will not protect them. Procedures without ethics become bureaucracy; ethics without procedures remain good intentions.

B5 — LEARNER SUPPORT AND EMPOWERMENT SERVICES

T27 — Ground every service in triangulated, evidence-based needs assessment



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Sources:** S4 BP 1 + S2 BP 18 (*merged*)

Key points

- Start from the documented reality: dropout among Roma students reaches 70% in some contexts against 9.7% for non-Roma peers. Address discrimination and prejudice, poverty, language gaps and low institutional expectations **together**, not in isolation.
- Cover all three categories of educational need: conscious and explicit; conscious but not expressed; and “dying needs” that are never voiced.
- Combine three methods — simple tick-list questionnaires assisted by mediators, content analysis of existing reports, and interviews with mediators and VET specialists — so that triangulation yields stable, reliable results.

Why it works: Needs assessment in adult education and VET is the foundation on which interventions are planned, at both short and long horizons. Its quality determines whether a programme answers a real need or an assumed one. The evidence base is stark: Roma learners face pervasive discrimination and prejudice that produce social exclusion; many grow up in poverty, with inadequate housing, healthcare and educational resources; language barriers limit full participation; and low institutional expectations compound these conditions. Cultural factors matter equally — strong community traditions, pressures towards early marriage or labour (especially for girls, who face combined gender-based and racial discrimination), and a scarcity of visible role models that limits aspiration. The conclusion is that services must be holistic and culturally respectful, respecting Roma cultural values.

The method.

1. **Identify the challenges** faced by the target group — for example difficulty entering the labour market because of missing qualifications or a mismatch between qualifications and market requirements.



2. **Establish the frame of reference** that gives those challenges their dimensions — for a community with high unemployment and low skills, that frame is labour-market entry and vocational qualification.
3. **Collect specific data** on the target population: demographic data (age, gender, marital status, number of children, economic level, employment status); educational level; prior training and work experience; and group-specific characteristics such as socio-economic background, duration of unemployment, fluency in the language of instruction, and need for linguistic or intercultural support.

On method selection. Questionnaires with fixed or closed multiple-choice items are efficient for capturing both views on education and demographic, social and educational characteristics — but for Roma adults the questions must be in simple language and completion must be assisted by Roma facilitators. Content analysis of documents and sources (forms, community reports, government data) gives depth on the problem's dimensions. Interviews — structured, semi-structured or unstructured — can replace or complement questionnaires and are best used with experienced or specialised community members. *Participant observation is judged too demanding and is not recommended*, since it would require qualified researchers to systematically observe processes such as low VET participation.

The recommendation: the combination. Tick-list questionnaires with mediator assistance, content analysis of Roma Community Centre and socio-educational service reports, and interviews with mediators, integration experts, VET providers and programme-design specialists. Triangulation across the three is what makes the findings defensible. Note that the three categories of need can only be fully reached by combining what people say with how they say it (**T16**).

The design test. Whether the service bundle meets the learner's full situation, not merely its academic slice. Targeted tutoring, mentorship, language support and anti-discrimination initiatives must be combined with broader socio-economic support rather than delivered as isolated patches.

Related: T58 — Diagnose dropout with data on its structural causes (the dropout-specific application of the same diagnostic discipline)



T28 — Coordinate wraparound, multi-stakeholder support around the learner



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Sources:** S3 BP 9 + S4 BP 13 + S3 BP 13 (*merged*)

Key points

- Offer a portfolio of support — academic, emotional, financial, linguistic, guidance-related and transition support — matched to need without stigma.
- Coordinate trainers, counsellors, administrators, social workers, mediators, mentors, Roma-led organisations and external services through clear roles, referral pathways and shared information.
- Judge support by whether it is organised, reachable and delivered with respect — not merely by whether it exists.

Why coordination is the whole problem. Learners face compounding barriers — linguistic, financial, emotional, logistical — that no single intervention addresses alone. Support is therefore a portfolio, ranging from academic assistance and mentoring to counselling, financial aid, language support and transition help. The case of **Amara** shows the cost of uncoordinated provision: the trainer notices absences, the administrator files a report that never reaches the learner-support coordinator, and the referring agency is never contacted — while Amara drifts toward withdrawal. A mentoring programme isolated from academic counselling, or a financial-aid process whose paperwork is inaccessible to a struggling learner, is not truly supportive.

The three groups of actors and what each contributes. No single institution can meet the full spectrum of need, and learners' hardest problems appear precisely at the intersections of services — where the training institution meets the employer, the welfare system, the housing office or the family.

- **Schools and training centres:** tailor curricula, identify needs early, adopt inclusive policies, and work with NGOs as mediators between school and family. NGOs additionally provide teacher training.



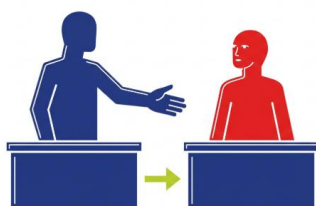
- **Social workers, mediators and mentors:** provide holistic support beyond the classroom — housing, healthcare, family dynamics — build trust with families and advocate for learners within institutions.
- **Roma-led organisations:** guarantee cultural relevance, lead community initiatives and advocate for policy change. Their cultural knowledge and earned trust give the institution reach and credibility it cannot manufacture internally.
- **Care, mental-health, housing and other services:** formal protocols, including named contact points and information-sharing agreements, so that support follows the learner across systems.

How to apply. Treat support as a system with named roles, defined referral points and shared information about each learner's situation: who is responsible for what, who communicates with whom, and who follows up. Multidisciplinary cooperation is a prerequisite, not a luxury. Partners need leaders committed to their long-term maintenance, dedicated staff who understand how partner services operate, and the humility to recognise what the institution cannot do alone — partnerships are easily neglected under financial strain.

The quality test. Would a learner in difficulty be reached by the system before having to ask for help?

Related: **T44 — Partner with employers** covers the employer strand of external partnership (co-design, mentoring, apprenticeships, inclusive workplaces).

T29 — Remove barriers to support uptake through proactive outreach



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S3 BP 10

Key points

- Recognise that stigma, mistrust, unclear communication, fragmentation, timing and bureaucracy keep learners away from support that formally exists.
- Normalise contact before crises — for example, an informal one-to-one with a liaison worker in the first month.
- Simplify procedures so learners do not have to self-identify as “struggling” in order to receive help.



What it means: Support services often go unused by the learners who need them most. One documented case traces how bureaucratic complexity (a bank statement, a social-worker letter), unclear communication about a welfare adviser's scope, the invisibility of an available resource (the community liaison worker) and the timing of offers combined to leave an engaged learner unsupported.

The best-practice responses are: **proactive outreach** — brief, informal conversations scheduled with every learner early in the programme, normalising contact so that asking for help is not an act of self-labelling; **process simplification** — interim emergency support accessible through a short verbal conversation rather than a formal documented application; and **trust-building through consistency** — support that reaches out repeatedly and predictably.

The deeper principle is that institutions must evaluate support from the learner's perspective — asking not whether services exist, but whether learners feel safe enough, informed enough and empowered enough to use them.

T30 — Deliver multilingual, culturally responsive language support and language accommodation



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Sources:** S4 BP 3 + S2 BP 14 (*merged*)

Key points

- Distinguish migrant Roma learners (limited proficiency in the language of instruction) from native Roma learners (Romani dialects spoken alongside it), because the two need different solutions.
- Offer targeted language classes, bilingual and multilingual education, trained language assistants and interpreters, and Romani-speaking teachers who act as linguistic and cultural mediators.
- Organise mixed-ability classes — including across ages — where teaching is delivered comprehensibly; where that is impossible, use a fluent Roma peer as translator during sessions.

Why language matters twice over. First, Roma learners frequently have to attend instruction in a language they do not know or do not speak fluently, which places them in an unfair comparison with peers and restricts their social



integration. Second, the mismatch destroys trust: if the teaching cannot be understood, the family reasonably concludes that the system is not designed for them and will not deliver anything.

Two remedies, in order of preference.

- **Structural:** mixed classes, including across age groups, where the teaching delivery is comprehensible to the group.
- **Compensatory:** where a mixed class is not feasible, dedicated language classes in which a fluent Roma peer translates as needed. This has a dual effect — it prepares learners for instruction in another language and simultaneously signals that the institution is making a real effort to be inclusive.

What works in practice. Hungary's *Second Chance* programme shows the model working: Romani and Hungarian are integrated in the curriculum, Romani-speaking teachers act as linguistic and cultural mediators, and supplementary courses strengthen Hungarian while the home language is maintained. Documented results include higher retention rates, improved literacy and increased confidence — evidence that integrating Romani languages into mainstream education improves outcomes while preserving linguistic and cultural identity.

Two accuracy points. The distinction between Romani and Romanian should be stated explicitly in all materials, since confusing the two is a recurrent error that damages credibility with the community. And not all Roma share a single language or dialect, so language planning must be community-specific rather than assumed.

Framing. Treat language support as visible institutional effort, because it is what convinces families that education can actually benefit them.

T31 — Bridge the digital divide



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S4 BP 5

Key points

- Teach essential digital skills: computers, internet navigation and online learning platforms.
- Provide devices and connectivity, especially where learners lack access at home.
- Deploy digital learning tools matched to Roma learners' needs, such as interactive language apps and supplementary content.

What it means: Digital literacy is now a precondition of both academic and career success, and Roma learners frequently face a digital divide driven by limited access to technology at home. Support services should therefore do three things: **train** (digital literacy classes), **equip** (laptops, tablets and internet resources in underserved areas) and **adapt** (online tools designed for the learners' actual needs rather than generic platforms).

The digital divide compounds other disadvantages: admissions procedures, learning platforms and job searches increasingly run online, so connectivity poverty silently converts into educational and labour-market exclusion. Digital inclusion is therefore not an optional enrichment but a core equity measure — and its delivery should be paired with the in-person support that learners with limited digital confidence require.

Learner counterparts: **L01–L05** (the digital foundation skills this service exists to build)

T32 — Offer psychosocial and emotional support



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S4 BP 6

Key points

- Provide access to school counsellors and psychologists for stress, personal challenges and trauma.
- Create peer support networks where learners facing similar challenges connect and belong.
- Run anti-bullying programmes that address Roma-specific discrimination and promote safety.

What it means: Many Roma learners carry the weight of discrimination, social exclusion or personal trauma, which directly affects academic performance and well-being. Psychosocial services respond at three levels: **individual counselling** for coping with personal challenges and stress; **peer networks** that replace isolation with belonging and mutual support; and **anti-bullying initiatives** that raise awareness of discrimination specific to Roma students while promoting a safe and inclusive environment.

These services matter because learning is emotional before it is cognitive: a learner who feels unsafe or stigmatised cannot fully engage. Best practice therefore treats psychological safety as educational infrastructure — planned, resourced and monitored like any other service — and normalises access to it, so that seeking help carries no stigma.

T33 — Build life skills and financial literacy





Level: [CLASSROOM] / [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S4 BP 7

Key points

- Train soft skills — communication, teamwork, problem-solving and decision-making.
- Teach time management, goal-setting and organisation to balance study with personal life.
- Provide financial literacy education on budgeting and saving, especially valuable for economically challenged families.

What it means: Empowerment begins with the skills that let a person navigate personal and professional life independently. The life-skills package covers the soft skills workplaces demand, organisational techniques that allow learners to manage competing responsibilities, and financial literacy that builds economic agency — particularly important for Roma families facing economic challenges.

These are not remedial extras but the generic capabilities VET promises to develop; scheduling them explicitly ensures they are not assumed and therefore never taught. Financial literacy has an inclusion dimension as well: understanding budgeting and saving protects learners and families from predatory choices and strengthens the economic stability that makes continued education possible.

Learner counterparts: **L18** (teamwork), **L19** (time management), **L20** (SMART goals), **L27** (money management)

T34 — Train self-advocacy, leadership and rights awareness



Level: [CLASSROOM] · **Source:** S4 BP 8

Key points

- Run self-advocacy workshops: articulate needs, understand rights, participate in decisions affecting one's education.
- Create leadership opportunities in school and community life.
- Educate learners on their legal rights in education and employment to empower them against discrimination.

What it means: Roma learners routinely confront institutional and social challenges that require the ability to speak for oneself. Self-advocacy training teaches learners to articulate their needs in educational settings, understand their rights and take part in decisions that affect them; leadership programmes convert confidence into responsibility; rights education arms learners against discrimination and unequal treatment in education and employment.

The underlying shift is from learner as recipient to learner as agent. Services designed around self-advocacy produce graduates who can negotiate workplaces, institutions and public services — precisely the capacity that marginalised communities most need, and the capacity the MIRANDA project identifies as the heart of empowerment.

Related: **T57 — Enable cultural empowerment and co-decision** (the institutional side of the same shift)



T35 — Foster social inclusion and civic engagement



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S4 BP 9

Key points

- Create cultural awareness spaces where Roma learners share culture, traditions and history with peers.
- Organise volunteering and civic engagement opportunities that build pride and belonging.
- Encourage extracurricular participation — sports, arts, youth clubs — to build networks and skills.

What it means: Belonging is a service in itself for learners who routinely experience exclusion. Cultural awareness programmes let Roma learners share their heritage with peers, building mutual understanding between Roma and non-Roma students; community involvement opportunities let learners contribute visibly, fostering pride and belonging; extracurricular activities build social networks and new skills outside the classroom.

These measures address the social dimension of retention: learners stay where they feel they belong. Best practice treats civic engagement as a two-way exchange — the institution learns from the community as much as the learner is integrated into it — and ensures that Roma culture appears in the institution's public life, not only in private, parallel activities.



T36 — Deliver gender-sensitive services for Roma girls and young mothers



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S4 BP 11

Key points

- Run gender equality workshops that challenge traditional roles while emphasising education for all.
- Connect girls with successful female role models and mentors.
- Support young mothers with childcare services and flexible learning options that allow continued education.

What it means: Roma girls face a double burden of gender-based and racial discrimination, and cultural expectations around early marriage or domestic roles can end their education early. Gender-sensitive services respond specifically: equality workshops open conversations about roles and education; female mentorship supplies the role models girls most lack; support for young mothers — childcare services, flexible learning options — removes the practical barriers that end many educational journeys.

Best practice **mainstreams** this perspective across all services rather than adding it as a special track: every measure — timetabling, mentoring, family engagement, financial support — should be tested for its effect on girls specifically. Services that ignore gender systematically under-serve the most vulnerable part of the learner population.

T37 — Connect learners with Roma role models, mentors and peer networks



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S4 BP 12

Key points

- Pair learners with mentors from similar backgrounds who model possibility and provide guidance.
- Share success stories of Roma individuals who overcame barriers.
- Use peer support networks so learners can exchange experiences as equals.

What it means: The absence of visible role models in education and employment limits aspirations and motivation among Roma youth: aspiration cannot grow where success has never been seen. Mentorship schemes pairing learners with mentors from similar backgrounds provide guidance and — equally important — proof that the pathway works; success stories circulate that proof widely; peer networks convert individual examples into collective confidence.

The evidence supports this: peer-to-peer support models demonstrably enhance educational engagement among Roma students, and mentorship combined with other support significantly increases retention and graduation. Best practice therefore recruits mentors from the community, trains them properly, and treats their visibility as an institutional asset rather than a symbolic gesture.

Related: **T55 — Make VET visible: open days, site visits and real-life success stories** (the same mechanism applied at recruitment stage)



T38 — Personalise services through tailored implementation and individual learning plans



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S4 BP 14

Key points

- Develop individual learning plans reflecting strengths, needs and goals — updated regularly.
- Integrate culturally relevant content (Roma history, literature, practices) into the curriculum.
- Use flexible learning models and holistic support — transport, language, healthcare — that accommodate family and economic pressures.

What it means: Each learner faces a unique combination of educational background, language proficiency, family circumstances and cultural context, so standardised provision systematically misses. Personalised learning plans translate the individual profile into action and evolve with progress; culturally relevant content builds identity and belonging; flexible models absorb the instability of working and caring responsibilities; holistic support addresses the socio-economic factors — transport, health, social services — that no pedagogical intervention can remove.

Gender sensitivity is a mandatory part of personalisation: girls' situations differ structurally from boys', and services must be designed accordingly (T36). The test of tailored implementation is whether the learner's actual weekly life is compatible with the programme's requirements — a test best performed **with** the learner, not about the learner.



T39 — Evaluate services and institutionalise evidence-based self-review and development planning



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Sources:** S3 BP 14 + S4 BP 15 (*merged*)

Key points

- Review honestly and comprehensively, using data — learner feedback, outcomes, observations — and including voices that are usually unheard.
- Collect learner, family and practitioner feedback directly on relevance and effectiveness, and make data-driven adjustments.
- Set measurable inclusion goals with owners, resources, timelines and monitoring; embed review and planning in normal quality cycles.

Why it works: Services are only as good as their fit to needs, and fit can only be known through systematic listening. Self-review must be **honest** (discussing what is not going well rather than polishing appearances), **evidence-based** (using learner feedback, staff comments, performance data and direct observation rather than impressions) and **inclusive** (amplifying the voices of learners and staff who are not usually heard, instead of letting the powerful define what matters).

The monitoring package. Regular progress assessment (teacher evaluations, self-reports); direct learner feedback on how services feel and function, via surveys, focus groups and interviews; family and community input on real-world impact; structured reflections from mentors, teachers and social workers who observe learners daily; and data-driven adjustments that scale what works and revise what does not.

From review to planning. Development planning converts insight into commitment: a good plan states what will change, how it will be implemented, who is responsible, when it will happen, and what support is needed — with measurable objectives so progress can be evaluated.



Two principles that make it durable. First, **embed** planning in the institution's regular management and quality-assurance cycles rather than running it as a parallel project, because embedding signals that inclusion is part of the institution's identity, not a temporary concern of a particular team. Second, note that the process of reviewing and planning together is often as valuable as the plan itself, since it builds the shared understanding and relationships on which genuine, long-term change depends.

The trust dividend. When learners see their feedback change practice, monitoring also becomes a trust-building act — evidence that their voice counts inside the system. Evaluation belongs to the service itself, not to an external audit.

T40 — Learn from proven programmes



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S4 BP 16

Key points

- Roma Education Fund: scholarships combined with mentorship and academic counselling significantly raise retention and graduation.
- Peer mentorship models (European Youth Forum): Roma youth guided by successful older students gain confidence and belonging.
- School-level pilots: Romania's inclusive education model and Hungary's mobile schooling show how to integrate learners and reach isolated communities.

What it means: The guidebook compiles demonstrated practice rather than speculation. REF's scholarship-plus-mentorship package shows that financial support alone is insufficient, and that **combined** support changes outcomes. The peer-mentorship model supplies role models and belonging at low cost. Romania's inclusive-education pilot shows what school-level integration requires: regular teacher training on cultural awareness, Roma community mediators improving school-family relations, and extracurricular activities promoting social integration — all contributing to



reduced dropout. Hungary's mobile schooling demonstrates how to reach learners whom distance excludes from school buildings.

Best practice treats these cases as **templates to adapt, not ornaments to cite**: each encodes a transferable logic — bundle support, mobilise peers, integrate institutions, go where learners are. Systematic learning from comparable initiatives is itself a practice: institutions that document, compare and adapt outperform those that improvise alone.

B6 — INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN, LEADERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIPS

T41 — Design inclusion into the institution from the outset



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S3 BP 8

Key points

- Build accessible entry points, flexible pathways, learner-centred pedagogy and genuine learner participation into institutional design — not as add-ons.
- Treat diversity as a reality to be honoured, not a problem to be managed; anticipate it instead of correcting for it later.
- Diagnose where learners “fall through the gaps” and redesign at system level.

What it means: Inclusive structures are “the architecture of fairness”, not optional enhancements. When institutions design for inclusion from the outset, they stop treating diversity as a deviation from a standard learner and begin treating it as the norm to be designed for. Concretely, this means entry requirements communicated in plain language and open to several routes; pathways that can bend in pace and sequence without losing standards; pedagogy centred on the learner; and mechanisms through which learners genuinely shape their own journey.

The diagnostic exercise trains professionals to examine an institution and ask where learners are likely to fall through the gaps and which framework features are missing or underdeveloped. The answer usually reveals that exclusion is



produced by **design defaults** — a rigid enrolment calendar, a single pathway, support bolted on after failure — rather than by individual ill will.

Best practice therefore makes inclusion a design criterion in every institutional decision, from timetabling to information materials. The test: **would the system still work inclusively if no individual went the extra mile?**

T42 — Cultivate a visibly inclusive institutional culture



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S3 BP 11

Key points

- Make belonging experienced, not merely proclaimed: representation in materials, everyday staff language and informal social dynamics all matter.
- Align what happens “when no one is watching” with the institution’s stated values.
- Expect success from historically excluded learners rather than merely tolerating their presence.

What it means: Institutional culture is the implicit rules, shared values and habitual behaviours that operate beneath mission statements — what occurs during regular hours when routines take over. The case of **Samira** shows how a formally “inclusive and welcoming” institution communicated the opposite: promotional posters featured only majority-background learners, class examples excluded diverse communities, staff spoke of “students who are not motivated enough”, and existing cliques left her alone at lunch. Samira concluded that she was expected to adapt to the institution rather than belong within it.

Best practice therefore audits culture through visible signals: who is represented in displays, materials and examples; how staff talk about learners when learners are absent; how newcomers are integrated socially; whose voices appear in meetings. An inclusive culture is one where learners from historically excluded groups are genuinely expected to



succeed, where their identities and experiences are respected, and where systems actively remove barriers rather than reproduce them.

Such a culture does not emerge spontaneously — it is deliberately built, continuously maintained, and measured by the experience of the least visible learner.

T43 — Secure committed leadership and shared responsibility



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S3 BP 12

Key points

- Make leadership visibly accountable for inclusion through decisions about time, resources and priorities — not statements alone.
- Embed inclusion responsibilities across all departments so that practice survives staff turnover.
- Give learners structured voice — consultation meetings, anonymous feedback, visible follow-up.

What it means: Sustainable inclusion cannot rest on individual commitment: practice that depends on one motivated teacher or support worker collapses when that person leaves or loses energy. Leadership is therefore the load-bearing element. Leaders make inclusion real through observable choices — where money and time go, what staff meetings prioritise, who is consulted, how conflicts about scarce resources are resolved.

Best practice distributes responsibility institution-wide: inclusion duties are embedded in every department's remit, with clear ownership, so that no team can treat equality as "someone else's job". Equally important is **learner voice with consequences**: structured consultation, anonymous feedback channels and visible follow-up processes that show learners how their input changed decisions — because voice without visible action breeds cynicism.

The test of leadership for inclusion: whether the institution's *default routines* — not its exceptional gestures — carry the values it claims.

T44 — Partner with employers: co-design, mentoring, apprenticeships and inclusive workplaces



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Sources:** S3 BP 13 (employer strand) + S4 BP 24 (*merged*)

Key points

- Form partnerships among vocational schools, businesses and Roma organisations in skill-shortage sectors: IT, renewable energy, healthcare and skilled trades.
- Engage employers in course design, mentoring and workplace inclusion — and create dedicated, remunerated apprenticeship slots with clear routes into full-time employment.
- Run Roma-mentored internship programmes linked to job offers; firms that host Roma apprentices learn what inclusive workplaces require.

Why it works: Roma youth face systemic discrimination and a lack of workplace mentors that block access to apprenticeships — the gateway to skilled employment. Employers who co-design curricula, mentor learners and open their workplaces signal that Roma trainees are future colleagues, not charity cases. Institutions must invest time in relationships, clarify mutual benefits and support employers in making their own workplaces inclusive.

How to apply. Build formal partnerships between VET schools, employers and Roma organisations, targeting industries with labour shortages, creating dedicated apprenticeship places for Roma students and visible pathways from training to employment. Roma-run internship programmes add mentors from the community, reducing alienation and building trust in the system.

Non-negotiable conditions.

- **Remuneration.** Unpaid placements exclude the very learners whom economic pressure most affects.
- **Linkage to job offers.** Internships connected to real offers convert training into employment — the outcome that justifies the learner's investment.
- **Employer education.** Firms that host Roma apprentices learn, by working with them, what inclusive workplaces require.



Learner counterparts: **L06–L10** (safety rights and responsibilities at work), **L25** (networking into the hidden job market)

T45 — Provide Roma-specific career guidance, real work experience and mentor networks



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Sources:** S4 BP 4 + S4 BP 25 (*merged*)

Key points

- Offer personalised career counselling, delivered by Roma counsellors based inside schools and VET institutions, to explore pathways into further education and VET.
- Run practical workshops on goal-setting, CV writing and interview preparation, and broker internships and apprenticeships that build experience and professional networks.
- Expand mentorship by successful Roma professionals who have navigated VET pathways themselves, closing the guidance gap that leaves learners unaware of options and lacking confidence to pursue them.

Why it works: Many Roma learners lack exposure to the range of educational and vocational opportunities that others take for granted, and guidance compensates for that missing exposure. The lack of personalised career counselling is a crucial gap: without strong guidance, Roma students may not know the full range of VET opportunities or may lack the confidence to pursue them.

How to apply. Counselling personalises the exploration; workshops equip learners with concrete job-search skills; internships and apprenticeships create the first real-world experience and — critically — the professional networks on which labour-market entry depends. Roma career guidance centres place counsellors who understand the cultural and social dynamics of Roma communities inside the institutions where learners already are, offering personalised support on pathways, applications and transitions. Mentor networks extend guidance into lived example.



The combination — institutional counselling plus community mentorship — gives learners both information and confidence: direction, and proof that the direction works. Guidance should be linked to actual placements rather than left abstract: a learner who has met an employer, practised an interview and completed a placement holds assets no brochure can supply.

Learner counterparts: **L11** (explore vocational sectors), **L23** (application documents), **L24** (interviews), **L26** (strategic job search)

T46 — Engage and empower families and communities as partners in learning and retention



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Sources:** S4 BP 10 + S4 BP 28 (*merged*)

Key points

- Run culturally sensitive outreach — home visits, parent-teacher meetings and information sessions in Roma languages — and parental workshops on the value of education and on strategies for supporting children's learning.
- Offer family counselling and mediation for concerns that affect the learner's journey, plus family support services (system navigation, legal aid, financial resources) in cooperation with Roma NGOs.
- Involve Roma community leaders in educational initiatives, and treat family engagement as critical infrastructure of dropout prevention rather than as outreach.

Why it works: A supportive home environment is one of the strongest predictors of educational success, yet families are often left outside the support system. Family involvement is decisive for retention, yet many Roma parents face language barriers, institutional mistrust and unfamiliarity with how the education system works — the same mistrust addressed in **T21**.

How to apply. Outreach programmes conducted in Roma languages inform and engage parents as partners; parental workshops emphasise the importance of education and equip parents with practical strategies; family counselling and



mediation address the economic, social and cultural concerns that can derail a learner; family support services help families navigate the school system, access legal aid and find financial resources. Cooperation between Roma NGOs and education ministries ensures the support is trusted and sustained.

The guiding principle is partnership rather than outreach. Families are co-educators whose cultural knowledge is an asset, not obstacles to be managed. Engagement must be proactive and culturally literate — the institution goes to the family, in the family's language, through people the family trusts. When Roma leaders co-design and co-deliver initiatives, scepticism born of historical discrimination gives way to genuine engagement. When parents understand the pathway and feel respected by the institution, their influence — the strongest force in a young person's life — works for education instead of against it.

T47 — Deploy Roma mediators as the first point of contact



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S2 BP 11

Key points

- Deploy a Roma mediator who has personally completed an educational pathway to carry the message about the value of VET — in the community's own language, from a shared background.
- Use the same mediator to advise families on practical barriers and to provide guidance and psychological support during enrolment.
- Always pair the mediator with a culturally aware representative of the education institution, so the institution is visibly present and accountable.

Why it works: The most common reason a family does not enrol is not opposition to education but lack of trust in the system, or lack of awareness of what it offers. A message delivered by an institution is filtered through history; the same message delivered by a Roma mediator who has lived it is filtered through shared experience.



The mediator performs three functions, mirroring the evidence from Roma health mediation in Romania: **bridging cultural divides**, because they understand both Roma culture and the institutions Roma deal with, and can therefore explain complex subjects in culturally appropriate terms; **improving communication**, by removing language obstacles between Roma and non-Roma parties; and **strengthening the community**, because the presence of a trusted representative makes Roma participants willing to voice concerns and advocate for their needs. Where mediators are Roma women with community legitimacy, this effect is stronger still.

Two design conditions. The mediator must be a **role model with a completed pathway**, not simply a translator — the credibility comes from the biography. And the institution's representative must be genuinely culturally aware, since a culturally insensitive official accompanying the mediator cancels out the mediator's work.

Note: Mediators also serve as key actors in community dialogue (**T49–T54**), in cultural competence building (**T01**) and in early warning (**T59–T60**).

T48 — Institutionalise services and interventions — from project to state-owned, funded, legally protected system



Level: [SYSTEM] · **Sources:** S4 BP 17 + S4 BP 20 + S4 BP 29 (*merged*)

Key points

- Treat projects as prototypes, not policy: design every funded initiative from day one with a pathway to state ownership, permanent budget lines and Roma community participation.
- Embed measures in national and regional frameworks with six elements: legal and policy embedding, dedicated funding, teacher training and certification, Roma education advisory bodies, curriculum reform, and robust monitoring.
- Protect the system with two safeguards — evidence (regular evaluations, impact assessments, data collection) and law (reinforced legal protections and enforced anti-discrimination frameworks).



Why it matters: Sustainability is the difference between projects and systems. The review of existing VET strategies shows a clear pattern. **Germany** funds integration projects — European Social Fund initiatives and the IQ programme — that upskill migrants but rarely target Roma explicitly. **Greece** has run EU-funded pilots connecting Roma youth to VET and jobs, alongside NGO short courses, but lacks a systematic mechanism. **Austria** includes Roma under “disadvantaged youth” measures through the Public Employment Service and municipal projects, with Roma organisations such as Romano Centro acting as intermediaries. **Bulgaria and North Macedonia** go furthest: REF-supported scholarships and mentoring, subsidised internships, wage subsidies, Structural and IPA funds for training centres, and strategies with explicit Roma participation indicators. Yet even the stronger cases are undermined by project cycles, segregated VET tracks and weak labour-market absorption.

The institutionalisation agenda has six elements.

1. **Legal and policy embedding**, so that measures are permanent rather than temporary initiatives.
2. **Dedicated funding mechanisms** — education budgets, international funding, public-private partnerships — that survive budget cycles.
3. **Teacher training and certification**, putting Roma-inclusive pedagogy, cultural competence and bilingual teaching into standard professional equipment.
4. **Roma education advisory bodies** with community representation, which provide recommendations, monitor progress and ensure accountability.
5. **Curriculum reform** integrating Romani language and culture, with textbooks and materials that reflect learners’ diversity.
6. **Robust monitoring, evaluation and reinforced anti-discrimination protection.**

What it applies to. The full intervention package — the Early Warning and Monitoring System (**T59–T60**), financial support (**T61**), Roma-focused apprenticeships (**T44**), career guidance and mentorship (**T45**), flexible programmes (**T07**), anti-discrimination policies and teacher training (**T26**), and family engagement (**T46**) — operating as one coherent package embedded in national and regional frameworks.

The final test. Whether the service or mechanism remains when its funding ends and its champions move on. Institutionalisation is how inclusion stops being a special effort and becomes the ordinary operating system of education: evidence allows stakeholders to adapt on the basis of results rather than habit, and law guarantees equal access as a matter of right rather than hope.



B7 — COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND DIALOGUE

Reference methodology: FRA/LEXI “Local Engagement for Roma Inclusion” (LERI) and Participatory Action Research (PAR). These nine practices are the operational core of MIRANDA Deliverable 2.2 and sit upstream of recruitment: they describe how a VET provider approaches, listens to and shares decision-making with a Roma community.

Suggested sequence (from the source implementation annex): internal readiness (T01, T15–T21) → preparation (T21, T49) → partnership (T50, T47) → needs assessment (T27) → trust-building (T55, T56, T30, T57) → dialogue (T51, T52, T53) → institutionalisation (T54) → closure (T54).

T49 — Prepare a six-category community information base before any engagement



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S2 BP 16

Key points

- Before any dialogue, assemble quantitative and qualitative data across six categories: demography, community history, household infrastructure, social challenges, leaders and key actors, and degree of socio-economic integration.
- Source the data from official and community-based channels — municipal records, Roma Community Centres, Roma mediators, social and labour services, Roma organisations.
- Treat the community as non-homogeneous: record the Roma sub-groups present and their distinct cultural and linguistic characteristics.

The six categories.

1. **Demography** — total resident population and family units, gender ratio, Roma-to-non-Roma ratio in the area, age structure across adults, adolescents and children.
2. **History** — when and under what circumstances the community was formed, whether it is long-established or new, significant positive and negative events in its recent history, and the cultural and linguistic composition of the sub-groups present.



3. **Household infrastructure** — settlement type, electricity, water, sanitation, telephone and internet access, access to technology.
4. **Social issues** — poverty and income levels, unemployment, food insecurity, number of NEETs, barriers to employment, lack of free recreation, crime, youth offending and drug use.
5. **Leaders and key actors** — community leaders and prominent figures, and the Roma organisations, associations and cultural clubs active in the area with their leadership.
6. **Degree of integration** — employed and unemployed numbers and shares, duration and types of unemployment, informal and undeclared work, educational attainment at every level, political participation, and qualitative data on the community's openness to non-Roma, its events and festivals, and its level of cooperation with local authorities.

Why it works: A dialogue that begins without a shared factual base degenerates into anecdote. The framework gives organisers a structured picture and, just as importantly, a set of named local contacts before the first meeting. Organisers should enter the first meeting able to state these facts back to community representatives — being visibly informed is itself a trust signal.

T50 — Agree a formal cooperation protocol with the Roma Community Centre and mediators



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S2 BP 17

Key points

- Approach the Roma Community Centre and the municipal social-inclusion service in parallel, present the project and objectives to both, and explain precisely what you need from them.
- State clearly and early that you are asking for expertise and a venue in the community, not for their money — activities must take place where the community lives.



- Put the arrangement in writing: a cooperation/action protocol defining each party's role, plus the indicators, instruments and methods to be used, and secure agreement to it.

Why it works: Roma Community Centres and the mediators working in them are the operational infrastructure of inclusion at local level. Since 2011, through ROMED1, ROMED2 and other capacity-building projects, mediators have been trained and specialised in social inclusion, school education and mediation, access to health systems, and access to social benefits and public services. No external project can reach a community credibly without them.

The recommended sequence.

1. Contact the Roma Community Centre by email or telephone and speak to the social inclusion officer.
2. **In parallel**, contact the municipal authority and inform the municipal social service for Roma, or whichever service is responsible for Roma social integration.
3. Present the project, the general plan and the dialogue objectives to both.
4. Explain the specific contribution required: data for the needs analysis; two mediators to engage community leaders and organisations in planning; a room in the community or community centre; facilitation support during the dialogue itself.

Two points carry most of the weight. The **cost plan** — present a short breakdown of the costs you undertake to cover and make unambiguous that their contribution is expertise and premises, not funds. And the **location** — the dialogue happens inside the community, so that neither the community nor its representatives are removed from their own area. The written protocol (roles, indicators, instruments, methods) converts goodwill into an accountable arrangement and should be agreed before any date is fixed.



T51 — Run the community dialogue with explicit ground rules



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S2 BP 19

Key points

- Fix a small number of discussion topics and clear, measurable, achievable goals before the session (e.g. a three-hour dialogue with 50 community members and leaders on barriers and motivators for VET participation).
- Seat participants in a circle or in a П/U shape for eye contact; appoint three facilitators — one from your organisation, one Roma community leader, one from the VET provider — with Roma mediators at the centre of the panel.
- Manage speaking time explicitly (3–4 minutes per contribution, a one-minute warning before closing) and enforce inclusive, respectful language throughout.

The eight rules that convert an open community meeting into a working session.

1. **Topic selection.** Identify the few issues you genuinely need to discuss. One well-chosen question — “What would motivate or push you to take part in VET training?” — is enough to unfold barriers, motivation, and what VET can actually offer.
2. **Goal definition.** Goals must be clear, measurable and achievable, stated in terms of participants, duration and intended outcome.
3. **Layout and facilitation.** A circle or П/U arrangement maintains eye contact and makes all participants comfortable enough to speak. The three facilitators give the floor, keep the discussion on topic and on goal, and prevent abusive or discriminatory attitudes.
4. **Mediator role.** Roma mediators are central both for linguistic and cultural mediation and for managing interruptions, irrelevant interventions and questions already answered.
5. **Time discipline.** Facilitators allocate three to four minutes per contribution, warn one minute before the close, and offer mediator support where needed.



6. **Experience sharing.** Personal experiences, examples and practices that have worked in comparable circumstances should be brought into the room.
7. **Space for all.** Everyone who feels they have something relevant and worth hearing gets the floor.
8. **Inclusive language** in both linguistic and non-linguistic communication, with regular reminders that politeness and respect for others' opinions are essential.

The rule set should be read out at the start of the session and agreed by participants, which turns the facilitators' authority into a collectively accepted convention.

T52 — Design and run the dialogue: agenda-setting, facilitated exchange, partnership-building



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Sources:** S2 BP 20 + S2 BP 23 (*merged*)

Key points

- Set objectives that align with the national Roma strategy and the EU Strategic Framework for Roma Equality, Inclusion and Participation for 2030 — promoting equality and inclusion, fostering dialogue and cooperation, empowering Roma communities (especially youth and women).
- Create an inclusive space: invite government, civil society, academia and — most importantly — the Roma community; use Roma mediators to bridge cultural gaps and ensure Roma voices are heard.
- End with concrete action points, agreed collaboration areas, and a plan for regular communication and follow-up meetings.

Stage 1 — Setting the agenda. Welcome participants and introduce the objectives. Provide an overview of the national Roma strategy and the EU strategic framework, and state the specific aims of this dialogue. Briefly outline ongoing initiatives supporting Roma communities, so that participants know what already exists before they are asked what is



missing. Aligning objectives with the national strategy and the EU framework is not bureaucratic housekeeping — it is what makes the dialogue's outputs admissible into policy processes afterwards.

Stage 2 — Facilitating dialogue. Encourage participants to share perspectives, concerns and priorities in an open forum; then discuss the challenges Roma communities face and explore areas for collaboration and support. The facilitator's job is to keep contributions moving and to ensure quieter voices are invited in — supported throughout by Roma mediators.

Stage 3 — Building partnerships. Agree concrete action points and collaboration areas that align with the dialogue's objectives and the national strategy. Establish a plan for regular communication, follow-up meetings and ongoing collaboration.

The arc of the first meeting with community leadership — which determines whether a dialogue will happen at all:

- **Rapport and trust.** Introduce yourself and your organisation, state your commitment to dialogue and cooperation, and share relevant experience of successful engagement with Roma communities. Mentioning past success is not self-promotion — it is the evidence leaders need in order to commit community time.
- **Understanding needs.** Invert the roles: the institution listens. Leaders set out the community's concerns and priorities; the discussion covers socio-economic conditions and access to education, healthcare, employment and housing; and collaboration is explored with a deliberate bias towards **community-led** initiatives rather than externally designed ones.
- **Initiatives and continued dialogue.** Present existing programmes, seek feedback so initiatives stay relevant, and agree a schedule for regular communication, follow-up meetings, monitoring and evaluation.
- **Institutionalising the relationship.** An explicit commitment that the dialogue remains inclusive, transparent and responsive to community needs — and a basis for holding the institution to account afterwards.

Three practices make the space inclusive: diverse representation across government, civil society, academia and the Roma community; fostering mutual understanding through a safe space for open exchange of perspectives and experiences; and utilisation of Roma mediators to bridge cultural gaps and facilitate communication.

T53 — Use participatory and creative methods to maximise Roma participation



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S2 BP 22

Key points

- Choose methods that let participants express themselves in more than one register: co-creation workshops, storytelling, visual mapping and storyboarding, World Café, participatory video, Open Space Technology, ABCD workshops, and arts and culture events.
- Match the method to literacy levels — visual, oral and artistic formats include people whom written questionnaires exclude.
- Use arts and culture both as an engagement method and as an empowerment objective in its own right.

Why it works: Standard consultation formats privilege fluent, literate, confident speakers — precisely the profile that exclusion suppresses. The participatory toolkit widens who can contribute.

- **Co-creation workshops** engage community members in jointly developing solutions, programmes and policies, so that participants share perspectives, experiences and aspirations while working with stakeholders on ideas that directly affect their lives.
- **Storytelling sessions** give a platform for personal experiences, challenges and aspirations, promoting empathy and connection.
- **Visual mapping and storyboarding** let participants represent ideas, challenges and solutions visually, helping them see patterns and co-create collaboratively.
- **World Café** structures open dialogue through café-style conversations in which participants move between tables on specific topics and build collective intelligence.
- **Participatory video workshops** teach production skills so that community members tell their own stories on film — a powerful platform for self-expression and advocacy.
- **Open Space Technology** enables self-organising groups to propose topics, form working groups and drive the agenda themselves.



- **Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) workshops** map community strengths, assets and local resources and develop community-driven strategies, fostering empowerment and self-reliance rather than deficit framing.
- **Arts and culture** — seminars, concerts and exhibitions — honour Roma culture, encourage self-expression and build communal solidarity, while preserving heritage and fostering intercultural understanding. The **Khamoro World Roma Festival** in Prague is the reference example: an annual festival of music, dance, theatre and visual arts, produced jointly with local and international partners and actively involving Roma communities in its planning and execution, bringing Roma and non-Roma audiences together through performances, exhibitions, seminars and discussion.

Method selection should be explicit and justified in the dialogue plan, with **literacy levels and language needs stated as selection criteria**.

T54 — Sustain the dialogue: standing platform, documented action points and closing the loop



Level: [INSTITUTION] / [SYSTEM] · **Sources:** S2 BP 21 + S2 BP 24 (*merged*)

Key points

- Establish a **standing platform**, not a one-off event, bringing together government representatives at several levels and Roma civil society organisations, with trained facilitators.
- Set the agenda with Roma communities so it addresses their most pressing issues, and make every discussion produce documented action steps and recommendations.
- Compile the results, report them with quotes and data, apply them to revise objectives and strategies, and **return** them to the community — then keep the review cycle running.



The transferable model: Austria's Roma-Dialogplattform (est. 2011). Its design has five operational features, all transferable to a VET provider:

1. **Needs-based agenda** — topics chosen in collaboration with Roma communities.
2. **Inclusive participation** — meetings bring together representatives from various levels of government and Roma civil society organisations, producing a holistic view of the challenges.
3. **Facilitated discussion** — trained facilitators guide respectful exchange and secure productive outcomes.
4. **Actionable outcomes** — discussions end in documented action steps and recommendations.
5. **Monitoring and follow-up** — the platform tracks implementation of the national Roma inclusion strategy.

The benefits follow from the design. Authorities become sensitised to Roma-specific challenges, which produces better-informed policy and practice. Roma communities gain a direct channel to advocate their needs and priorities. And because Roma civil society monitors implementation, transparency and accountability improve and the national strategy is more likely to address real concerns.

Closing the loop — the four movements. This is the practice that separates genuine engagement from consultation theatre, and it is the one most often skipped under deadline pressure.

- **Compile** — collect everything said in the sessions, then organise and categorise it to surface key themes, concerns and recommendations.
- **Report** — produce a detailed summary of findings with relevant quotes, anecdotes and data that give context and support to the conclusions.
- **Apply** — use the compiled results to refine and improve project objectives, strategies and activities, ensuring the design meets the needs and expectations of the target audience.
- **Return** — share the collated results and the action plan that came from them with the community, showing transparently how feedback shaped the project and communicating any modifications made on the basis of it.

The final movement does not end at publication. Open communication must be maintained throughout implementation, with objectives and actions regularly re-examined in response to continuing input and changing community needs. Allowing for continual improvement by incorporating community feedback into project changes is what makes the initiative responsive rather than merely well-intentioned.

Two sentences worth posting on the staff-room wall. A community that sees its own words return in a revised plan will participate again; a community that sees its words disappear will not. And: a dialogue with no follow-up is the single most reliable way to destroy trust that took years to build.

T55 — Make VET visible: open days, site visits and real-life success stories



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S2 BP 12

Key points

- Let parents physically see the building, the classroom and the environment their child would attend — “putting a picture to the facts” reduces reluctance more than any brochure.
- Publicise concrete, named examples of Roma learners who completed VET and improved their employment and income, including how they coped with discrimination.
- Use these narratives to counter the fear of marginalisation and the fear of being isolated from one’s own community after studying.

Why it works: Reluctance to enrol is often an absence of mental imagery: families cannot picture what the school is like, so they default to the worst-case image supplied by previous experience. A site visit replaces speculation with observation and gives parents a basis for a decision. It should be organised with the mediator present and with an institutional representative available for questions.

Success stories work on a different mechanism. They establish that the pathway is real and that the payoff is real, which addresses the motivation barrier directly. They also perform a specific protective function: prospective learners fear discrimination inside the institution and fear losing standing inside their own community if they study. Hearing from someone who went through it — and hearing specifically how that person handled discriminatory behaviour — reduces both fears and provides a script for coping.

The isolation fear is addressed structurally, not rhetorically: the answer is to increase the overall number of Roma learners in the institution, so that any new student has a peer group. **Recruitment targets should therefore be set at group level, not individual level.**

T56 — Support civil registration and administrative integration



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S2 BP 13

Key points

- Unregistered children fall outside state protection on compulsory education and child labour, and can be denied access to education and healthcare — registration is a precondition for everything else.
- Produce a simple, accessible information leaflet or database, agreed with the municipality or ministry of interior, listing every procedure a citizen needs in order to be fully integrated.
- Use Roma community members who have already completed the procedures as spokespersons to explain their importance.

What it means: This is the least glamorous and most consequential practice in the trust-building set, because it removes a hard legal obstacle rather than a perceptual one. Widespread mistrust of the state, unwelcoming behaviour in medical institutions, and uninsured parents all suppress birth registration; lack of awareness of the requirement persists independently of these. The consequence is a population that is, in the eyes of the administration, invisible — and therefore unprotected and unserviceable.

The intervention is deliberately administrative: a plain-language, easily accessible compilation of the required procedures, produced jointly with the competent authority so that it is authoritative, distributed through the Roma Community Centre and mediators, and reinforced by peer spokespersons who have completed the process and can describe it in practical terms.

Why a VET project should care. This practice sits upstream of recruitment. An adult learner without documents cannot be enrolled, certified or placed in employment, so registration support is not a distraction from the VET objective — it is the entry gate.



T57 — Enable cultural empowerment and co-decision — learners as designers, not recipients



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S2 BP 15

Key points

- Involve Roma learners in curriculum design, programme planning and policy discussion — participation must reach decision-making, not stop at consultation.
- Run seminars and training that empower learners through their own cultural heritage, and hold diversity talks led by people the community already trusts.
- Build time and flexibility into community-level projects, because participation, trust-building, capacity-building, monitoring and evaluation cannot be compressed into a standard activity calendar.

Why it works: Co-decision is the mechanism that converts participation into ownership. When Roma learners help shape what they study and how it is delivered, they acquire a sense of responsibility and investment that shows up as motivation, engagement and commitment. The institutional benefit is equally concrete: programmes that learners helped design have lower dropout and better fit to the local labour market.

Cultural empowerment addresses the internalised inferiority that exclusion produces. Seminars grounded in Roma heritage and characteristics, and talks about diversity led by trusted community figures, rebuild the self-worth that a hostile school environment erodes — and self-worth is a precondition for persistence in a demanding VET programme.

Two structural warnings.

1. **Timeframes.** Community-level projects routinely lack adequate timeframes and flexibility for the participatory cycle; building in revision points is what makes outcomes sustainable.
2. **Particularised trust.** In many of these communities trust is particularised — extended mainly to members of the same group — so facilitators arriving as outsiders must earn standing slowly, by respecting collectivist community practices, by participating genuinely in community and cultural events, and by creating platforms for intergroup dialogue.



The practical sequence: be present, be useful, be consistent, and only then ask for co-design.

Learner counterpart: **T34 — Train self-advocacy, leadership and rights awareness** (the learner-side capability that makes co-decision real)

B8 — DROPOUT PREVENTION

T58 — Diagnose dropout with data on its structural causes



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S4 BP 18

Key points

- Know the scale: reported dropout of Roma learners ranges from 31% (Greece) to 70% (Bulgaria), against 9.7% for non-Roma peers.
- Read the causes: financial strain (cited by 47% of Roma youth dropouts), work interfering with education (~30% of Roma youth), early marriage and domestic expectations (35% of Roma girls), segregation, language barriers, institutional distrust.
- Treat dropout as the outcome of structural failure, not of learner failure.

What it means: Dropout is common, patterned and predictable — which means it is preventable. The patterns are clear: discrimination and segregation in schooling; economic pressure pushing youth into informal labour and out of education; cultural expectations around early marriage, family formation and gender-specific roles that interrupt girls' education; language barriers; and generational distrust of institutions born of historical discrimination and forced assimilation.

Best practice therefore diagnoses before it intervenes. An institution that cannot say **which learners drop out, at which points and for which causes** is flying blind; one that reads its own data — attendance, finance, family engagement — can target interventions precisely.



The framing discipline: dropout is a system outcome with identifiable causes, and every cause is addressable.

Related: **T27 — Triangulated needs assessment** supplies the method; **T59–T60** supply the mechanism that turns diagnosis into action.

T59 — Operate an Early Warning and Monitoring System (EWMS)



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S4 BP 21

Key points

- Track four risk dimensions per learner: attendance, academic performance, behavioural records and social risk factors.
- Trigger a multidisciplinary response — Roma mediator, career counsellor, class teacher, psychologist — with an individual support plan and monthly progress reviews.
- Make the system participatory and culturally sensitive, with Roma mediators as trusted intermediaries; anonymise and aggregate data to inform regional and national policy.

What it means: The EWMS is the flagship mechanism: a preventive, data-driven and human-centred tool embedded in the administrative and pedagogical framework of VET institutions. It continuously collects student-level data across four dimensions — **attendance patterns** (absences and chronic lateness as early disengagement signals), **academic performance** (continuous assessment and formative evaluation), **behaviour** (referrals, isolation, counsellor observations) and **social risk factors** (unstable housing, poverty, family responsibilities, discrimination) gathered through confidential interviews, Roma mediator reports and family outreach.

When a risk threshold is crossed, the system alerts a designated dropout-prevention team that reviews the case and develops a tailored support plan — tutoring, attendance incentives, flexible scheduling, mental health services or family



engagement — with monthly progress reviews. Data is anonymised and aggregated to inform regional and national policy.

The defining principle is proactive, not reactive: the system reaches learners before withdrawal becomes a decision, and Roma mediators ensure that alerts are socially accurate, not merely technically generated.

T60 — Operationalise the EWMS with concrete thresholds and tools



Level: [INSTITUTION] · **Source:** S4 BP 22

Key points

- **Attendance tracker:** alert above 10% missed hours per month. **Academic dashboard:** flag at two failed core modules or below a 40% average, reviewed bi-weekly.
- **Socio-Economic Vulnerability Index (SEVI):** the top 30% risk tier is prioritised for material support and mentoring.
- **Behavioural monitor:** three incidents per semester trigger a psycho-social referral; teacher alerts, family-engagement tracking, a support logbook and an outcome and retention index complete the system.

The interlinked components.

- **Real-time attendance tracking** catches disengagement early, especially where transport or domestic burdens explain absence.
- **The academic dashboard** flags performance decline before failure consolidates.
- **The SEVI**, built from intake forms and mediator interviews (housing stability, family income, dependents, parent education), directs material support and mentoring to the most vulnerable learners.
- **Behavioural monitoring** triggers referrals after three incidents per semester, with mediators contextualising incidents within the learner's home environment.
- **Teacher monthly qualitative reports** — missing materials, fatigue, bullying — correlated with other indicators.



- **Family-engagement tracking** flags families who miss consecutive meetings for mediator home visits.
- **A support logbook** records whether interventions were delivered on time and adjusted when ineffective.
- **An outcome index** benchmarks persistence, re-enrolment and apprenticeship acquisition.

Together these tools produce a **monthly-updated risk profile per learner** — the operational basis for individualised, timely intervention and for auditing the system's own performance.

Ethical safeguard: data must be anonymised and aggregated for policy use, and social risk data gathered through confidential interviews and mediator reports rather than administrative assumption.

T61 — Provide tailored financial support



Level: [INSTITUTION] / [SYSTEM] · **Source:** S4 BP 23

Key points

- Introduce Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs) linked to attendance, milestone completion and graduation, covering travel, books and materials.
- Establish dedicated VET scholarships for Roma students based on economic need.
- Publish existing scholarships, stipends and grants so learners know what is available.

Why it works: Financial strain is the single most cited reason for dropout — nearly half of Roma youth who leave school cite it — so money is an intervention, not charity. CCTs create a direct incentive structure: payments conditioned on attendance, completion of key milestones such as exams and internships, and successful graduation. Scholarships administered by education ministries provide need-based support and remove the forced choice between studying and earning. Both measures address the opportunity cost of education in families that depend on every member's income.



The information dimension: providers should actively compile and communicate available funding, because unclaimed support is support that does not exist for its beneficiaries. Predictable, condition-linked financial support makes staying in VET economically rational for families — the most direct antidote to premature labour-market entry.

Learner counterpart: **L27 — Manage money: budget, save and avoid debt** (financial support works best alongside financial literacy)

Part 3 — Making an inclusive learning environment

Part 2 gives 89 practices. Nobody implements 89 of anything. This part is the map: it describes what an inclusive learning environment actually consists of, sets out twelve techniques that produce one, and names for each technique the practices that need to be combined to make it work.

Nothing here is new content. Every reference points back into Part 2.

3.1 The five conditions

An inclusive learning environment is not a mood. It is five conditions that either hold or do not, and each of them can be inspected.

Condition	The learner can say...	If it fails, it looks like...
Access	"I could find this course, enrol, and get here."	Enquiries that never become enrolments; drop-off at paperwork, fees, transport or digital steps.
Belonging	"I am addressed correctly, I am heard, and I am protected."	Silence in class; withdrawal after an incident; learners who never ask for help.
Learning	"I know what I am learning, how I will be assessed, and how to succeed."	Achievement gaps that appear at assessment rather than during teaching.
Support	"When something goes wrong, I know who will act and by when."	Referrals that go nowhere; support that requires disclosing ethnicity to obtain.
Transition	"This leads to a qualification, a placement and a job I want."	Completion without progression; placements that are unpaid, unsupervised or unrelated to the qualification.

Two principles run underneath all five.



Equity is not equality. Equality gives everyone the same route. Equity keeps the occupational standard common while providing the different information, time, equipment or support that different people need in order to reach it. Lowering the standard is not inclusion; it produces a qualification that employers discount.

Barriers, not deficits. What presents as low motivation is usually the visible surface of a structural, institutional or personal barrier. The diagnostic question is always *which barrier is operating*, never *why is this learner like this*. This is the single most consequential habit in the whole guidebook, and it is why the first technique below comes first.

3.2 Twelve techniques

TECHNIQUE 1 — DIAGNOSE THE BARRIER BEFORE YOU RESPOND

Irregular attendance, silence, missed deadlines and unfinished paperwork are symptoms. Before any consequence is applied, establish what is actually happening: transport, unpaid care, housing instability, health, a device that does not work, a document that cannot be obtained, or an incident nobody reported. Replace the penalty-first sequence with an ask-first sequence. This costs one conversation and prevents most avoidable withdrawals.

Combine: T02 (barrier lens) · T17 (empathy and active listening) · T18 (structured questioning) · T27 (evidence-based needs assessment) · T58 (structural causes of dropout)

TECHNIQUE 2 — DESIGN THE DEFAULT, THEN ADD TARGETED SUPPORT WITH CONSENT

Build as much as possible into what every learner receives: clear timetables and assessment calendars, more than one way to practise, predictable routines, explicit criteria, printed as well as digital alternatives. Then add targeted support — tutoring, language help, equipment, travel, childcare referral, flexible scheduling — on top, with the learner's consent, and without making it visible or humiliating. The combination matters: universal design alone leaves individual barriers standing, and targeted support alone becomes a parallel, lower-status track.

Combine: T06 (accessible, clear, relevant) · T07 (flexible pathways) · T12 (adapt without stigmatising) · T30 (language support) · T31 (digital divide) · T61 (tailored financial support)

TECHNIQUE 3 — MAKE THE HIDDEN CURRICULUM EXPLICIT

Every institution runs on rules that were never written down: how to address a tutor, what counts as an acceptable absence, how to challenge a mark, what “professional” means in this workshop. Learners who arrive with prior familiarity absorb these rules invisibly; learners who do not are penalised for breaking rules they were never told. Write



them down. A first-week map of people, rooms, equipment, breaks, assessment and help is the cheapest inclusion intervention available.

Combine: T15 (plain, multimodal language) · T24 (audit rules for hidden exclusion) · T06 (clarity) · T10 (transparent criteria) · L22 (professional etiquette, from the learner's side)

TECHNIQUE 4 — RUN A REPEATABLE PARTICIPATION ROUTINE

Confidence should not be the gatekeeper of voice. Use the same five-step shape in every session: **welcome** (names used correctly, purpose and success criteria stated) → **connect** (link the task to occupational practice, invite more than one route to an answer) → **participate** (structured turn-taking, pairs and small groups) → **protect** (agreed response to stereotypes, jokes and harassment, applied every time) → **close** (what was clear, what was hard, what is needed next). Predictability is what makes participation safe.

Combine: T09 (active, safe participation) · T16 (non-verbal signals) · T19 (strategic silence) · T23 (exclusionary language and microaggressions) · L18 (teamwork, from the learner's side)

TECHNIQUE 5 — CONNECT CONTENT TO OCCUPATIONAL REALITY WITHOUT STEREOTYPING

Culturally responsive teaching links new knowledge to learners' experience while challenging the unequal structures that shape opportunity. Use examples, tools and workplace settings that are recognisable and varied. Offer more than one route to demonstrate understanding while holding the same standard. Where relevant, make power discussable: who gets access to work, whose knowledge is valued. Two traps must be avoided — explaining outcomes through "Roma culture" while ignoring segregation and poverty, and adding food, music or a celebration day without changing curriculum, relationships or progression.

Combine: T01 (cultural competence) · T03 (bias in perception and expectation) · T08 (scaffolding) · T57 (learners as designers, not recipients) · T42 (visibly inclusive culture)

TECHNIQUE 6 — ASSESS COMPETENCE, NOT FAMILIARITY WITH THE SYSTEM

Keep the occupational standard high and remove everything irrelevant from the route to demonstrating it. Share criteria and worked examples in advance. Use formative checks and low-stakes rehearsal. Read instructions aloud or show them. Accept varied evidence — oral explanation, annotated image, demonstration — where the competence permits. Separate language development from the competence judgement wherever possible. Document adjustments and make them routine. Never create a lower-status version of the qualification.



Combine: T10 (formative assessment, transparent criteria) · T11 (varied evidence) · T13 (recognition of prior learning) · T14 (academic support) · T03 (bias in assessment)

TECHNIQUE 7 — ENGINEER TRUST RATHER THAN HOPE FOR IT

Mistrust of institutions among Roma communities is a rational response to a documented history of exclusion, not a personality trait. It therefore has to be addressed structurally: consistency between what is promised and what happens, transparency about decisions and their reasons, safe spaces where a concern can be raised without consequence, and a visible, reliable response when discrimination occurs. Silence after an incident teaches every learner present that the rule is not for everyone.

Combine: T21 (trust and the history of exclusion) · T20 (difficult conversations and repair) · T22 (identifying discrimination) · T26 (reporting systems and accountability) · T47 (mediators as first point of contact)

TECHNIQUE 8 — WRAP THE SUPPORT AROUND ONE NAMED PERSON

Support fails at the handover. Every referral must answer three questions: who will contact the learner, by when, and how we will know whether it helped. If those cannot be answered, it is not yet support. Put one named person in the middle — trainer, mentor or mediator — holding an individual learning and support plan that covers learning and language, digital access, travel and cost, wellbeing and safety, family contact, and the next step. Review it on a stated date.

Combine: T28 (coordinated wraparound support) · T38 (individual learning plans) · T29 (proactive outreach so support is actually taken up) · T32 (psychosocial support) · T36 (gender-sensitive services) · T47 (mediators)

TECHNIQUE 9 — MAKE THE CLASSROOM CONTINUOUS WITH THE WORKPLACE

A placement is part of learning, not a test of whether a learner can endure discrimination or unpaid work. Prepare (rights, safety, communication, how to report a problem, rehearsed travel and introductions) → match on skills and goals rather than stereotypes → protect with a written agreement, named supervisor, anti-discrimination clause and complaint route → reflect through early and mid-placement check-ins with the learner privately as well as the employer → progress by turning placement evidence into a reference, portfolio or job lead. Review placement quality, not only placement count.

Combine: T44 (employer partnerships) · T45 (career guidance and real work experience) · T37 (role models and mentors) · L06–L10 (workplace health and safety) · L12–L17 (customer service and hospitality) · L23–L26 (applications, interviews, job search)



TECHNIQUE 10 — DETECT AND RESPOND TO DISENGAGEMENT EARLY

Retention is a monitoring problem before it is a motivation problem. Agree concrete thresholds in advance — a number of consecutive absences, a missed assessment, a sudden change in participation — and attach a named owner and a response time to each. The first response after a trigger is contact and diagnosis, never escalation. Keep a re-entry route open that preserves both dignity and the standard.

Combine: T59 (Early Warning and Monitoring System) · T60 (thresholds and tools) · T58 (structural causes) · T02 (barrier lens) · T61 (financial support) · T39 (evaluate and adjust)

TECHNIQUE 11 — SHARE DECISIONS WITH LEARNERS, FAMILIES AND THE COMMUNITY

Participation is not consultation theatre. Before engaging, build the community information base. Agree a cooperation protocol with Roma community structures and mediators. Run dialogue with explicit ground rules and a real agenda. Use participatory methods so that participation is not restricted to the confident and the literate. Then close the loop: report back what changed, what did not, and why. Pay for community expertise; do not extract it.

Combine: T46 (families and communities as partners) · T49–T54 (the community dialogue cycle) · T55 (open days and visible VET) · T57 (co-decision) · T53 (participatory methods) · T56 (civil registration support)

TECHNIQUE 12 — HOLD THE FRAME AT INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

Trainers can change the room. Only leadership can change the rules, the budget and the accountability around the room. Inclusion designed in from the outset is cheaper and more durable than inclusion retrofitted after a complaint. That means paid mediation and community expertise, staff development on anti-Gypsyism and inclusive assessment, an audit of institutional rules for indirect exclusion, monitoring that protects privacy while informing action, and a plan for moving services from project funding to institutional funding before the project ends.

Combine: T41 (design inclusion in from the outset) · T43 (committed leadership) · T24 (audit rules) · T25 (legal and policy anchoring) · T05 (collective professional learning) · T39 (self-review) · T48 (institutionalisation) · T40 (learn from proven programmes)



3.3 Combination map

The same information, read by condition rather than by technique. Use this table to check coverage: a condition with nothing in the institutional column is a condition that depends entirely on individual goodwill.

Condition	Classroom practices	Institutional and system practices	Learner practices
Access	T02, T15, T06	T07, T29, T30, T31, T47, T55, T56, T61	L01–L05
Belonging	T01, T09, T16, T17, T19, T21	T22, T23, T26, T35, T37, T42, T57	L18, L22
Learning	T03, T06, T08, T10, T11, T12	T07, T13, T14, T05	L19, L20, L28
Support	T18, T20, T34	T27, T28, T32, T36, T38, T39, T58, T59, T60, T61	L21, L27
Transition	T33	T44, T45, T46, T48	L06–L17, L23–L26

3.4 Learner–provider pairs

Several practices in Cluster A and Cluster B look similar but are the same subject seen from opposite sides: the learner builds a capability, the provider makes it possible. They are not duplicates and both are kept. Read them together — a paired reading is the most efficient staff development exercise in the guidebook, because it shows in one sitting what is being asked of the learner and what the institution must supply for the request to be fair.

Cluster A — what the learner does

L01–L05 Digital foundations

L06–L10 Workplace health and safety

L11 Explore vocational sectors

L12–L14, L16–L17 Customer service, hospitality, housekeeping

L18 Teamwork · **L19** Time management · **L20** SMART goals

L19, L20 Time and goals

L21 Integrity and accountability

L22 Professional etiquette and communication

Cluster B — what the provider makes possible

T31 Bridge the digital divide

T44 Safe, inclusive workplaces · **T26** Duty of care

T45 Career guidance, work experience, mentor networks

T45 Real work experience · **T33** Life and soft skills

T33 Build life skills

T07 Flexible pathways · **T38** Individual learning plans

T26 Professional ethics and accountability

T16 Non-verbal signals · **T05** Collective professional learning



Cluster A — what the learner does

L23, L24, L26 Applications, interviews, job search

L25 Networking and online presence

L27 Manage money

L28 Reflection and lifelong development

L13 Clear, empathetic communication

L14 Complaints and conflict

Cluster B — what the provider makes possible

T45 Career guidance · **T13** Recognition of prior learning

T44 Employer networks · **T37** Role models and mentors

T33 Financial literacy · **T61** Tailored financial support

T04 Reflective practice · **T13** Recognition of prior learning

T15 Plain, multimodal, culturally adapted language

T20 Difficult conversations and repair

3.5 Where to start: three bundles

Eighty-nine practices are not eighty-nine equally urgent tasks. These bundles are a defensible sequence for a provider beginning from a standing start.

Bundle 1 — Start here (first term). Low cost, high yield, no new budget line required.

T02 barrier lens · T06 accessible and clear teaching · T09 safe participation · T10 transparent criteria · T15 plain language · T23 exclusionary language · T22 identifying discrimination · plus a named contact for every learner.

Bundle 2 — Build the structure (first year). Requires coordination and some resourcing.

T27 needs assessment · T28 wraparound coordination · T38 individual learning plans · T29 outreach for uptake · T47 mediators · T59 and T60 early warning · T44 employer partnerships · T24 rule audit.

Bundle 3 — Make it permanent (beyond the first year). Requires governance and funding decisions.

T41 design inclusion in from the outset · T43 leadership commitment · T46 family and community partnership · T49–T54 the dialogue cycle · T39 self-review · T25 and T26 legal anchoring and enforcement · T48 institutionalisation.

3.6 Knowing whether it worked

Count access, participation, learning, safety, belonging and transition — and use the data to improve the route, not to police learners.



Outcome	Early signals	Results
Access	Enquiry-to-enrolment drop-off; time to complete enrolment; support route used	Enrolment rate; who is missing from the cohort
Participation	First-month check-ins; absence followed up supportively; re-entry offered	Attendance, retention, completion by course and stage
Belonging and safety	Learners know where to get help; incidents responded to on time	Belonging pulse; discrimination reports; repeat incidents
Learning	Formative feedback given; adjustments used; criteria understood	Achievement, resits, qualification, progression
Transition	Placement quality check; supervisor contact; learner check-in	Paid work, job quality, retention, further training

A six-question learner pulse, asked anonymously or in a safe conversation, covers most of what matters:

1. I know what I am expected to learn and how it will be assessed. *(yes / partly / no)*
2. I can ask for help without being judged. *(yes / partly / no)*
3. People in this programme treat me with respect. *(always / sometimes / rarely)*
4. If discrimination happens, I know what will happen next. *(yes / partly / no)*
5. The programme connects to a job, placement or next qualification I want. *(yes / partly / no)*
6. What is one change that would make learning easier? *(open response)*

Measure safely. Collect only what is needed. Explain purpose, consent, access and retention. Do not infer ethnicity from names or neighbourhoods. Do not publish figures small enough to identify an individual. Combine quantitative trends with learner narratives and Roma-led interpretation of what the numbers mean.

The test. The test of inclusion is not whether a document looks inclusive. It is whether learners can enter, belong, learn, qualify and move into decent work.

Annex — Provenance of the best practices

The 89 practices in Part 2 were consolidated from four MIRANDA source documents, which between them draw on the eleven project outputs listed in the Introduction.



Ref	Source document	Scope	Practices contributed
S1	<i>MIRANDA Power-Up Courses — A Compendium of Best Practices for Work Readiness and Career Development</i> (WP3, Activity 3.3)	Digital literacy, health and safety, vocational exploration, customer service, soft skills, career planning, job search, financial literacy	28
S2	<i>Deliverable 2.2 — Engagement Methodology with the Roma Community</i> (WP2, Activities 2.1–2.4)	Communicating with Roma communities, building trust, designing and running community dialogue	24
S3	<i>Best Practice Compendium — Inclusive VET for Roma Learners</i> (WP4, Activities 4.1–4.4, training modules and worksheets)	Knowing Roma learners, non-discrimination, institutional design, inclusive pedagogy, communication, reflective practice, flexible pathways	30
S4	<i>Best Practice Compendium II — Supporting and Empowerment Services and Dropout Intervention Mechanisms</i> (WP3, Activities 3.1 and 3.2)	Learner support and empowerment services; dropout prevention and the Early Warning and Monitoring System	29
Total input			111

Each practice in Part 2 carries its source reference and original number in its header line, so that any statement can be traced back to the deliverable it came from. Twenty-two de-duplication decisions were recorded during consolidation; in every case the content of all merged source practices was retained in the resulting entry, and none was discarded.

Note on data sources. Population estimates, literacy figures and participation rates quoted inside individual practices originate in the source deliverables and are reproduced with the year and source stated wherever the original permitted. Where a figure could not be reconciled across sources, it has been removed rather than substituted. Users who wish to quote statistics from this guidebook in their own publications should verify them against a single dated reference — the Council of Europe estimates, the FRA country factsheets, or the FRA Roma Survey 2024 — before doing so.

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