

SECTION FOUR

Working with Young Travellers

“There is a special minority within a minority culture: children. In the dominant society, the children of a minority must endure along with their parents, the problem of social and cultural discrimination, and they are even more exposed to the risk of cultural dissolution.”

Children of Minorities, UNICEF, 1993



Introduction

This section focuses on young people who are members of the Traveller community. It explains aspects of Traveller culture, the varying needs and issues that young Travellers may face and it offers practical advice on working with young people from the Traveller community. It concludes with a list of resources that will help you in your work with young Travellers.

Travellers are an indigenous minority, documented as being part of our society for centuries. Travellers have a long shared history and value system which make them a distinct group. They have their own language, customs and traditions.

“Being a Traveller is the feeling of belonging to a group of people. Knowing through thick or thin they are there for you, having the support of family systems. Having an identity.”

Michael McDonaghⁱ

In the **Republic of Ireland** under the **Equal Status Act 2000** and the **Equality Act 2004**, it is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the grounds of membership of the Traveller community in the provision of goods and services, education, sports, access to public facilities and accommodation.



In **Northern Ireland** the **Race Relations (NI) order 1997** makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of colour, nationality, ethnic origin, national origin and membership of the Irish Traveller community.

Terminology

This resource has been developed for youth workers on the island of Ireland. At times it is necessary to make distinctions between our two jurisdictions and we have had to choose a terminology to reflect this. We have chosen for the most part to use Northern Ireland (NI) and Republic of Ireland (ROI). At times we also use North and South. Additionally, for clarity, where information is significantly different we have used coloured boxes:

Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland.

The terms ‘Traveller,’ ‘settled Traveller,’ ‘housed Traveller’ or ‘member of the Travelling community’ are all used. These terms can give rise to certain preconceptions about the lifestyle, culture and practice of this community. Travellers are often perceived by the majority population in relation to the practice of nomadism. It is important to distinguish between the term nomadism as it applies to Travellers’ identity and its origin as a largely descriptive term. In fact the majority of Travellers living in Ireland (North and South) are living in standard housing accommodation. This does not change the identity of Travellers as a distinct group. A Traveller living in a house is still a Traveller - just as an Irish person living in England is still Irish. It is important for the youth worker to fully understand nomadism and how it is more than simply physical movement – it is a mind-set and a particular view on lifeⁱⁱ.

With this in mind terms such as ‘settled Traveller,’ ‘housed Traveller’ or ‘member of the Travelling community’ are not preferred by some Travellers or Traveller organisations. At the same time, some Travellers do prefer these terms. Using the terms ‘Traveller’ (or member of the Traveller Community) however, is broadly acceptable. The best approach is to ask the Travellers you are working with what their preferred terms are.



Demographicsⁱⁱⁱ

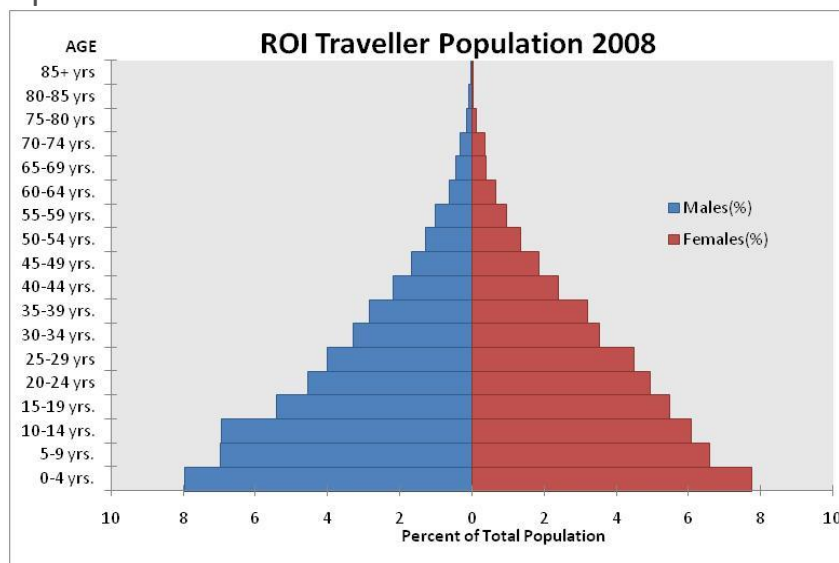
A census of the Traveller community was undertaken in 2008-09 as part of an all Ireland health study of Travellers. In total there were 40,129 Travellers living on the island of Ireland.

Table 1: Estimation of Traveller population (2008)

	Republic of Ireland	Northern Ireland
Number of Traveller families	9,056	1,562
Average family size	4.0	2.5
Estimated Traveller Population	36,224	3,905

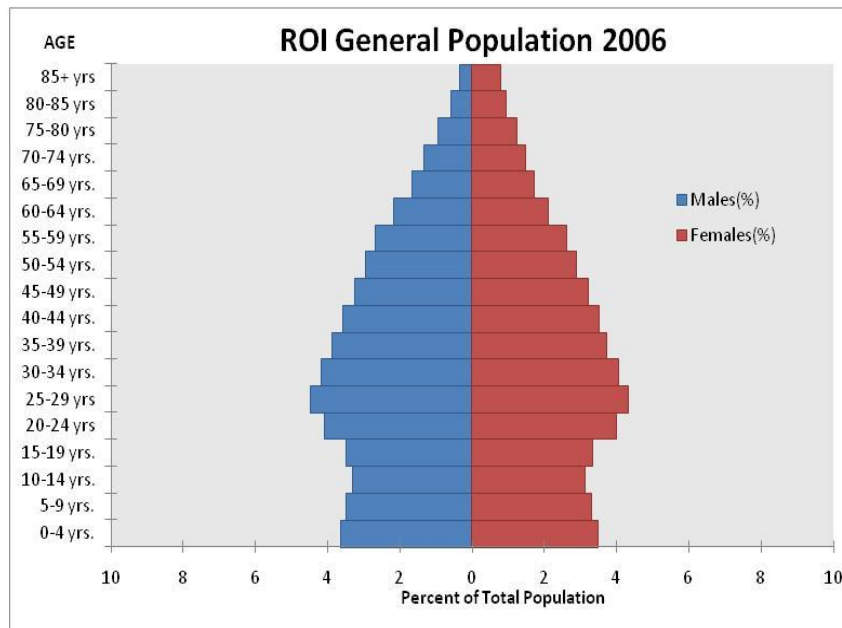
Travellers have a very distinctive population profile. In the **Republic of Ireland** (ROI) their population pyramid is very similar to that in developing countries, with a wide base that narrows steeply (see graph 1).^{iv} This is indicative of a relatively high birth rate and high mortality rates at a younger age than the settled community.

Graph 1



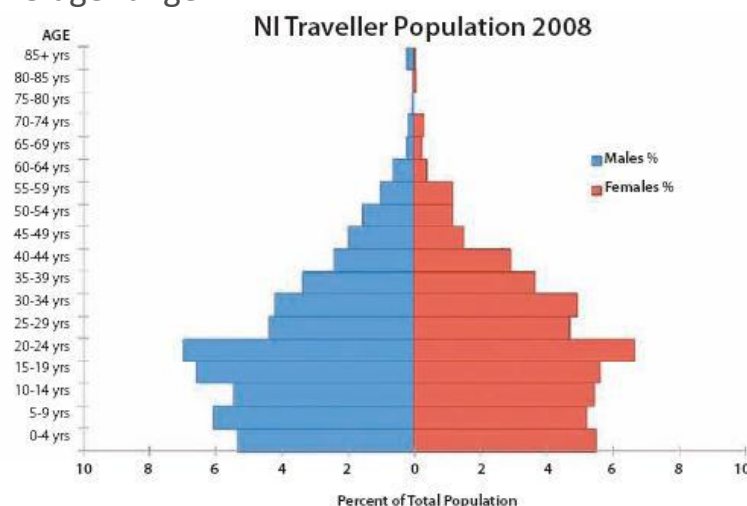
65 years and over	3%
40 - 64 year	13%
25 - 39 years	21%
15-24 years	21%
0-14 years	42%

In comparing this with the national population: 63% of Travellers are aged under 25 compared with 35% nationally and 42% of Travellers are aged under 15 compared with 21% nationally.^v



Therefore, the numbers of Travellers aged under 25 years is 1.5% of the same age group in the general population in the Republic of Ireland.

The **Northern Ireland (NI)** picture shows a different population profile with a smaller birth rate resulting in the highest numbers of Travellers being in the 15 to 25 age range.



Population pyramid of Traveller community in Northern Ireland (AITHS 2008)

Young Travellers between the ages of 0-14 years represent the second highest

number of young people from minority ethnic and cultural backgrounds in the Republic of Ireland (after the UK); while Travellers aged 14-25 years represent the third highest group (after Polish, and UK young people).

You can find statistics for a more detailed demographic breakdown of Travellers from

http://pavee.ie/ourgeels/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/AITHS2010_SUMMARY_LR_All.pdf and see also the following table

<http://beyond2020.cso.ie/Census/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=109363>



Needs and issues for Young Travellers

The needs of young Travellers must be seen in the context of the reality of Traveller lives, recognition of Traveller culture and an appreciation of what Travellers themselves want.^{vi}

Young Travellers must be acknowledged, recognised and embraced by the youth workers for themselves in order for young Travellers to be proud of their identity, have a sense of belonging and have the right to reach their full potential without hiding who they are.



Why is it important to work with Young Travellers?

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child contains a number of important social rights for all young people such as the right to participate in leisure, recreational and cultural activities. Young members of the Traveller community have contributed to society through their culture, enterprise, sporting excellence, artistic achievements, participatory expertise and unique history and traditions. Youth services can be the place where the contributions made by young Travellers are nurtured and celebrated.

Young Travellers face discrimination on a daily basis through denial of access and verbal and physical abuse, purely on the basis of their identity as Travellers. They experience being followed around shops and being refused entry to sports halls, cinemas and discos etc. This constant discrimination coupled with

the effects of indirect discrimination which affects access to health services, education and employment can lead young Travellers to feel socially unaccepted, inferior to other young people and they can experience a lack of pride in their culture, anxiety about their identity and low self-esteem. Youth services have a lot to offer to young Travellers especially in the areas of building confidence offering non-formal education opportunities, chances to participate fully and creating a place of welcome where their culture is recognised and taken into consideration in planning and programme development. The non-formal, youth centred and participative approach of youth work appeals to many Travellers.

Traveller culture

In order to work effectively with young Travellers it is important to understand some aspects of their culture and to know what constitutes the cultural distinctiveness of this minority social group.

History of the Traveller Community

The exact origin of Travellers is not conclusively known. Different theories of origin have been proposed with the most convincing theories confirming the presence of the group before the tenth century AD.

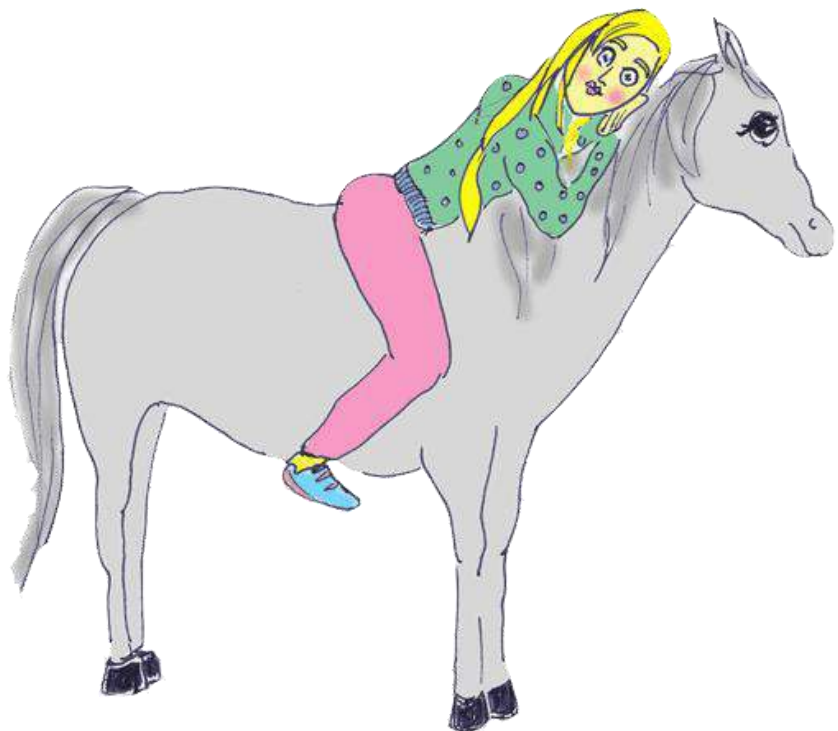
While Travellers are often associated with a nomadic way of living, over the last 30 years many of them have migrated to urban areas. This is due in part to the trades and activities of their traditional, nomadic, rural existence being rendered obsolete by industrialisation. Another development that led to Travellers moving into urban areas in the Republic of Ireland is the enactment of the Housing (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act in 2002. This made trespassing a criminal offence so that Travellers living on the roadside, awaiting accommodation with nowhere else to go, became criminalised. Nevertheless, Travellers' cultural identity has largely withstood this transition. In Northern Ireland trespassing is not a criminal offence. However police do have powers to

evict where six or more vehicles are present or where threatening, abusive or insulting language is used or damage is caused to the land.

Families and Kinship

Travellers organise within family groups - socialising together and supporting each other. Family bonds are extremely strong and radiate out beyond the immediate or 'nuclear' family group. In this way the extended family plays an important part in the lives of most young Travellers. Traveller children have the advantage of growing up in an environment where the extended family generally lives as a community and some of the restrictions and restraints experienced by the children are likely to be less than in the settled community. However, as young Travellers grow up and become young people this often changes. The age of maturity can differ substantially for some members of the Traveller community. Young Travellers of 14 or 15 years of age will frequently take on adult responsibilities such as employment and domestic duties. Tighter restrictions are often placed on young women from the Traveller community in particular.

The notion of 'kinship' is of utmost importance and is reflected in activities and practices. Relationships within families and aligned with the family name are extremely significant; marriages predominantly taking place within the wider family circle.



Traveller language

Traveller language is known as Shelta, Gammon or Cant. The language borrows and adapts words from old and new forms of English and Irish and follows an unwritten tradition. Some Traveller organisations and representatives have begun the process of recording and documenting the language in order to preserve it.

Religion and Superstition

Strong religious beliefs remain important for most of the Traveller community. In practice it is usually composed of an orthodox Catholic faith together with superstitious beliefs. This can be a powerful factor in the lives of young members of the Traveller community.

Concept of time

For many Travellers the concept of time differs greatly from that of settled people as stated in the following quotation:

“Chronological time is irrelevant since what happened yesterday or what will happen tomorrow are both subordinate to today’s search for sustenance. Travellers, therefore, live intensely in the present whether the occasion be one of sorrow or of joy”.^{vii}

Youth workers may need to adjust their approach to accommodate this concept of time when working with young members of the Traveller community.



Understanding ethnicity and the Traveller Community

Because Travellers have a long shared history and distinct value system, their own language, customs, values and traditions it is argued that the only viable way to describe the Traveller Community is as an ethnic group because of the view they hold of themselves and their culture.^{viii}

There are other views on whether the Traveller Community constitutes an ethnic minority group. The disparity in these views has consequences for the Traveller Community in fighting against discrimination and for their human rights. In the **Republic of Ireland** leading National and International bodies continue to press the Irish Government to view Travellers as a minority ethnic group, a position that is already held for Irish Travellers in **Northern Ireland**, the rest of the United Kingdom and the European Union.^{ix}

REMEMBER

- Identity, and ethnic or cultural identity in particular, is self-defined and open to change. Therefore we should not assume someone else's ethnicity or culture on the basis of limited information, nor should we assign an ethnicity or culture for someone without asking them how they like to be described. People from minority ethnic and cultural backgrounds increasingly prefer to describe themselves in terms of their new identities, their mixed identities or their national identity.
- So terms such as Irish Traveller, Traveller, settled Traveller, housed Traveller or just Irish/Northern Irish may be commonly used. Self-identification should be encouraged as it denotes a person's sense of belonging in a community as much as describing their personal identity. In intercultural youth work we are engaging with people from minority ethnic and cultural backgrounds. We use the term 'background' to acknowledge the changeable but still concrete nature of a person's identity and the fact that we all have a past that influences our present and our future lives

Accommodation

Accommodation is probably the issue most closely associated with the Traveller Community in Ireland (North and South) today. A perception among the majority population is that members of the Traveller Community tend to live in caravans, in small or medium sized groups, by the side of the road and with little or no facilities. This nomadism is often perceived to be what sets Travellers apart from the wider population. However these days members of the Traveller community are more likely to live in standard or group housing accommodation.

Nevertheless, accommodation remains a difficult issue for many Traveller families, not least with regard to access, location, adequate provision of basic services, local hostility, discrimination, and security of tenure. Members of the Traveller community continue to experience significant marginalisation in the area of accommodation.

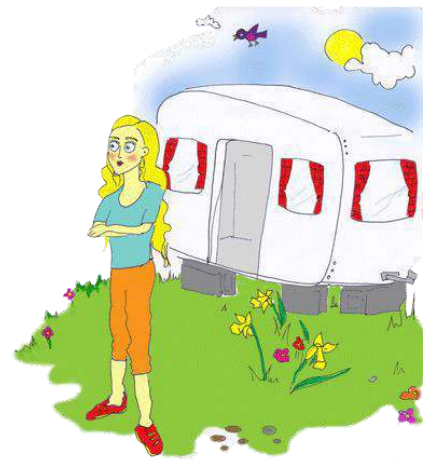
In the **Republic of Ireland** the 2006 Census found that 40.6% of Travellers live in 'temporary housing units' of which:

- 91% are without central heating
- 38% are without piped water
- 35% are without sewerage

In **Northern Ireland** the 2008 Travellers' Accommodation Needs Assessment showed that:

- 11% of respondents had no access to electricity
- 11% had no access to toilet facilities
- 13% had no access to mains water

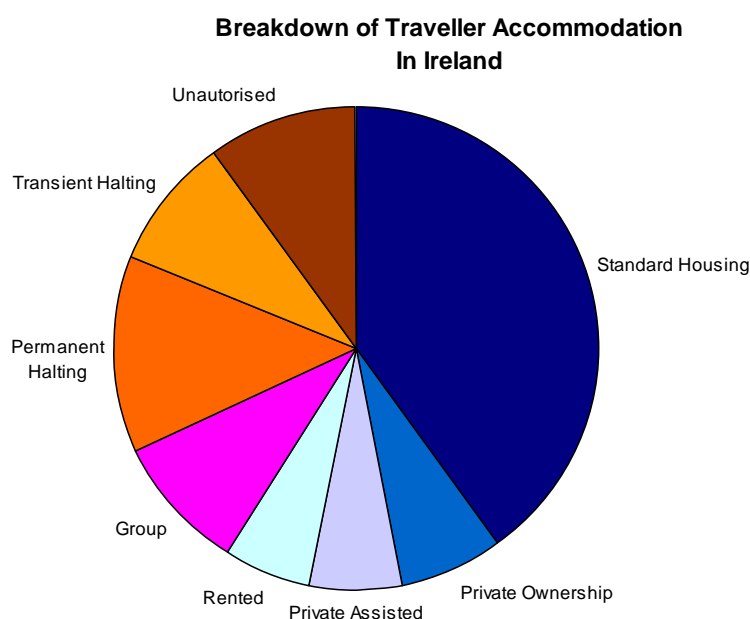
The most common accommodation type for Travellers is standard local authority accommodation or social housing and this



accounts for around 40% of Travellers in Ireland (North and South). In contrast less than 10% of Traveller families now live on unauthorised (e.g. roadside) sites in the Republic of Ireland; the figure falls to 7% in the North.

The graph below illustrates the different types of accommodation occupied by Travellers in Ireland today. It is important for the youth worker to be aware of the accommodation types and their location used by young members of the Traveller community in their area and become aware of the issues the young people face in relation to those accommodation types. Inadequate, inappropriate accommodation often leads to effects on other areas such as health, overcrowding, conflict, inability to preserve Traveller culture, access to education and access to services and basic facilities.

- Standard Local Authority Housing (incl. voluntary housing) / Social Housing
- Private Housing (own resources)
- Private Housing (assisted by Local Authorities)
- Private Rented Accommodation
- Group Housing
- Permanent Halting Site Bays (incl. sharing) / Serviced Sites
- Basic Service Bays/Transient Halting Site Bays (incl. sharing) / Transit Site
- Unauthorised Sites



Education

The educational achievement of members of the Traveller community is starkly different to their settled peers. The reasons are many and complex with external and internal factors impacting on educational attainment at school.

Young Travellers' direct experience of school

Imagine the unfamiliar world the Traveller child encounters when he/she first enters school, where rules and values conflict with the child's experience at home. In school, the authority figure usually speaks differently, behaves differently and most importantly does not have an understanding of Traveller culture. Pupils from the Traveller community may discover that certain ways of being (symbolised through appearance, clothes, possessions, activities, ways of expressing themselves, language etc.) are favoured over others, that certain family compositions are more 'normal' than others or that certain attitudes (for example, expectations around politeness) are more appreciated than others. This may be the first time the Traveller child realises they are different. And sometimes these 'differences' are expressed negatively by the settled community due to their lack of understanding or awareness or because of prejudice. This results in confusion and isolation for the Traveller child.

A lack of visibility of Traveller culture within the school system can contribute to feelings of isolation and lead to poor self-esteem. Youth workers must make sure that these experiences are not replicated in their youth service.^x

Inherited experience of education

A negative experience of education by parents from the Traveller community can lead to



misunderstandings about the importance and value of school for their own children. 47% of Travellers over 15 years of age have not attended school beyond primary level. Furthermore it can be difficult for Travellers to see the positive outcome of staying on in mainstream education, as many experience discrimination in trying to obtain employment, thus severing any incentive to achieve success in mainstream education.

In the past, education policy in the **Republic of Ireland** promoted a segregated model of provision. In practice this meant that in many schools young Travellers were placed in special all-Traveller classes with one teacher who catered for all Traveller children regardless of age in one classroom. However over the past decade this approach has been acknowledged as inappropriate and has been largely abandoned in favour of an inclusive, age-appropriate and integrated educational model. In **Northern Ireland** formal education is currently integrated, however, where there is a large concentration of Traveller children (e.g. West Belfast) Education and Library Boards may opt in favour of segregated provision for Travellers.

Recent trends in education

In **Northern Ireland**, data from the Department of Education for NI (DENI) on the performance of school leavers 2009/10 reports that:

- 9% of Traveller school leavers obtained at least 5 GCSEs graded A*- C compared to 72% of the NI school population
- 63% of Travellers leave with no GCSEs compared to 2% of the general NI school population
- Attendance at post primary education sits at 92% for the general population and at 53% for the Travellers

In **Northern Ireland** the School Leavers Survey (Department of Education NI) indicated that, in the period 2004-2008, Travellers were substantially less likely than the rest of the Northern Ireland population to say they were going to

Further Education (20% vs 28%) or Higher Education (0% vs 38%). Travellers were also substantially more likely than the general school leaving population to say they were going on to unemployment (33% vs 4%).

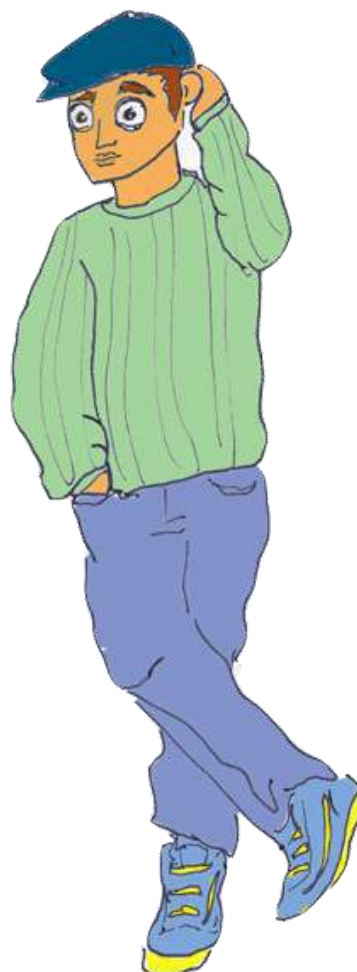
Improvements have been ongoing in the **Republic of Ireland** with the number of young Travellers remaining on in education steadily increasing:

- In 2008 50% of Travellers completed their Junior Certificate^{xi}
- In 2008 13% were attending senior cycle
- A modest uptake of 0.8% was achieved among Travellers of third-level education courses with the support of access programmes in universities and colleges^{xii}

University courses that Travellers have taken up include medicine, psychology, law, youth and community work and health studies.

While things are improving we cannot forget that four times as many young Travellers as young people in the general population leave school before the age of 15. This presents serious issues for young members of the Traveller community in terms of literacy and other skills. Youth programmes need to take literacy issues into consideration when working with Travellers and their parents.

More information on this is available in chapter 10A of this Toolkit - 'working with Early School Leavers'.



Employment

The Traveller economy is the term used to describe work that Travellers take on. Traditional examples of this type of work include scrap metal recycling, market trading and horse dealing. However with increasing regulation and enforcement in work areas associated with Travellers (e.g. recycling, waste disposal, horse trading) opportunities for self-employment have become more difficult to find. In more recent times many members of the Traveller community have set up businesses working in manual labour, manufacturing, retail, building and maintenance, landscaping, childcare and beauty therapy. Many others are currently employed as community development workers, youth workers, mentors, counsellors, therapists and public servants, Gardaí/PSNI, solicitors and barristers. It is important to highlight these positive steps when talking to young Travellers about education.

However, figures from 2006 in the Republic of Ireland show that 75% of Travellers in the labour force were unemployed compared with 8.5% of the general population.^{xiii} Furthermore, 70% who are economically active have had no paid work in the last 10 years.^{xiv} In **Northern Ireland** 89% were registered unemployed compared to 4% for the general population^{xv}. Increasingly the involvement of Travellers in continuing education and training has been central in strategies to increase Traveller participation in the mainstream labour force. One of the agreed actions of the National Traveller Monitoring and Advisory Committee (2008) was to address the profile of members of the Traveller community in the workforce.^{xvi} Youth workers can do a lot to further that work in their youth service through peer education, introducing role models and giving positive examples.



Health (all-Ireland)^{xvii}

Young Travellers face a number of issues in relation to their health:

- **Infant mortality rate for Ireland (North and South) is 14 per 1000 live births compared with 4 per 1000 for the national population**
- **Traveller males born today can expect to live 15 years less than settled males. These figures are what the general population would have experienced in 1945-7^{xviii}**
- **Traveller females born today can expect to live 11.5 years less than females in the general population**
- **Suicide is 6 times higher for Traveller men than men in the general population – it accounts for 11% of deaths amongst Travellers^{xix}**

These facts re-enforce the need for consistent and culturally specific interventions aimed at improving Traveller health.^{xx}

Barriers to using Health Services

Travellers can face a number of barriers in using health services in Ireland (North and South).

- **They may not be able to communicate well about their physical and mental health care concerns**
- **They may have a lack of knowledge about health services and their entitlements**
- **In the Republic of Ireland in particular they may believe there are financial barriers in accessing services**

There is also a clear link between the poor health status of Travellers and their poor living conditions, the social exclusion they constantly face and the racism they consistently encounter.^{xxi}

More recent barriers to health

It is important here to mention two serious and increasing health issues for young Travellers in Ireland. There are real opportunities for youth services to address these issues within their projects.

Drugs

Recent research suggests that drug use among Travellers is still lower than that of the general population, but evidence shows that it is growing. The age profile of drug users in the Traveller community tends to be from the teen years up to people in their mid-thirties. The research also finds that there are more male drug users than female and these are highly concentrated in areas of disadvantage. There are a number of barriers for Travellers in dealing with drug misuse:

- **It is seen as a relatively new problem for Travellers and therefore still has a stigma attached to it. Many Travellers address the issue of drugs as a “family matter” thus not accessing external support. The stigmatisation of drug use can also lead to the Traveller community not accepting drug users within their wider family circle**
- **Another barrier to Travellers seeking help and support about drug misuse is a general lack of awareness of services available**

Suicide

Suicide is six times higher amongst Traveller men than men in the general population. It is predominately a male issue with 65% of it occurring among

those aged 30 years and younger. Suicide is seen to be a recent phenomenon in the Traveller Community.^{xxii}

There are a number of factors that can lead a young Traveller to take their own lives including family problems, psychiatric illness, alcohol and drug use, unemployment, violence - both for victims and perpetrators, racism, discrimination and sexual orientation. Young men are particularly at risk as many leave school early and feel they have no purpose or role in their community.

Suicide is not something that is discussed openly in the Traveller community or within a lot of Traveller families. When suicide does occur, young Travellers may feel that they have no-one they can talk to about it.

Gender issues

Women from the Traveller community play an important role in their immediate family and the wider Traveller community. They generally take on a traditional role of mother and carer with responsibility for the home, family and children. They are also the link with many of the service providers and often take on leadership roles within their own community.

Young Traveller women can be expected to take on these roles at an earlier age than those in the settled community. This can be a factor in young women's lack of attendance in youth services and programmes. They may be needed to remain at home and help to look after younger siblings and with household chores.



Parents can be stricter with young women than young men and might be

reluctant to let their daughters attend youth services. Marriage at an early age can lead to added responsibility for young women which can be another factor in the difficulty of retaining young Traveller women in youth services.

Experience of conflict

Violence and conflict exist in all sectors of society, including in the Traveller community. Conflict is not the over-riding part of being a member of the Traveller community. However, it is something that is often highlighted in the media, without the same level of interest shown to positive aspects of the Traveller community.

Conflict between members of the Traveller community can be connected to the strong values attached to family. Power struggles relating to defending the family honour and avoiding shame can pressure Travellers to get involved in conflicts. For a small minority of Travellers violence and conflict have been a normal part of their upbringing. This normalisation of violence in Traveller life has led to it becoming an exciting spectator sport, bringing large numbers to watch.



Crime

Ethnic identifiers are not done with young people entering the Juvenile Justice System but anecdotal evidence would suggest that young Travellers are disproportionately represented in these services.

Further information is available in chapter 8 of this Toolkit – ‘working with young people involved in the Juvenile Justice System’.

Other areas of conflict can include inter-generational conflict, conflict around

drug misuse, sexuality (including homosexuality and promiscuity) and child abuse.

Inter-generational conflict

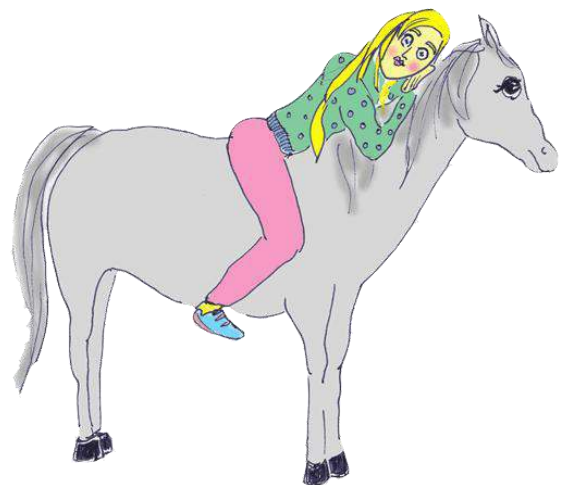
As Traveller traditions and culture struggle to find a place in modern society many families can experience inter-generational conflict. Parents will expect, or hope, that their children will adopt the traditional values and roles of their family. Meanwhile young people will face pressure from their settled friends to adopt “non-Traveller” values and roles. Families often fear that their children will lose their culture and values and they may be inclined to limit their children’s social circles because they do not trust mainstream social values. Young people can feel torn between their parents’ cultural norms and the norms of the majority settled community and trying to straddle two cultures can be very difficult. This can sometimes result in young Travellers falling out with their families and becoming isolated from them. Coming from a close family unit can make this doubly isolating as the young person has limited alternative support systems to fall back on.

Racism and Discrimination

Racism and discrimination is an explicit part of the economic, social, political and cultural exclusion experienced by Travellers in Ireland.^{xxiii} This treatment is completely contrary to internationally accepted human rights.^{xxiv}

Members of the Traveller community have been subjected to two forms of discrimination:

1. Direct discrimination which is mostly experienced by members of the Traveller community as exclusion on an on-going basis. The Task Force of the Travelling People 1995 states:



“Discrimination at the individual level is most common when a Traveller seeks access to any of a range of goods, services and facilities to which access is denied purely on the basis of their identity as Travellers.”

2. Indirect discrimination occurs when policies, practices or initiatives unfairly impact on Travellers and in turn have a negative effect on their lives. For the Traveller community the effects of this type of discrimination can be seen in the unequal outcomes for Travellers in relation to health, education and employment. National policies have failed to recognise that some groups in society may not be equal in terms of literacy, education, information, finances or access. Recently policy has made moves to address this issue but the impact of indirect discrimination has already had the effect of further marginalising this group.

Developing Traveller Inclusive Practice

The most important piece of advice for any youth service hoping to engage with young Travellers, like any young people, is to go out and meet and talk to the young people, their parents and others in the community. Explain who you are, where you are from, what you do and why you want to work with young Travellers. The key to working meaningfully with young Travellers in your service is through building trusting relationships. To start:

- **Find out how many Travellers are living in your local area. You can do this by looking at CSO figures (ROI) or NISRA figures (NI) or the Our Geels study**
- **Learn more about the Traveller community in Ireland— especially things such as culture and values. Get in touch with some of the National Traveller organisations for information on the Traveller community in Ireland (see useful contacts at the end of the chapter)**
- **Contact the local Traveller services in your area**
- **Engage in site-work. Go and visit where the Travellers in your area live. Get to know them**
- **Contact the Youth Officer in your VEC / ELB area who will have details and information on other local services in your area**
- **Network with other local youth services, schools and community development organisations as it is likely some of these are already engaging with members of the Traveller community in their services**
- **Consider cultural awareness training or an information session facilitated by a Traveller organisation to ensure staff are aware of and up-to-date on issues affecting young Travellers. These are available from national and some local Traveller organisations (see also list of training courses at the end of this chapter)**

- **Facilitate awareness programmes on Traveller culture with the young people already engaging in your service**
- **Realise that mixed social events can be daunting for young Travellers. The social codes and the social language used in your youth group may be unfamiliar. Create a safe environment where a person they trust is present**

Targeting and recruitment

Historically youth services on this Island have focused on the young person as an individual and close contact with parents has often been limited. When engaging with young Travellers it is very important to involve their parents from the outset to allay their fears.

- **Involving young Travellers requires more recruitment time. Leaflets or posters are not adequate. Going out and meeting the young people and their parents is essential. It may be a case that Traveller parents and young people are unsure what “youth work” is. Traveller parents may be uneasy about letting their children join a service that is away from the family home and run by people they do not know. Building trust with parents, families and others in the community is a must in opening up your service to young Travellers**
- **Work closely with local Traveller or youth services who already have relationships with Traveller parents**
- **Site-work - which involves the youth worker going to where the Traveller community is living (rather than relying on the traditional process of having the young person approach the youth service) - is a very effective way of engaging with and recruiting young Travellers and their families**
- **Have “Open Days” or evenings that Traveller parents can attend so that they can meet the youth workers face to face. Consider having**

open meetings on site or in a local Traveller organisation where Traveller parents may feel more comfortable

- **Have clear information for families about your service and activities you run. Leave leaflets or posters in local Traveller organisations or health clinics where Traveller parents can access them**
- **Encourage adult Traveller men and women to become volunteers/leaders in your service. This may serve as a way for parents to let their young people attend while relationships are being built between the service and the community**
- **If a young person is not allowed to attend a service offer to meet with the parents to discuss if there is anything you can do to aid their participation**
- **If parents are concerned about specific activities or youth groups try and meet with them, explain the supervision and safety policies of your organisation. Treat parents as allies and partners**
- **Have peer leadership places available to encourage prolonged participation by older Traveller youth. (Because Travellers take on more responsibility at a younger age than the settled population it can sometime have the effect of making them feel like they are “too old for youth work”. To counter this, have places available for peer leaders. In this way, the young Traveller can remain involved for a longer period of time with your youth service.)**
- **Run activities for parents in the youth centre such as cookery, health and safety courses etc**

Working with Local Traveller Services

Develop a partnership with a local Traveller organisation. They may be aware of groups of young people who want to participate in youth activities. They will be able to provide advice and links to the community you are trying to reach while you can use your expertise to make sure their service is appropriate for young people.

Contact details for your local services, including Traveller-led services, are available from all the National Traveller organisations, from your local Community Development office or the Family Resource Centre in your area. Also see the resources and links at the end of this section.

Developing Activities

Your service will have a lot to offer young Travellers. The benefits can include the opportunity to make friends and reduce social isolation/ marginalisation, develop skills, be acknowledged for themselves and not stereotyped by their status (Traveller), positively celebrate their Traveller identity and culture, have a break from family responsibilities and have the opportunity to simply enjoy fun activities.

However it is important that all social and recreational activities are culturally appropriate and do not result in further isolating young Travellers. In choosing activities, liaise with the young people in your service and also parents or a trusted person within the community about what is appropriate and what they want to do.

Building self-confidence around Identity and Culture

Youth services should be a safe space for young Travellers to express their identity and be proud of who they are. It is important to make time and to offer

opportunities for young people from different cultures to discuss and learn about each other's cultures. Culture should be celebrated. However, young people should not be expected to be 'experts' on their culture. Like many others, they may not find it easy to explain aspects of their own culture.

It can be daunting and difficult for young Travellers entering a youth service, where they are the only people from their community. Having Traveller peer leaders, or even better, Traveller youth workers can help to allay these fears. This also has the added benefit of exposing young Travellers to Traveller role models and the opportunity to look up to members of their own community.

- **Remember questions about someone's cultural traditions may be appropriate but asking someone about their personal experiences could be considered prying and insensitive**
- **Involve young people in the planning of culturally appropriate activities**
- **Reinforce cultural identity where appropriate**
- **Create a welcoming environment – make sure all young people in your service have ownership over the space you use, not just those who live in close proximity to the space**
- **Be flexible in your programming – your organisation's customary ways of doing things may not work with different cultural groups. Explore what activities are the most relevant to your group members and remember that some young Travellers may not want to “do some work about culture”**
- **Encourage leadership from within the Traveller community. Invite Travellers to come into your project as volunteers or peer leaders**
- **Culture proof your programming (ask yourself if what you are planning will work cross culturally)**
- **Support young Travellers to understand and ‘straddle’ both settled culture and Traveller culture**

Communications – written, verbal and visual

Barriers can exist:

- Some young Travellers may not have strong literacy skills so written communication can be a challenge for them. Introduce written communication gently at first to determine their skill level before relying on it as a communication tool
- Travellers often tend to live very much in the moment and may find it difficult to remember structured times, location or dates. It is always good to give information a number of times. Where possible, information should be verbally communicated to parents along with written notes
- Repeat instructions if it is not clear that someone has understood
- When providing information about your own service make sure that you avoid jargon
- Provide an explanation for terms that some people may not be familiar with such as “youth work” or “community development”
- Do not use acronyms unless you provide an explanation e.g. VEC, ELB, NYCI, ITM etc
- Remember that using technology such as email etc. for social networking may be difficult if young Travellers do not have access to the internet

Education

Young Travellers may not have the same level of academic achievement as other young people. It is important that youth services promote the importance of remaining in education. Consider having different professionals come in to talk to the young people about their jobs. In doing this try to be culturally diverse and include a professional from the Traveller community to

provide young Travellers with role models.

Work closely with local schools. While youth work aims to compliment mainstream education by providing programmes and activities that emphasise the social and personal development of young people, you may find that you can have a role within schools in supporting them on issues for young Travellers and working in partnership to support young Travellers to stay on in education.



Health

It is important that youth services make information available to young Travellers about what health services they are entitled to. Young Travellers may have a lack of knowledge about health services which places barriers on them accessing healthcare.

More recently Travellers have been involved in Primary Health Care Teams and in the provision of health services. This is considered crucial in bridging the gap between the Traveller community and the health service. Youth services should develop links with these teams to further inform their own approach to delivering health programmes within their services in which young members of the Traveller community are involved.

In addition, if you are running programmes on sexual health or relationships make sure you speak to Traveller parents beforehand. Involve health

professionals who will be experienced in delivering information in a culturally responsive way.

Drugs

Drug use is a relatively recent problem in the Traveller community but is becoming increasingly common and presents a real and dangerous impact for young Travellers. Youth services need to increase the awareness of young Travellers about the dangers of drugs and available drug-related services. This information should be displayed and accessible and the stigma of drug misuse should be challenged.

The stigma attached to drug use can lead to it not being discussed within the Traveller Community; some people will deny there is a problem at all. It is very important that youth services are a safe space where this issue is discussed in an open and supported way. Consider running parallel sessions on drug misuse for parents from the Traveller community so that dialogue is possible between young Travellers and their parents.



Suicide

Many Travellers have experienced the pressure of being removed from their traditional way of life. Legislation and policy has made it impossible to pursue traditional Traveller traits – such as travelling, working with horses and learning traditional trades. Young men in particular can lack purpose and a place in society. Leaving school early and being bored can lead to increases in binge-drinking, drug-taking, anti-social behaviour and dangerous driving. These in turn increase a person's risk of suicide. The following quote sums it up:

“A consequence of increased integration is that today young Travellers dress like and share the same interests as their settled peers...Young Travellers are more openly questioning why their culture is held in disregard, or what it is about the name “Traveller” that evokes such hostility from others. Some take the course of having as little to do with the society that rejects them as possible... What is of greater concern are those who react by rejecting their traditions and culture in order to fit in.”

Suicide among the Irish Traveller Community 2000 – 2006, Mary Rose Walker, 2008

It is important for youth services to be safe spaces where young Travellers can explore issues relating to suicide and their mental health. Support services and how to access them should be displayed clearly, taking into account any literacy problems that may exist for some.

Gender

Parents can be reluctant to let their daughters mix with “settled” young men or young men from different cultures and this can have an impact at the participation of young Traveller women in youth services. The most effective way to allay these fears is through developing respect and trust in the service provided. Good relationships with Traveller parents or people of high standing within the community are vital. If you run gender specific programmes this may ease parents’ concerns. You will also need to ensure gender specific supervision.



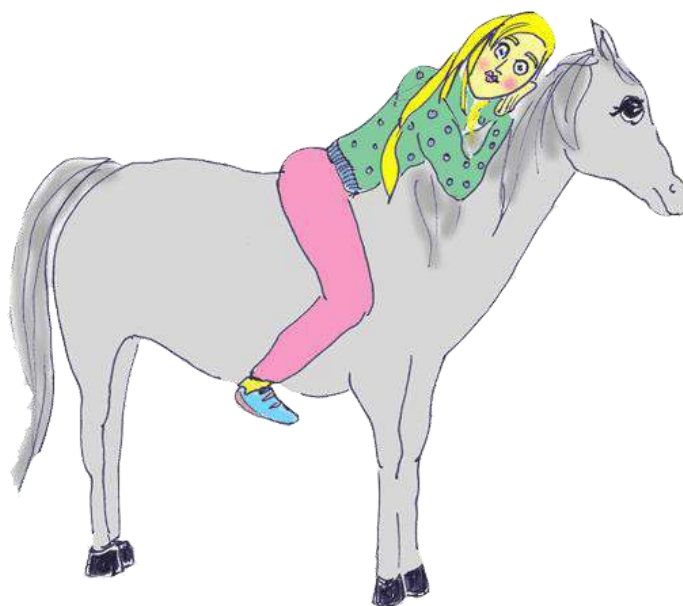
Mixed activities are also possible when Traveller parents are assured that their particular traditions and beliefs will be respected in the youth services that their children attend. Having an older Traveller woman present during mixed activities can help alleviate concerns.

While striving to work in a way that promotes the gender specific values and traditions of the Traveller community, it is also important to promote the concepts of equality, human rights and diversity.

Conflict

Young Travellers may have to deal with experiences of conflict. Young people may be traumatised by their own experiences or those of loved ones. Effects of conflict include injury, death, loss of homes, disruption to home life, disruption to education, effects on mental health and well-being. These factors can often impinge on young people's ability to attend their youth service. Parents may have concerns for the safety of the young people when attending a youth project. Young people who feel they are not understood or supported become more marginalised and isolated. For these young people and their families attending a youth project may not be a priority in times of conflict.

For a small minority of young Travellers violence and conflict has been a normal part of their lives. To break this cycle, conflict needs to be addressed in all areas of a young person's life - both personally and socially. It is important that the reality of violence and conflict is acknowledged and challenged in a youth work settings for young Travellers.



To work meaningfully with a young person or group who are experiencing conflict the following should be remembered:

- **Implement rules and policies to ensure the safety of the young people and the workers**
- **Highlight the negative aspects of conflict and discuss and challenge them**
- **Implement programmes that deal with conflict as a reality. Look for ways to dissuade young people from participating in or spectating in conflict**
- **Establish a neutral, safe place in the youth project. Have a confidential space available for young people to talk to a youth worker about the situation**
- **Provide support for workers and young people who have experienced conflict**

- **Establish a reporting process in the event of conflict taking place during activity time**
- **Keep the lines of communication open with trusted people within the Traveller community. Be aware of the young people from different families and how this might play out in a project**
- **Be aware of flashpoints that may trigger conflict such as certain times of the year e.g. St Patrick's Day, Halloween and large gatherings such as Weddings, Funerals, and First Communions etc.**
- **Have links with your local community Gardaí/PSNI and the Juvenile Liaison Officer**
- **Have information available in your service on dealing with conflict**

Racism and Discrimination

- Take active steps to prevent and address racism at your service including the development of clear rules and policies
- Treat racist issues initially as you would treat a bullying incident – with a no-tolerance approach and/or in the context of a group charter that highlights respect
- Actively promote the value of interculturalism and increase the knowledge about different cultural groups at your service. Young Travellers will need to be strongly supported in this process - they may feel they have much to lose and are strongly protective of their way of life
- Ensure that young Travellers attending mixed groups run by a settled youth worker are accompanied by someone who they trust, preferably an older, trusted member of the Traveller community
- Take part in special cultural events or intercultural festivals, such as Traveller Focus Week or One World Week
- Acknowledge and celebrate special cultural days (religious ceremonies, weddings, funerals etc.)
- Promote positive images of people from a range of different cultural backgrounds, for example in the graphics you use in promoting your service, and the posters you display
- Promote positive role models from within the Traveller community, both local and national
- Talk to young people about their own unique culture and background as part of your normal conversation
- Organise activities for young people that increase their awareness of other cultures. For example, some services in areas with a low number of Traveller young people could organise combined activities with services in other areas. These activities provide an opportunity for

young people to learn about other cultures through fun and social programmes

- **Invite settled children to Traveller projects and halting sites to participate in joint activities**
- **Serious racist issues usually need a community-wide response with all support agencies involved**
- **Ensure all staff have an opportunity to take part in anti-racism training**

Networking and Professional Development

A useful way of improving your knowledge about working with young Travellers is to contact the National Traveller Organisations - Involve, Pavee Point, Irish Traveller Movement (ITM), An Munia Tober and National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI). Also see resources and links below.

Some National Traveller and Youth organisations offer support and training around cultural awareness, engaging with the Traveller community and “culture-proofing” your organisation. These training and professional development opportunities can help to develop your skills, knowledge and confidence in this area.



Challenging myths about the Traveller Community

One very practical way of challenging attitudes is to be aware of common myths about Travellers and have the facts that debunk them. You can use these myths in your youth work activities. You can make sure the people you work with are aware of them. You can enlarge them and put them up for service users to see.

Myth 1 Traveller accommodation lowers nearby house prices

Independent research has shown no drop in house prices due to adjacent Traveller accommodation. This myth is generated to try to keep the Traveller community out and results in Travellers being deprived of a place to live.

Myth 2 Travellers do not want to be part of our society

The Traveller Community have always been part of our society. Unfortunately, Traveller experience of our society is often one of exclusion from the mainstream. Members of the Traveller community are often viewed as ‘a problem’; one that would be solved if Travellers would just be ‘normal’ and ‘fit in’. Travellers are a distinct ethnic group with their own culture, shared history, language, traditions, perceptions and sense of belonging.

Discrimination is now, and has always been, the main barrier facing the Traveller community when it comes to equal participation in society. Discrimination has a deep effect on the community and gives Travellers the message that they are not wanted. Up until recently there was no legal redress for the Traveller community or other groups experiencing discrimination. Now with equality legislation, Travellers are beginning to challenge the treatment they receive.

Myth 3 All members of the Traveller Community move from place to place

Travellers do not want to live without access to basic facilities such as water, electricity and sanitation. The vast majority of Travellers living on the roadside are on local authority accommodation waiting lists and are living on the roadside because there is nowhere else for them to go. Since 1995, approximately 900 housing units and approximately 600 Traveller specific units have been provided. Approximately 1,500 Traveller families still require permanent accommodation in Ireland in 2005.

Myth 4 All Travellers live off Social Welfare and subsidise their living through crime

Unemployment remains unacceptably high amongst Travellers for a number of different reasons - early school leaving, discrimination, literacy problems and lack of belief that they can get a job due to being a Traveller. The reality is that 30% of Travellers in the labour force are in paid employment. Any Traveller on social welfare is means tested like any other member of the population. As in all communities there will be some Travellers who engage in crime but to associate all Travellers with crime or to blame Travellers for crime without proof is offensive and contributes to the exclusion of Travellers.

Checklist 4 - How accessible is your organisation to Young Travellers?

This checklist can help you to identify how you can improve your service for young Travellers.

Programme planning and delivery

Our programmes are designed and delivered to include the diverse needs and identities of young members of the Traveller community

Our service reflects the diversity of the community

- | | | | |
|---|------------|---------------|-----------|
| • Our service has up to date information about the number of young Travellers in our area | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • Our service knows about the members of the Traveller community that are highly represented in our area – where they live, who they are, how to contact them etc | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • We collect statistics from young people who use our service about their cultural or ethnic background | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • We compare the numbers of Travellers are in our area to the numbers of Travellers in our youth group e.g. if 3% of the local population are Travellers we will see if they are fairly represented in our group (i.e. 3% of our membership)? | YES | PARTLY | NO |

Service delivery

- | | | | |
|---|------------|---------------|-----------|
| • Staff and volunteers consider cultural differences in the way they develop and deliver programs | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • We consider community profiles and needs in our strategic planning processes | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • We have staff members or volunteers who are Travellers | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • We have Traveller peer leaders in our organisation | YES | PARTLY | NO |

Professional development

Our staff and volunteers are trained and supported to deliver an inclusive youth service

- | | | | |
|--|------------|---------------|-----------|
| • Staff and volunteers receive cultural awareness training and professional development opportunities | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • Staff and volunteers address racist comments or behaviour | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • Staff and volunteers actively promote a service environment that is respectful of all cultures and values interculturalism | YES | PARTLY | NO |

Participation

We make sure we include the voices of young people at all levels of our youth service

- | | | | |
|---|-----|--------|----|
| • We consult with a broad range of young people, including those who do not use our service | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • Our service actively promotes participation from all service users including those from the Traveller community | YES | PARTLY | NO |

Public image

How we present our service to our community

Partnerships and networks

- | | | | |
|---|-----|--------|----|
| • We have a list of relevant Traveller Support services that we can refer young people and families to | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • Staff attend relevant interagency forums, local forums, or seminars on Traveller issues | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • We provide information about our service to a broad range of Traveller and non-Traveller organisations and services | YES | PARTLY | NO |
| • Our service works in partnership with Traveller services to make our program accessible | YES | PARTLY | NO |

- Our service works in partnership with parents to ensure their concerns for their children are met **YES** **PARTLY** **NO**

Information about services

- Our service uses verbal communication
- Our service has visual information available about other community and government services **YES** **PARTLY** **NO**
- Our service actively communicates with parents **YES** **PARTLY** **NO**
- Our staff regularly engage in site-work and outreach work where young Travellers live **YES** **PARTLY** **NO**

Policies and procedures

We have a written commitment to deliver an equal and inclusive service

- Mechanisms are in place that protect participants from racism and discrimination **YES** **PARTLY** **NO**
- Our organisation has a written commitment to anti-racism, equality, inclusion and interculturalism **YES** **PARTLY** **NO**

Useful contacts

Irish Traveller organisations

An Munia Tober www.anmuniatober.org	Travellers support program for Belfast which provides a variety of services to the Traveller community.
Armagh Traveller Support Group www.armaghtsg.org	Provides support for Traveller families in the Armagh area.
Craigavon Traveller Support Group www.craigavontravellers.org	Provides support to Traveller families in the Craigavon area to access various services.
Derry Traveller Support Group 028 7135 9340	Provides support to Traveller families in the Derry area to access various services
Exchange House Travellers Service www.exchangehouse.ie	Provides services, i.e. Family Support, service for young peoples, Drugs Counselling and Education programmes, to members of the Traveller community in the Dublin area.
Irish Traveller Movement (ITM) www.itmtrav.ie	National network of organisations and individuals working within the Traveller community.

<p>Involve (formerly NATC)</p> <p>www.natc.ie</p>	<p>Involve is the main provider of services for young Travellers nationally since 1988. Currently, Involve funds 18 projects for young people and directly employs or funds 19 youth workers. Involve is a partnership organisation in which Traveller and settled communities work together in responding to the needs of Travellers.</p>
<p>National Traveller Women's Forum</p> <p>www.ntwf.net</p>	<p>The National Traveller Women's Forum is an alliance of Traveller women and Traveller organisations from throughout Ireland which aims to work collectively to challenge the racism and sexism experienced by Traveller women and promote Traveller women's right to self determination, the attainment of human rights and equality within society.</p>
<p>Pavee Point Traveller's Centre</p> <p>www.paveepoint.ie</p>	<p>Pavee Point is a non-governmental organisation committed to the attainment of human rights for Irish Travellers. The group is comprised of Travellers and members of the majority population working together in partnership. Pavee Point promotes the human rights of Travellers through a number of different programmes including youth, drugs, mediation, health, violence against women and education.</p>

Travellerheritage.ie www.Travellerheritage.ie	First ever online photo archive of Irish Travellers, searchable by surname/categories to explore the history of Travellers
Traveller Visibility Group (TVG) http://groups.msn.com/TravellerVisibilityGroup	Cork-based organisation which brings together Travellers and settled people in solidarity, to facilitate community development work within the Traveller community.

Training and Education organisations

National Co-ordination Unit for Senior Traveller Training Centres www.sttc.ie	Network of 36 training centres throughout Ireland, which provide Travellers with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to successfully make the transition to work and adult life, and to participate fully in their communities. The National Association of Travellers' Centres is the recognised representative body for the centres.
Solas (FÁS) Community Training Centres www.fas.ie	Solas (previously known as FÁS) operate a variety of training and employment programmes as well as a recruitment service to jobseekers and employers.

Irish Vocational Education Association (IVEA)	The Association represents the interests, at national level, of Ireland's 33 Vocational Education Committees (VECs). As a representative body, IVEA seeks to protect, promote and enhance the interests of vocational education and training within the wider education sector and the country at large.
www.ivea.ie	
National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA)	Independent membership organisation concerned with developing policy, advocacy and research and offering advisory services in adult literacy work in Ireland.
www.nala.ie	

Youth related sites

Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO)	The Ombudsman for Children's Office (OCO) is here to make sure that the government and other people who make decisions about young people really think about what is best for young people.
www.oco.ie	
Youthreach	Programme directed at unemployed young early school leavers aged 15-20. It offers participants the opportunity to identify and pursue viable options within adult life, and provides them with opportunities to acquire certification.
www.youthreach.ie	

Discrimination and anti-racism organisation

Equality Authority (ROI)

www.equality.ie

Independent body set up under the Employment Equality Act 1998. The Equality Authority seeks to achieve positive change in the situation and experience of those groups and individuals experiencing inequality by stimulating and supporting a commitment to equality.

Equality Commission for NI

www.equalityni.org

The Equality Commission is an independent public body established under the Northern Ireland Act 1998.

The Equality Commission seeks a shared, integrated and inclusive place, a society where difference is respected and valued, based on equality and fairness for the entire community.

Citizens Information

National Traveller MABS (Money Advice and Budgeting Services)

www.natTravellermabs.org

Part of the national network of Money Advice and Budgeting Services around the country that offer free, confidential and independent services for people in debt or in danger of getting into debt.

International links

Irish Traveller Movement in Britain (ITM)

www.irishTraveller.org.uk

Develops and facilitates a national network of groups, organisations and individuals working with and within the Traveller community, to promote the interests and welfare of the Irish Traveller community in Britain.

Relevant Training Programmes

Pavee Point Youth Work Programme offer training to youth services on:

- Traveller youth leadership
- Traveller youth participation
- Including Travellers in your service for young people

Pavee Point Traveller organisation offer training to services including:

- Open information sessions on the Traveller community
- Anti-racism training
- Anti-racism Training of Trainers
- Cultural awareness training

National Youth Council of Ireland also offers training on inclusive youth work – see www.youth.ie

Useful Reading Resources

Bhreathnach, Aoife (2006) *Becoming Conspicuous – Irish Travellers Society & the State*

Bhreathnach, Ciara (2004) *Portraying Irish Travellers: Histories and Representations*

Cauley, William (2006) *Canting with Cauley: A glossary of Travellers – Cant or Gammon*

Connor, Sean, Van Hout, Marie Claire (2008) *The normalisation of Substance Abuse among Young Travellers in Ireland: implications for practice.*

Department of Education and Science (2002) *Guidelines on Traveller Education in Second Level Schools.* Dublin.

Department of Education and Science (2003) *National Youth Work Development Plan 2003-2007.* Dublin.

Department of Education and Science (2005) *Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy,* Dublin.

Department of Health and Children (2002) *Traveller Health A National Strategy 2002 – 2005.* Dublin.

Foróige (2010), *Progressing Traveller Inclusion in Youth Work: A training manual and toolkit for youth workers*

Health Service Executive (2008) *Consultation Report HSE National Intercultural Health Strategy.* Dublin.

Kirk, John, M. (2002) *Travellers and their language.*

Macalister, R.A.S. (1937) *The Secret Languages of Ireland.* UK, Cambridge: University Press.

National Youth Council of Ireland (2009) *Practical Guidelines for doing Intercultural Youth Work.* Dublin.

O’Riain, Sean (2000) *Solidarity with Travellers.*

Pavee Point Travellers organisation (2004) *Ar an mBealach - On the Way - The Eist Manual*, Dublin.

Pavee Point Travellers organisation (2005) *Assimilation Policies and Outcomes: Travellers' Experience*. 2005.

Pavee Point Travellers organisation (1998) *Respect: Education without prejudice - a challenge for Early Years Educators in Ireland*. Dublin.

Pavee Point Travellers organisation (1997) *Travellers - Nomads of Ireland*. Dublin.

Online Resources

"Irish Traveller" on Wikipedia

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_Traveller

About the Irish Traveller communities in Ireland

http://pavee.ie/ourgeels/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/AITHS2010_SUMMARY_LR_All.pdf
www.nccri.ie/cdsu-Travellers.html

Friends, Families and Travellers

www.gypsy-Traveller.org/history/
www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEnglish/imperial/ireland/Travellers.htm

References

ⁱ Traveller Voices, www.paveepoint.ie/voices

ⁱⁱ Kenny, 1994; McDonagh 1994

Review Body, 1983, p.6. The Traveller Community have been defined as “an identifiable group of people, identified both by themselves and by other members of the community as people with their own distinct lifestyle traditionally of a nomadic nature but not now habitual wanderers.”

ⁱⁱⁱ Research was carried out with Travellers across Ireland and with Traveller organisations in relation to Traveller Health. The All Ireland Traveller Health Study was done in conjunction with UCD, the Department of Health and Children in the Republic of Ireland and the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety in Northern Ireland. The report can be accessed on http://pavee.ie/ourgeels/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/AITHS2010_SUMMARY_LR_All.pdf

^{iv} http://pavee.ie/ourgeels/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/AITHS2010_SUMMARY_LR_All.pdf

^v http://pavee.ie/ourgeels/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/AITHS2010_SUMMARY_LR_All.pdf

^{vi} Murray 1997

^{vii} Mac Aonghusa, 1990, p.7

^{viii} O’Connell DTEDG, 1992, p.3ff

^{ix} The following authorities have all upheld the need to officially recognise the Traveller Community as a minority ethnic group: Equality Authority, Irish Human Rights Commission, Council of Europe, UNICPR, FCNM etc.

^x Report and Recommendations for a Traveller Education Strategy, 2006

^{xi} Department of Education, Social inclusion Unit (2010) Traveller Education Strategy quoted in Progressing Traveller inclusion in Youth Work, Foróige 2011

^{xii} Press release in October 2008 by the Minister for Education, Mr. Batt O Keefe

^{xiii} CSO 2006

^{xiv} http://pavee.ie/ourgeels/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/AITHS2010_SUMMARY_LR_All.pdf

^{xv} Department of the Environment, NI 2001

^{xvi} Voice of the Traveller in the Irish Workforce, published by NATC, 2009: A practical guide and Toolkit to assist Travellers in exploring their beliefs around work and employment.

^{xvii} Further information on health that was collected in census 2006. See www.cso.ie

^{xviii} It is important to point out that these statistics are from research carried out in 1987 and represent the most up to date research into Traveller health in Ireland.

^{xix} http://pavee.ie/ourgeels/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/AITHS2010_SUMMARY_LR_All.pdf

^{xx} http://pavee.ie/ourgeels/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/AITHS2010_SUMMARY_LR_All.pdf

It is sobering to note that the age population pyramid demonstrating the life expectancy for Irish Travellers is almost identical to the profile for Nicaraguans – Beyond the Local Conference Report, NYCI 2005

^{xxi} Government Responses to improving health outcomes for members of the Traveller Community have been taken. The Department of Health and Children's publication Traveller Health: A National Strategy, 2002 – 2005 set out clear and practical responses to some of these inequities. A Traveller Health Advisory Committee has been established by the Department as has a Traveller Health Unit in each Health Service Executive Area. The involvement of members of the Traveller Community in the Primary Health Care Teams and in the provision of health services is considered crucial in bridging the gap between the Traveller community and the health service

^{xxii} http://pavee.ie/ourgeels/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/AITHS2010_SUMMARY_LR_All.pdf
^{xxiii} www.nccri.ie

^{xxiv} The United Nations International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination defines racial discrimination as “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on a equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life”.