

Travellers' Experiences of Labour Market Programmes

Pearn Kandola Occupational Psychologists

Equality Studies Unit

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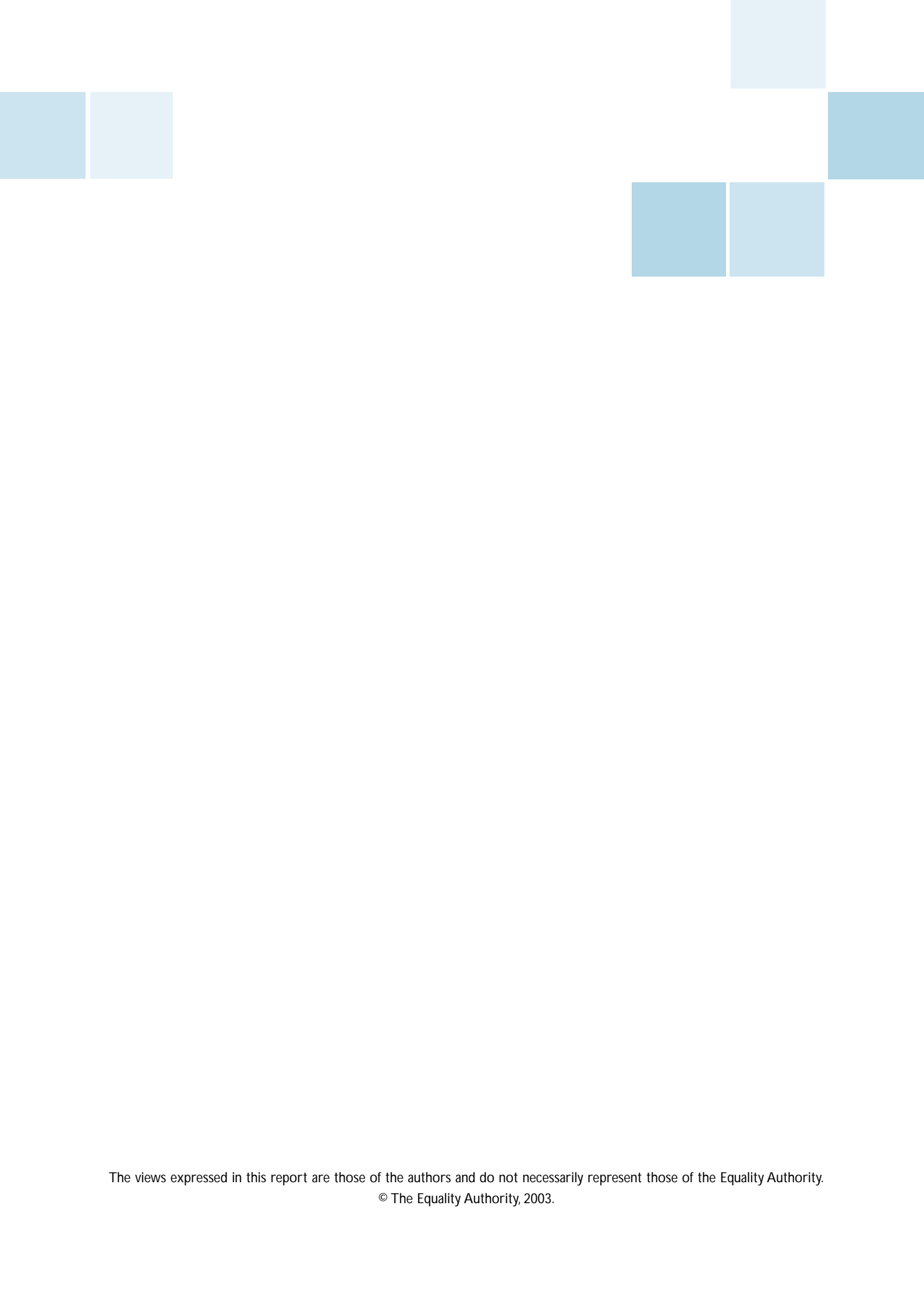
THE EQUALITY AUTHORITY
AN tÚDARÁS COMHIONANNAIS



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Barriers to Access and Participation

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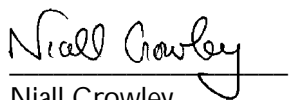
FOREWORD

This report has been prepared by the Equality Authority as part of our contribution to the effective implementation of the Employment and Human Resources Development Operational Programme which forms part of the National Development Plan. Under the Operational Programme the Equality Authority has established an Equality Studies Unit. The Equality Studies seeks to support outcomes for older people, people with disabilities, minority ethnic groups (in particular refugees) and Travellers from the education and training measures which form part of the Operational Programme.

The focus of this report is on the Traveller community. It highlights the experiences of Travellers accessing and participating in the labour market and details barriers Travellers experience in accessing labour market programmes. It makes recommendations to policy makers and programme providers on the design and delivery of programmes delivered under the Operational Programme.

The recommendations establish an approach to making reasonable accommodation of Travellers within labour market programmes. This is about making adjustments and facilitating Travellers in the design and delivery of these programmes. It requires programme providers to name Travellers as a key part of the audience they seek to reach and to identify and address the practical implications of the Traveller identity experience and situation for the design and delivery of their programmes. A key recommendation is the designation of a central body to champion the participation and progression of Travellers with labour market programmes. Implementation of the recommendations will facilitate an improved approach to Traveller participation and will enhance the potential for them to realise positive labour market outcomes.

We would like to thank Pearn Kandola for their work in preparing the report and the Equality Studies Unit Management Committee for their contributions. The Committee draws together implementing agencies, social partners and equality interests. We would also like to thank all the implementing bodies for taking the time to participate in the study. The Equality Authority looks forward to building on existing good practice in the area of Traveller inclusion by supporting the implementation of these recommendations.



Niall Crowley
Chief Executive Officer
Equality Authority
November 2003



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INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

1.1 Introduction

The Equality Studies Unit of the Equality Authority commissioned Pearn Kandola to undertake research into the experiences of Travellers accessing and participating in labour market programmes delivered under the Employment and Human Resources Development Operational Programme (EHRDOP) which is a key element of the National Development Plan (NDP) (Government of Ireland, 1999) and to make recommendations for actions to improve access and participation.

In particular the study examines the:

- experiences and aspirations of Travellers (both urban and rural) in relation to the labour market
- barriers to accessing labour market programmes from the perspectives of Travellers, programme providers within the EHRDOP and employers
- core issues that should be addressed to secure labour market outcomes for Travellers
- the implications of the outcomes from the research for the design and delivery of programmes under the EHRDOP

In total 8 focus groups and 8 interviews were held with Travellers located in the following areas: Galway, Limerick, Dublin, Kerry and Offaly. Eighteen interviews and 3 focus groups were conducted with programme providers and 7 additional public and private sector employers were interviewed.

1.2 Findings

Best practice guidelines for programme provision were developed and presented under the following headings: identifying the audience, attracting participants, selecting participants and programmes, sustaining participation and monitoring outcomes and bridging the gaps. The experience of Travellers were compared against these gaps identified. These findings are summarised below.

Identifying the Audience

Identifying the audience will determine the design, delivery and outcomes of a programme. The study found little evidence of Travellers being identified as potential participants for mainstream programmes. There is also a clear need for greater networking and information sharing between programme providers and Traveller support groups.

Attracting Participants

Attracting participants involves influencing those who will most benefit to participate in labour market programmes. The messages and media used are key. The research suggests that Travellers have a variety of perceptions about programmes including a fear of loss of benefits, that programmes will affect their lifestyle and, overall, had negative experiences of programmes. Little is being done to send messages that will highlight the needs of Travellers and manage their concerns. There appears to be little evidence of adapting media to the Traveller context. Most mainstream programmes are advertised using word of mouth and newspapers. There is clearly a greater need to tailor the messages and media used to the Traveller context.

Selecting Participants and Programmes

An accurate match needs to be developed between the individual and the programme to ensure positive outcomes for all. The research reveals that Travellers perceive the methods used to select individuals for labour market programmes directly or indirectly discriminate against them. There is also a clear indication for greater needs analysis at both the group and individual level and for greater investment in career planning.

Sustaining Participation

In order to ensure the representation of Travellers on programmes, it is critical to meet their particular needs. Although the research suggests that there is some positive evidence of programme providers meeting the basic needs of Travellers, there is still much effort required, most notably in the areas of hours of attendance and childcare. Many of the Traveller participants in this research had positive perceptions about the benefits of training and the resulting increase in self-esteem. However, it is clear that greater efforts are needed to ensure that Travellers are treated with dignity and respect on programmes.

Monitoring Outcomes and Bridging the Gaps

This step involves ensuring participants achieve tangible goals and evaluating programmes to ensure they are making a difference. The findings demonstrate that informal evaluation of programmes is common. However, formal evaluation of the suitability of programmes for Travellers was less prevalent in mainstream provision. Critically there is evidence of confusion over who has responsibility to assist Travellers overcome discrimination and ensure positive outcomes in terms of progression from programmes. There is a clear need for formal evaluation of programmes and clarification of where responsibility lies for ensuring Traveller progression.

In conclusion, Travellers are not being identified as a potential audience for mainstream programmes. There is little being done to tailor messages and media to attract Travellers to programmes or to consider the group and individual needs of Travellers and their long-term development. Although there is evidence of programme providers meeting some of the needs of Travellers, greater efforts are needed to promote access, participation and outcomes for Travellers within both mainstream and targeted programmes. The formal evaluation of the suitability of programmes for Travellers is less frequent on mainstream programmes and there is confusion over whose responsibility it is to ensure Traveller progression.

1.3 Recommendations

The research suggests that Travellers cannot adequately and fairly participate within mainstream labour market programmes without reasonable accommodation of their particular needs and culture at each step in the cycle of programme planning and provision. However it is not clear who is ultimately responsible for ensuring that every care is taken to fully embrace the value of the Traveller community within programme provision. For example there is no central body to support and provide advice to programme providers and designers on the inclusion and participation of Travellers within mainstream labour market programmes. Gaps are also evident at the end of programmes in the progression of Travellers to their desired outcomes. It will be difficult to make significant progress regarding the participation of Travellers in labour market programmes unless responsibility for this is assigned to a designated body. Thus the overarching recommendation is that the EHRDOP Managing Authority should, as a priority, designate a central body with responsibility for championing the participation and progression of Travellers within labour market policy and programme provision. This could be advanced in the context of more general arrangements for promoting the broader equality agenda within the EHRDOP.

The key recommendations we make to programme providers and in particular to providers of mainstream measures under the Employment and Human Resources Development Operational Programme are:

- **to create links** between key stakeholders (for example, Travellers, Traveller support groups, programme providers) to identify those who will benefit most from inclusion in programmes
- **to develop concrete objectives** for the inclusion of Travellers in programmes. This will allow for formal evaluation of programmes in terms of their inclusiveness of Travellers
- **messages** used to attract participants should be tailored to highlight Traveller needs and dispel negative perceptions that Travellers have of programmes
- **media** should be audited to determine their suitability for use with the Traveller community
- **group-focused needs analysis** should be conducted to determine the training needs and additional supports required by Travellers as a group
- **validity of criteria** for selecting participants for programmes should be checked to ensure fairness and ensure that they do not discriminate either directly or indirectly
- **individual needs analysis and career planning** should be conducted to develop a plan for the medium-term development of individual participants
- **meeting basic needs** of Travellers should incorporate the provision of additional supports such as particular hours of attendance and childcare
- **meeting higher level needs** of Travellers should involve a three-phased approach that will build a Traveller's sense of belonging by training all programme providers in valuing diversity, build the confidence of Travellers by accommodating the needs of Travellers, and increase self-esteem by acknowledging the Traveller culture within the content of programmes
- **monitoring outcomes** should involve the formal evaluation of programmes to determine their suitability for Travellers
- **bridging the gaps** between programmes should involve setting targets to measure the value added by programmes to the lives of Travellers and clarifying whose responsibility it is to facilitate the progression of Travellers

METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

In this section we outline the approach and methodology used in the study. The research approach involved distilling existing information, data collection and data analysis and findings. The methodology used consisted of interviews and focus groups to gain insight from Travellers, programme providers and employers into the barriers Travellers experience accessing and participating in labour market programmes.

2.2 Distilling Existing Information

Contact was made with key stakeholders among the Traveller community, programme providers and employers. A list of stakeholders and organisations contacted are illustrated in Table 1 of the Appendix.

A detailed review and analysis of existing research relevant to Travellers and in particular to their experience of labour market programmes was conducted and the main issues identified are set out in Chapter 3 of this report. The aim of the literature review was to identify the policy context and to ensure that this study could build on the research conducted to date.

2.3 Data Collection

Focus groups and interviews were set up with Traveller groups, programme providers and public/private sector employers. The objective of this stage was to gather data on Traveller and programme provider perceptions of the barriers Travellers experience accessing labour market programmes.

Interviews and focus groups with members of the Traveller community were set up by contacting Traveller support groups and outlining the objectives of the research. Permission was sought from the directors of Traveller support groups to conduct focus groups with each group. An informal approach was taken to conducting focus groups and interviews with Travellers. Trainers sat in with the groups. No written material (for example, flip charts, questionnaires) were used. Each question was delivered verbally to the group and data was recorded by the focus group facilitator and an administrator.

The Traveller sample consisted of a mix of Travellers from urban and rural locations and of men and women. Eight focus groups and 8 interviews were held with Travellers located in the following areas: Galway, Limerick, Dublin, Kerry and Offaly. The rationale for using these locations was to include an urban/rural mix within the data and to include locations where research had not been conducted in the past year. Ninety-six female Travellers and 9 male Travellers took part in this study. A breakdown of the numbers of Travellers by location is summarised in Table 2 of the Appendix.

Data was collected from programme providers through three mediums: telephone interviews, face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions. Eighteen interviews were held with providers of programmes, which are of primary relevance to Travellers. These programmes are listed in Table 3 of the Appendix. The remaining programme providers were invited to three focus group discussions. Eleven programme providers took part in these focus groups, see Table 4 of the Appendix. The aim of these focus groups was to stimulate discussion among programme providers by presenting Traveller perceptions of the barriers they face in accessing and participating.

A series of telephone interviews were conducted with 7 employers including a retailer, pharmacist, IT company, hotel, bus and rail travel organisations and a forestry organisation. The aim of these interviews was to gain an insight into employer's views of the barriers Travellers experience accessing labour market programmes.

2.4 Data Analysis and Findings

All data collected was analysed and the findings are detailed in Chapter 4. Best practice guidelines on programme provision were developed under the following headings: identifying your audience, attracting participants, making the match between participants and programmes, sustaining participation and monitoring outcomes and bridging the gaps. The experiences of Travellers were compared against these guidelines and gaps identified are highlighted in the findings.

In Chapter 5 conclusions are drawn in relation to the current situation for Travellers within the framework of a model for managing diversity (the MOSAIC model), and finally recommendations are presented for the way forward.

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

3.1 Introduction

Irish society is increasingly multicultural. This reality has been reflected in the growing numbers of diverse groups seeking training and employment opportunities in Ireland. However, many groups remain marginalised in Irish society.

The EHRDOP addresses the labour market and the projected workforce requirements for the period 2000 to 2006. It is devised within the context of the National Development Plan and is consistent with the European Employment Strategy. The programme is made up of a number of measures and sub-measures which are delivered by various government departments and agencies. These are known as Implementing Bodies or Programme Providers. The EHRDOP is structured around the four thematic pillars of employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability and equality. This is in line with the EU Employment Strategy and the National Employment Action Plan.

Under the employability pillar there are measures designed to mobilise labour supply such as apprenticeship programmes, skills training for the unemployed and measures designed to prevent unemployment such as Early Literacy, National Employment Service and the Action Programme for the Unemployed. In addition there are social inclusion measures such as Traveller education. Under the entrepreneurship pillar there are programmes that focus on assisting companies, particularly small to medium enterprises in adjusting to a more competitive labour market and encouraging self-employment and enterprise creation. These programmes include in-house training and the Social Economy Programme. Under the adaptability pillar there are programmes designed to increase workplace skills such as skills training, lifelong learning and education and training. Under the equal opportunities pillar there are programmes that aim to promote equal opportunities between men and women such as educational equality and gender mainstreaming.

The Traveller community is widely acknowledged as one of the most marginalised groups in Ireland. One of the shared aims of the government and the social partners, as expressed in the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF) is to develop a fairer and more inclusive Ireland. Despite this Travellers continue to experience discrimination when accessing education, training and employment and are largely excluded from labour market programmes.

A review of the literature on Traveller participation in labour market programmes suggests that the reasons for this include:

- a lack of recognition of the Traveller culture in the planning and delivery of programmes
- a lack of additional support during programmes
- a lack of follow up and development on completion of programmes

An overview of the existing literature in this area has identified the following key issues as pertinent for planners and providers of labour market programmes, based on key reports by the Task Force on the Travelling Community (1995), Nexus Research Co-operative (2000) and two studies published by Pavee Point - Byrne (1996), Murphy (2001).

3.2 Recognition of the Traveller Culture

One reason for the difficulties Travellers experience accessing and participating in programmes is a lack of acceptance and acknowledgement of the unique culture and identity of Travellers. The Task Force on the Travelling Community (1995) stated that, "The Traveller culture lies within the values, meanings and identity that the Traveller community shares," and this culture includes traditions of nomadism, self-employment, occupational flexibility and economic adaptation. Other research suggests that almost half of the Irish population are negatively disposed towards Travellers (Farrell and Watt, 2001). This lack of acceptance of the Traveller culture has taken many forms in the past within programmes including stereotypes about Travellers as a group, lack of recognition of Traveller skills and a failure to treat Travellers with dignity and respect. A lack of acknowledgement of the Traveller culture has also manifested itself in the absence from programme content of positive images of Travellers and the integral role they play within Irish society. Research has suggested that support agencies do not easily understand Traveller culture and are not always comfortable with Travellers (Murphy, 2001).

The lack of acknowledgement of the Traveller culture in the planning and delivery of labour market programmes is reflected throughout the process from issues such as access, recruitment procedures, selection criteria and achieving outcomes.

The literature indicates that programme planners do not understand Traveller culture and that labour market programmes commonly discriminate against Travellers. Specific measures should be taken to target and encourage the participation of Travellers in programmes. Previous studies have made recommendations in three key areas relevant to this goal which are culturally appropriate programme content, diversity awareness training and Travellers as role models. These are considered in turn below.

Culturally Appropriate Programme Content

The literature demonstrates the importance of the recognition of Traveller culture in course content. Programme providers have been urged to design and deliver training and education modules around specific Traveller enterprise activities. These should include technical skill modules in the areas of management, marketing and finance. Culturally appropriate apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeship courses are also recommended. Ideally Travellers should be involved in the design of such programmes. FÁS has implemented a recommendation by Byrne (1996) that social economy programmes (enterprises that will benefit the economic and social regeneration of a community) incorporate Traveller enterprises. However, this is an area identified as requiring further development in order to improve Traveller participation in social economy programmes.

Diversity Awareness Training

Previous studies have found that Travellers encounter bias and discrimination when accessing labour market programmes. Recommendations stemming from this finding aim to raise awareness of the living circumstances and culture of travellers in mainstream programmes. In particular, the provision of diversity awareness training with an emphasis on anti-racism has been promoted for those working with Travellers.

Travellers as Role Models

The importance of employing Travellers in training positions is emphasised in the literature. The specific benefits of this in providing role models for other Travellers have been highlighted. While many training centres now employ Traveller staff, the recommendations in the literature indicate that more could be done in this regard, for instance, by ensuring that Travellers hold posts as trainers or teachers and by creating the post of assistant teacher. Positive role models are thought to attract and sustain the participation of Travellers in labour market programmes.

3.3 Additional Support During Programmes

Another reason identified in the literature for continued discrimination against Travellers in accessing education, training and employment is the lack of provision of additional support during labour market programmes. The need for such supports arises because Travellers have a different culture from that assumed in the design of most programmes, they may also have less experience of formal education and are more likely than the majority community to experience economic disadvantage. Additional supports are intended to enhance participation and completion rates among targeted groups. The literature highlights the following three areas where the need for additional support for Travellers is indicated.

Flexible Training Provision

Additional supports in the form of measures to enhance the flexibility of programmes are considered essential. Such supports include the provision of bridging courses for Travellers with negative experiences of formal education, the gradual build-up of the formality of training, flexible hours and the provision of a comfortable training environment. The literature acknowledges the development of flexible provision in respect of some programmes, such as the Women's Education Initiative.

Childcare Support

The literature indicates that childcare supports are essential to encourage and maintain the uptake of labour market programmes among the Traveller community, especially among women. The provision of childcare support must be flexible and accommodate women's preferences in this regard.

Financial Assurances

Financial assurances to participants or potential participants in regard to the impact of programme participation on their financial situation are also identified in the literature as important support measures for Travellers. In particular, assurances are required in relation to any financial incentives and the effect of participation on social welfare benefits and medical card eligibility.

3.4 Follow Up and Development

Follow up and development is considered essential to support Travellers to progress to employment or further training. Travellers face particular barriers to progression. This lack of progression is attributed to lack of support for those seeking progression and discrimination in the labour market.

Support for Those Seeking Progression

Previous research identifies the potential of support agencies such as FÁS and Local Employment Services to take a more proactive role in liaising with potential employers on behalf of individual Travellers and to act as advocates on their behalf in the labour market.

The literature to date suggests that supports of those seeking progression include enhanced provision of information on the routes of progression. A further method identified for enhancing prospects of Travellers in the labour market is the provision of training in areas and skills not traditionally associated with Travellers, thereby deconstructing stereotypes that act to categorise Travellers into narrow areas of employment.

Countering Discrimination in the Labour Market

The literature demonstrates that discrimination in the labour market is a substantial barrier to Traveller progression. Recommendations made in this regard include the development of links with private and public sector employers to create opportunities for Traveller progression. In particular public sector employment in health, education and training are identified as areas providing opportunities for Traveller inclusion in the mainstream labour market. Recommendations have been made that government funding be made available to create Traveller employment in these sectors.

3.5 Conclusion

It is evident that Travellers continue to face significant barriers to accessing, participating in, and progressing from labour market programmes. Some improvements have been made (for example, the introduction of equality legislation and the development of the Social Economy Programme). However, many of the recommendations made in the Report of the Task Force (1995) and subsequent reports remain relevant. This is primarily because many of them have not been implemented. It is not the aim of this report to replicate the recommendations that have been made in the past but to raise new questions about the experience of Travellers in relation to labour market programmes.

THE EXPERIENCES OF THE TRAVELLER COMMUNITY

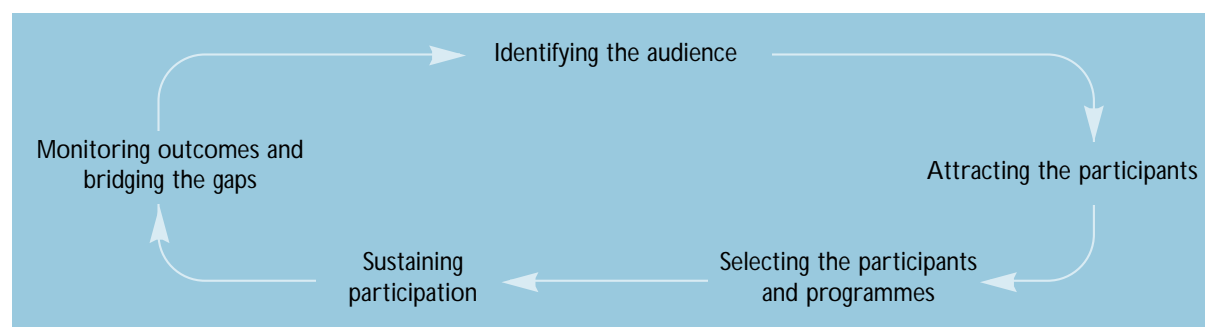
4.1 Introduction

In this chapter a set of best practice guidelines are presented based on the available literature and research on Travellers participating in labour market programmes. Findings from the interviews and focus groups with research participants have been analysed within the context of these guidelines to provide an overview of the current situation. The guidelines are arranged under the following headings:

- identifying the audience
- attracting participants
- selecting participants and programmes
- sustaining participation
- monitoring outcomes and bridging the gaps

These headings represent steps in a 'best practice' cycle, with each step directly feeding into and influencing the next stage (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1: The Best Practice Cycle



4.2 Identifying the Audience

This is a natural starting point when planning a programme, albeit one that is often overlooked. Identifying the target audience helps to inform the design of the programme i.e. what its outcomes will be, what it will involve for participants and how it will be delivered. Critically, this process also informs how a programme is advertised, how people are selected for it and how its effectiveness is evaluated. This constitutes an important first step in programme development. If at the outset programmes fail to consider a broader audience than the majority community they risk failing to consider the needs of a diverse population when taking subsequent steps.

Failing to consider the Traveller community as a potential audience for a programme may lead to their exclusion often in subtle and indirect ways such as the choice of venue, setting the hours of attendance or the setting of criteria for participation. The subtlety and complexity of some of these issues indicates a need for considerable awareness of Traveller culture on the part of programme designers.

When this exclusion occurs, it has a negative impact on two fronts. Firstly, the obvious loss of opportunity for members of the Traveller community to benefit from the programme, to learn more about other programmes and ultimately gain access to the labour market. Secondly, the programme designers and providers lose the opportunity to learn more about the Traveller culture. This means that stereotypes about programmes, programme providers and Travellers are not challenged and the cycle of exclusion continues.

There is no tried and tested methodology for identifying the potential audience of a programme. It is accomplished through deliberate attempts to overcome the traditional barriers and raise awareness within the groups concerned. While it may not be possible for programme designers to be experts on the Traveller culture, nor for Traveller support organisations to be experts on each and every programme, it is critical for these groups to network effectively together and share perspectives on common issues.

Box 4.1 Sample scenario: But they don't apply!

When asked about the inclusion of Travellers, a programme provider replied *'It's not really an issue for us, Travellers don't apply for any of our programmes'*.

How can this be explained? The lack of applications could be due to any of the following:

- a lack of interest within the Traveller community
- a lack of awareness of the programme within the Traveller community
- a need for greater effort by the programme provider to raise awareness of the programme within the Traveller community.

The answer can only be found by asking the people who are not applying.

The research revealed a number of instances where the Traveller community had been identified as potential participants on mainstream programmes, most noticeably programmes for the long-term unemployed. While in most other cases Travellers were not directly excluded, there was little evidence of the Traveller community having been formally identified as a part of the target audience for mainstream programmes. As highlighted in Box 4.1 above, this can lead to unintentional, indirect exclusion.

This has little relevance for Traveller specific measures, but it is important to acknowledge that Traveller specific measures are evidence of consideration of the Traveller community's development needs.

It is important to draw attention to an issue identified among male Travellers, particularly in rural areas,

that most of the programmes provided for Travellers seemed to be targeted at females. As such, the perception of training being solely for women had taken hold.

In the majority of cases there was little evidence of consultation with representatives of the Traveller community, such as interest groups, to share ideas about the provision of mainstream programmes. In many instances, it appeared that the core business of programme provision for the majority community was the only objective.

There was also evidence to suggest that this lack of communication may derive in some part from stereotypes of the Traveller community. For example, one programme provider of a mainstream programme suggested, *'trainers stereotypically think that Travellers are more interested in work as traders than in manual work'*. This lack of awareness could act as a barrier to Travellers being considered for inclusion in mainstream programmes.

In summary, it is best practice to build networks and consult with key stakeholders to identify how Travellers might best benefit from programmes. Although there is some evidence of attempts to acknowledge the Traveller community as a potential audience for programmes, the research suggests a distinct lack of networking and information sharing. This was evident both within the programme provider and the Traveller support group populations. There was no evidence of concrete objectives for the inclusion of Travellers being developed. In the absence of any formal objectives it becomes impossible to evaluate the success of a programme in terms of its inclusion of the Traveller community.

4.3 Attracting Participants

The previous section revealed how learning about programmes could be of benefit to the Traveller community. The next step is concerned with encouraging the participation of those individuals that will benefit most from the programme and this requires looking at both messages and media for attracting potential participants.

Securing the best possible group of participants will result in greater success, both in terms of outcomes for individuals and value for money for the programme provider. However, attracting participants from minority groups and diverse cultures such as the Traveller community, requires creativity and perseverance.

What works with one part of the target audience may not work with another. Tactics that might influence the majority community may be virtually useless for attracting applicants from the Traveller community. Worse still, there can also be a compounding effect if mainstream messages are used exclusively. For instance, a message that is biased towards the majority community, in the absence of any effort to make the message attractive to the Traveller community, could a) fail to attract Travellers, but also b) send out a message that the programme is aimed exclusively at the majority community and is not intended for Travellers.

Messages

Learning how to tailor messages for the Traveller community can only be achieved through consultation. Really persuasive messages can only be created once the concerns, perceptions and potential barriers for Travellers have been identified.

It is critical not to make assumptions about the messages that Travellers need to hear to be persuaded to participate in a programme. For instance, an assumption that could be made is that Travellers have the same frame of reference for making career decisions as members of the majority community. If they have not traditionally been targeted for involvement in programmes, it is likely that there is less understanding of these issues within the Traveller community. It may be necessary to provide introductions to the benefits and implications of participation.

It is also essential that messages do not include unfair or discriminatory language. Equally, the visual impact of the message must be free of any indication of prejudice. It is important to remember the use of positive action in term of securing the participation of Travellers in labour market programmes.

For example positive images reflecting Traveller culture could be used in an advertising campaign to encourage Travellers to participate in a programme.

It is clear from this research that members of the Traveller community have many and varied concerns about participating in programmes. Outlined below are some that were voiced during the research. It is not suggested that this dimension is exhaustive nor that it should be applied generally across the Traveller community.

Both Travellers and programme providers view the fear of losing out on social welfare benefits as a deterrent to potential training course participants. Findings from this study indicate that fear of loss of benefits may prevent people from engaging in programmes that are unpaid or that require a long-term investment of time before the results will be realised financially. Some Travellers also perceive that attendance on courses may increase the possibility of losing their medical card eligibility.

There is also evidence of a perception among Travellers that participation in programmes will by necessity inhibit travelling, an issue of most relevance for those who pursue a nomadic lifestyle. While this can be a pragmatic difficulty for longer-term programmes, it need not be a barrier for all programmes.

Along with general concerns about the challenges of the programmes, there was substantial evidence of a fear amongst research participants of disrespectful treatment, harassment or discrimination. Many of the sample talked about previous negative experiences of formal education which had served to discourage them from participating in further programmes. One Traveller parent explained another concern, *'Negative feelings among Traveller children about school since they feel they never do well there'*. A number of programme providers suggested that these early experiences often lead to poor images being held by teachers and Travellers of each other. The findings also revealed evidence of this type of negative perception being passed through generations of Traveller families.

Another critical concern that needs to be addressed in the messages sent to the target group relates to overcoming discrimination after the programmes have ended. Many Travellers in the study sample had not realised the outcomes they had hoped for, for example, employment, following completion of previous programmes. One participant said, *'You won't get a job at the end of the course and will be discriminated against when trying to access employment. So why bother?'*. Experiences of discrimination in trying to access employment or after having secured employment were in evidence. With very few exceptions, each Traveller that we talked to could recount one or more incidents. One woman reported being made redundant, *'because there wasn't enough work, but the next week they gave my job to a settled person'*. Another man spoke about keeping his Traveller identity a secret for many years for fear of less favourable treatment by colleagues and his manager. He also spoke about advising his children and local youngsters to do the same.

Finally, another concern relates to a common preference for self-employment, particularly within the male Traveller community. Specifically, as one programme provider explained:

'The cultural mindset of self employment, very predominant in the male Traveller community, can mean that programmes aimed to secure mainstream employment are of little interest'

The research suggests that at present, it would appear that little is being done to send effective positive messages to the Traveller community. In terms of learning more about these sorts of concerns, some examples of good practice do exist, although the evidence is sparse. In one location, a front line staff member of a mainstream programme visited Traveller specific programmes to listen to the concerns of the participants in relation to accessing other training programmes. Armed with this knowledge, programme providers visited halting sites to listen, provide reassurances and try to correct any misperceptions.

Media

Thoughtful consideration must be given to the selection of media to employ when targeting the Traveller community. As many Travellers experience literacy difficulties more interactive forms of promotion such as face-to-face interactions or radio advertisements may be required. It might also be incorrect to assume that members of the Traveller community are just as comfortable as members of the majority community to enter and browse through a public information centre.

The better examples of tailoring media come from the providers of Traveller specific programmes. Face-to-face contact, site visits and building trust are the most effective tactics. It is clear from the research that many members of the Traveller community do not assume that they will be treated fairly and with respect when interacting with representatives of the state. It also appears that this mistrust has been under-estimated by many programme providers.

Both Travellers and programme providers commented that the majority of programmes are advertised either through the various mainstream support agencies, by word of mouth or through the newspapers. The findings suggest that there is little evidence of adapting media to the Traveller context. It also suggests that there is a need for greater understanding of the barriers Travellers may experience accessing programmes through these forms of media. For instance, there is a need for greater consideration of the fact that literacy is an issue of greater relevance to the Traveller community than the majority community. There is also a need to recognise reluctance by some Travellers to engage in the formal office environment.

In summary, to be successful in attracting participants from the Traveller community, greater attention needs to be paid to identifying the media and the messages that are most likely to be effective. Currently it seems that most programmes are advertised in a generic way, using traditional methods of advertising. It is important that communication strategies accommodate the diversity of the Traveller community. Positive action measures should feature as a component of any media strategy employed.

4.4 Selecting Participants and Programmes

This step relates to each potential participant at an individual as well as group level. An accurate match between the needs, motives, circumstances and ambitions of the individual and the specific objectives of the programme will help ensure positive outcomes for all. The importance of selection criteria, group needs analysis, individual needs analysis and career planning is discussed below.

Selection Criteria

Selection criteria, such as Leaving Certificate performance, are often applied by programme providers. It is important to ensure that the standards specified in the criteria are absolutely necessary, particularly if they could have an adverse impact on the participation any particular sub-group. Unless selection criteria represent only essential requirements there is potential for indirect discrimination.

Box 4.2: Sample scenario: My future – in whose hands?

'I've been on at least ten courses now. It has been hard to find me a job so I think the people in the office don't know where to put me – so I just get put on another course'

In this scenario, the challenge that this person faces in finding employment is clear. The repeated efforts of the programme provider are also obvious, but it seems that there is no long-term plan and that the individual is not involved in the decisions being taken about their career.

During the course of the research, the selection criteria identified included educational requirements such as literacy, numeracy levels and requirements for certificates, for example the criteria for apprenticeships include a Grade D in any five subjects in the Junior Certificate and some employers may seek higher entry level requirements.

There was a strong perception among Traveller participants that in some cases the criteria set for certain programmes were too high and, in effect, indirectly discriminated against Travellers. See Box 4.2. As one participant stated, *'Many employers want a Leaving Certificate. This is a way of discriminating against an awful lot of Travellers. Basic labouring jobs look for this'*. Certain programmes also require that an employer sponsor the participant. Both Travellers and programme providers highlighted this as a key barrier to accessing apprenticeships and traineeships.

Overall, criteria appeared to have been set on the basis of the 'mainstream' norms. There was scant evidence of checking the validity of criteria or of monitoring them for adverse impact on the Traveller community.

Group Needs Analysis

When designing labour market programmes, it is critical that providers examine the needs of the Traveller community as a group. Because of the unique situation of this community, it is likely that they will have requirements, interests and needs that are different to the mainstream community. This does not always necessitate the provision of Traveller-specific programmes but requires a degree of reasonable accommodation within mainstream programmes to ensure the relevance and usefulness of these programmes for Travellers.

There was little evidence of group needs analysis for the Traveller community, outside of Traveller specific programmes. There was also little evidence of mainstream programmes being adapted to accommodate the Traveller culture. As an example, one programme provider commented, *'Travellers want segregated courses rather than integrated ones'*. This suggests a greater need to look at the Traveller community at a group level to take their unique context into consideration during the design of mainstream programmes.

During the research, evidence was found of Travellers having a need for greater training in areas such as entrepreneurial skills, trading within the Traveller economy or the development of Traveller enterprises. This has also been supported by Travellers who expressed concern that the Traveller skills were dying out and that some courses should focus on the traditional aspects of Traveller employment.

Individual Needs Analysis and Career Planning

Achieving effective individual needs analysis and career planning in every case is difficult. It requires the skill to help the individual assess their strengths and interests, to plan a career and in some instances to make decisions that may impact greatly on their lifestyle. Although the individual may have little experience of formal education, it is critical not to assume that the programme provider knows best. The emphasis must be on empowering the person to make an informed decision.

Career planning involves exploring the individual's long-term goals and how these can be met. The goal is that individuals can make informed and realistic decisions. For some individuals this will mean lowering their expectations about what is achievable within the established frameworks. For others it will be about encouraging them to consider broader possibilities and highlighting the benefits of making short-term sacrifices for longer-term gains.

The risk of stereotypical thinking and prejudice is greater at this point than at any other step in the cycle. Although the individual has a group identity, that is, 'Traveller', they also have an individual identity that has to be taken into consideration as there is a danger in failing to see beyond the group identity. Furthermore, stereotypes tend to be self-fulfilling. For example, an individual is stereotyped as disinterested in education and as a result is not helped to make an informed decision about which programme to attend. They are encouraged to participate in a programme that is not interesting to them, they become de-motivated and do not complete the programme. Their 'failure' is interpreted as a lack of interest and the initial hypothesis then appears to be proven.

This stereotyping is not all one-sided as a Traveller with little experience of education may well believe that it is impossible for them to ever achieve a formal qualification. If this stereotype is reinforced, rather than challenged by programme providers, there is little chance of that person ever believing

otherwise. It is critical that stereotypes are challenged in a positive and constructive manner.

Many of the Travellers participating in the study felt positively about the programmes they had experienced. However, many of them felt that they had to fit into the mainstream courses without any accommodation of their specific needs. For instance, one man who found it difficult to maintain his motivation through a literacy programme commented, *'Ideally, courses should spend three days of the week on one skill such as carpentry or block laying and the remaining two on literacy and numeracy'*.

It was noticeable that very few of the Travellers that we spoke to had been helped to fully assess their needs, ambitions and motivation. There was also evidence that in many cases the individual needs of Travellers were not considered when matching them to programmes. One woman commented, *'All they see is a Traveller and they push you into the Traveller course'*. Another said, *'We're all lumped into the one reading class even though I can read far better than her'*. There was also evidence that in some instances participants are matched to programmes based on stereotypical thinking. One programme provider said, *'I don't think many Travellers will come in to do apprenticeships'*. Another Traveller described the frustration she felt at being stereotyped, *'Although we have life skills we lack mainstream skills. But I keep getting put on courses to learn about life skills'*.

With regard to career planning, there was little evidence of a long-term focus when setting goals with Travellers seeking training. For example, one programme provider commented that programmes are often provided on an adhoc basis in response to a Traveller need and that there is no specific plan for longer-term development. The study found that there is little clarity about where responsibility lies for the provision of longer-term career advice to Travellers.

There was strong evidence within the study sample of Travellers limiting their own career goals and ambitions. For instance, many of the Travellers who participated believed that they would never gain employment outside of Traveller organisations. With very few exceptions, there was little evidence of these stereotypes being challenged by programme providers.

However, it was clear that many of the Travellers could benefit from a greater understanding of the options available for career development and the steps that need to be taken to secure longer-term goals. With some notable exceptions, many of the Travellers participating in the study put their career development totally in the hands of the programme providers. Overall, the findings indicated a need for training in making career choices.

In summary, matching participants to programmes requires that all criteria are audited to ensure they accommodate the Traveller community. A thorough needs analysis at group and individual levels is also required as is the provision of support to assist people to set career goals and to make plans to achieve them. These activities in particular are of critical importance for the Traveller group as they tend to have less education than the majority community, and in many cases individuals do not have the benefit of guidance from family members or friends who have made similar decisions in the past.

4.5 Sustaining Participation

In trying to increase the representation of Travellers on programmes, the achievement and communication of positive experiences is crucial. Positive role modelling is an agent for change and should be exploited at every opportunity, but this is only possible when participation is sustained. This opportunity is lost every time someone fails to complete a programme, each time they experience discrimination or whenever they fail to integrate with others.

Ensuring that each individual experiences the full programme and sees it through to completion is challenging with any group. However, there are likely to be additional challenges when cultural diversity must also be accommodated. In this section, we will look at both basic and high level needs from the perspective of motivating members of the Traveller community to sustain participation in programmes.

Basic Needs

Motivation is a complex phenomenon that is influenced by factors on many levels, from basic physical necessities through to a sense of belonging and self-esteem. It is generally recognised that basic needs must be met before higher level needs. Although not always directly within the remit of programme providers, basic needs such as libraries, a comfortable study environment, financial support and healthcare, if not met, may well prevent an individual from fulfilling their commitment to a programme.

Likewise, being able to balance lifestyle commitments with attendance at a programme is critical. Travel, hours of attendance and childcare are important issues for many members of the Traveller community.

Throughout the study, it was evident that many Travellers do not have adequate access to basic needs to ensure full participation in programmes. The challenge presented to programme providers in this regard is that the provision of many of the basic needs lies outside of their control. Nonetheless, the findings from this study show that programme providers have attempted to resolve some of these difficulties. For example, the provision of programmes through the development of breakfast clubs, lunch clubs and after-school clubs to support Travellers who have poor accommodation facilities.

Another example is the negotiation of logistics of courses with participants (for example, the timing and duration of courses) and demonstrating flexibility where possible. One of the main barriers to attending programmes cited by female Travellers was inflexibility. The hours must fit in with school hours and also not inhibit travelling especially in the summer months. To accommodate this some programmes are provided on a part-time basis, for example the Lifelong Learning – Back to Education Initiative.

Another programme provider told participants at the outset that they needed to cover three hours training a day and asked them which hours and which environment suited them better. This resulted in the training being provided in a public building in the town, not usually used for training, for three hours every afternoon.

The need to be flexible must be balanced with the need to ensure commitment from the participant group. This may be carried out through the provision of incentives to Travellers to attend training.

Childcare is a key issue and can act as a barrier, predominantly for female Travellers attending courses. While there are childcare funding and supports available, for example the availability of crèche facilities, there is a strongly held view among some female Travellers that they would not leave their children with strangers. Rather than use the crèche facilities they would leave their children with family members and this may cause difficulties for regular and timely attendance on courses.

Higher Level Needs

Beyond the basic needs, support must be provided to meet higher level needs such as ensuring a sense of belonging, increasing confidence and building participants' self-esteem. When diverse groups come together a positive sense of belonging is critical. Along with the opportunity for sharing experiences and cross-group learning, there is also a risk that strong intra-group identities may result in inter-group barriers which, once formed, can be difficult to overcome. Successful integration of diverse groups requires deliberate and careful facilitation on the part of the programme provider to ensure that differences between groups are not only respected, but also valued. The front-line programme providers must be the primary advocates for principles of valuing diversity. Not only should their own behaviour be respectful to all individuals, but they must challenge others to adhere to these values also.

Other factors will also influence the extent to which a sense of belonging is achieved. An individual focus is required to provide tailored support to each person. While their group identity may help explain some of their personal needs, it does not hold all the answers to their unique situation. Through an effective understanding of each individual, programme providers can make sure they motivate individual Travellers rather than simply tolerate them. Box 4.3 gives an example of this below. While it can take considerable time and ability to build this rapport and trust, the benefits for both

parties are enhanced understanding, increased personal fulfilment and higher levels of loyalty.

Increasing confidence for those with little positive experience of formal education is a critical issue. Various types of support may be required such as greater help with induction, a gradual build-up of the formality of the programme, the use of one-to-one tutors to assist those with particular skill needs or the use of mentors to guide participants.

In terms of self-esteem, ensuring that some of the programme content is culturally tailored, helping people to see the potential benefits of their achievements or giving people responsibility as a means to engage their commitment will all help.

Box 4.3: Sample scenario: Valuing differences

'In the first few weeks of the programme, we took more breaks than usual. We also spent more time doing practical work to cater for different learning styles among a few of the male Travellers'

'The rest of the group learned a huge amount from the Traveller participants'

Incidents of this nature were rare in the research, however, these examples demonstrate efforts to accommodate Traveller participants and to help the group to integrate is clear.

One of the main barriers to attendance on courses is the fear of not being accepted. A female Traveller stated that she, *'would go on a settled person's course, it would not bother me but if the settled people knew I was a Traveller it may be difficult'*. It was also evident that the embarrassment arising from poor literacy skills can have a negative impact on course attendance. This view is held by both Travellers and programme providers and there is a perception among female Travellers that this is one reason why more male Travellers do not attend courses.

The study also found that another factor that contributes to a sense of belonging is the behaviour and style of delivery of trainers when working with Travellers. The research encountered some evidence of programme providers developing positive relationships with Travellers. For example, some female Travellers praised the helpful and informative staff in the training centres and the fact that they could have one-to-one discussions regarding any problems they may have. They also expressed the view that more Travellers should become trainers. According to one Traveller, *'Traveller trainers are better able to communicate with Traveller participants'*.

However, positive experiences with programme providers were not universal. There was evidence from the research of mistrust in relationships between Travellers and programme providers. For instance there were perceptions, particularly among the female participants, that trainers carry out the *'bare minimum'* and do not show any interest in helping Travellers nor do they recognise potential or provide support. This sense of mistrust was illustrated by one woman who said, *'You were looked down on, the doors of the classroom were locked when the teacher wasn't there'*.

Travellers also felt that some programme providers treated them in a patronising way. For example participants felt they were not treated as adults on some courses, *'Youthreach is becoming more like being back at school, being told to ask if you want to go to the toilet and told not to run in the corridor et cetera. Travellers are not being treated like grown-ups'*. Some Travellers also regarded some trainers as bullies who discriminated against them in very subtle ways. According to some programme providers, there is a low expectation of Travellers' performance and they commented that in the past Travellers have been deliberately placed in Traveller organisations during work placements rather than in mainstream jobs.

There is a perception among Travellers that employers adopt the view that, *'all Travellers are stupid'* and they have a stereotype that all, *'Travellers are the same and they will not change'*. Some employers participating in the study stressed the importance of time-keeping and reliability. One employer highlighted the significance of community acceptance and the fact that the community may hold negative stereotypes of Travellers, which puts the employer under more pressure and also the Traveller

who constantly has to 'prove him or herself'. There was very little evidence of programme providers actively challenging these stereotypes.

Moving on to building confidence, best practice suggests that Travellers should be supported through any problems they experience. This is particularly important in the early period of the programme. The research suggests that Travellers often experience problems in adapting to the rigid structures of training. There is a perception among some programme providers that Travellers have difficulty in sitting behind a desk for long periods of time, particularly in the early weeks of programmes. One female Traveller stated she found it difficult to concentrate and stay in a course for the whole day. A programme provider highlighted the difficulties that Travellers participating in a programme have with time-keeping, *'When Travellers still arrive late on the third or fourth week of the course after they have been repeatedly informed of the need for punctuality'*.

The findings from the study indicate that a lack of experience of the formal education system can act as a barrier to attendance and the need for the option of increased support for Travellers attending training programmes was apparent. However, there is little evidence of a gradual build-up of training for Travellers, many of whom may be having their first experiences of formal training. Although some individual tuition was in evidence, the perception among Travellers and programme providers was that this was often insufficient.

Finally, the study also examined the issue of increasing self-esteem among programme participants. The Travellers, who we met, in general held a positive view of the benefits of courses and the opportunities they bring. Female Travellers, in particular highlighted that attendance on courses increases confidence, provides opportunities to learn to read and write and pass these skills on to their children. Another view commonly expressed was that attendance on training courses provided social support among Travellers and increased the respect for Travellers from the local community. There was also evidence of Travellers being encouraged to take responsibility for different initiatives (for example, running a breakfast club or helping with planning the programme content).

However, there was very little evidence of any aspects of the Traveller culture being integrated within training material. It was also clear that there are few role models for Travellers to aspire to when attending training and employment. Although there are Travellers working in training centres, female Travellers highlighted that there are few Traveller trainers.

In summary, to effectively sustain participation with the Traveller community, programme providers must place a greater emphasis on getting to know and learn about individual Travellers and their culture. They also need to work at breaking down barriers and earning the trust and respect of Travellers. Greater efforts must be made, particularly at the beginning of programmes, to induct Travellers and help them overcome initial problems.

4.6 Monitoring Outcomes and Bridging the Gaps

Monitoring outcomes and bridging the gaps is about ensuring that participants achieve a tangible goal and evaluating the programme to see if it is making a difference. Sometimes the tangible goal for the participant, such as employment, might be out of the control of the programme provider. However, it is vital that every effort be made to ensure that positive outcomes are achievable. Maintaining links with participants is important to ensure their successful progression to the next stage in their development. The evaluation will provide an indication of which elements of a programme are in need of revision and which should be retained. If implemented successfully, the monitoring and evaluation of programmes will help to overcome the prejudice against Travellers in the workplace and to ensure that the programme is meeting the needs of the Traveller community.

Monitoring is underpinned by the work that is done when identifying the audience. However, the process is hindered as it can be unclear whose responsibility it is to ensure that programme participants make the transition to their desired next step. While this can also be difficult for the majority community, particular barriers, such as discrimination, tend to be experienced more often by the Traveller community. It is important to examine the role of programme providers in assisting the participant to overcome this.

Monitoring Outcomes

A structured process for evaluating the strengths and areas for development within programmes should be conducted. As well as structured feedback sessions to gather views on programmes, the uptake of programmes by the Traveller community should be monitored. Where group differences are identified (for example, where Travellers are not accessing or sustaining commitment to a programme) investigations should be undertaken to identify the reasons for this. The questions to be addressed may include:

- What is having an adverse impact on Travellers?
- Was the audience properly defined?
- Was it the form of advertising used?
- Was it the perceptions the group had of the programme or programme provider?
- Was a proper match made between individual participants and the programme?
- Were sufficient efforts made to sustain the participation of this group?

The progression of participants following successful completion of a programme should also be monitored. When group differences are found within participant progression, questions should be asked around whether the amount of follow up support provided was sufficient, and how the process of providing follow up support could be improved.

There was a variety of processes used by programme providers both to evaluate the content and delivery of programmes as well as to monitor the outcomes of programmes. Examples include a survey of Traveller perceptions of the training delivered to gauge whether the training meets Traveller needs. This form of evaluation provides valuable opportunities to improve the development of training. Methods used to monitor the outcomes of programmes included monitoring the uptake of jobs by Travellers following training, an assessment of the number of interventions required to get Travellers into further training or employment and making comparisons with the majority community. The outcome of certain programmes may not necessarily be employment but simply an increase in level of education. Such programmes tend to be evaluated through a process of weekly supervisions and monthly management meetings and evaluations at the end of the intervention.

However, there remain a number of programmes that have no formal evaluation process and monitoring is confined to simply counting the number of Travellers attending. This represents a lost opportunity for improving course content and monitoring the trends of participant progression.

Bridging the Gaps

Participant progression following completion of a programme is an issue that should be discussed throughout the programme. Programme providers should ideally discuss with participants where they wish to progress to following the programme and what steps they need to take to achieve this progression. It is also desirable that follow up support should be provided to all participants to help bridge the gaps from one programme to another (for example, from one training course to another, or from a training course to employment). Career planning is as important at the end of a programme as it is at the beginning and Box 4.4 below provides a sample scenario of such activity.

Typically, follow up support will include providing information on the availability of other programmes, opportunities available and providing training to participants to help them achieve progression (for example, training in the completion of application forms, training in interviews and so on). However, to overcome the prejudice that exists for the Traveller community it may be necessary to go further than this by providing an intermediary service between the Traveller and the relevant body for those who are finding it difficult to progress.

Box 4.4: Sample scenario: Building bridges

'When people finish the programme there is an intermediary who goes out to employers and tries to secure employment for them'

The question is not why one minority group should receive this level of additional support, but rather why is this level of support necessary.

There is evidence of a variety of methods used by programme providers to assist Travellers take the next steps following attendance on a programme. These methods include assistance with application forms and CVs, preparation for interviews and informing Travellers of other courses available to them. There is also career guidance available on how to locate and access information on vacancies.

Despite efforts by programme providers to provide information to Travellers on progression, there was evidence of a lack of knowledge among Travellers of the process of securing employment or setting up in business. Most jobs were secured by word of mouth rather than answering an advertisement, thus limiting opportunities and experience of the formal job application process.

The study also found evidence of an assumption among programme providers that each participant needs the same level of follow up, resulting in a failure to recognise the additional barriers that certain diverse groups experience when attempting to progress. For instance, one programme provider emphasised the importance of treating everyone the same, regardless of group identity.

Many Travellers in the sample had experienced discrimination at interview particularly with regard to their name, address and appearance. There is a perception among Travellers that as soon as the potential employer discovers their address is a halting site they will no longer have an equal chance of securing the position. One young woman commented, *'If they find out your family name and address you won't get the job'*. A number of female Travellers who participated in the research agreed that as soon as the potential employer realises that they are dealing with Travellers they have been told they are *'not suited to the job'* or *'not suitably qualified'* or *'we'll put you on a waiting list'*. Some people have never been contacted after the interview to say that they were not successful. Others have been offered what they deem to be poor excuses for their rejection, *'it is very hurtful when you apply for a job and they say that there are loads waiting for that job'*. These experiences of discrimination result in many Travellers not applying for jobs outside the Traveller community since, *'they know they won't get them'*.

Programme providers and Travellers had different views about the amount of support that should be provided to Travellers following training courses. The view of one programme provider was that, *'the ultimate responsibility for getting jobs is the trainees own'*. There is a perception among programme providers that many Travellers do not take the necessary steps to access jobs. However, there is the perception among Travellers that there is little follow up provided by programme providers to assist them to progress to either employment or further training. This confusion over who should take overall responsibility for achieving progression, and lack of provision of follow up support, may act as a barrier to Traveller progression.

Best practice guidelines recommend that career planning discussions are as important at the end of training as they are at the beginning. However, there was evidence that career planning discussions are not happening at the end of training. For example, Travellers perceived that if they are provided with assistance in moving to another training course, they are usually sent on any course even if the course is not their preference. This is reflected in the wide variety of courses that some Travellers have completed. For example, one male Traveller was entered onto a childcare course having attended a woodwork course which was what he wanted to specialise in.

In summary, monitoring outcomes and bridging the gaps are critical steps in the cycle for members of the Traveller community but this practice is not yet widespread. More seriously, there seems to be a gap in the system in relation to whose role it is to help Travellers overcome prejudice and secure employment. For some Travellers, this makes the entire process of training and development seem pointless and it was in evidence at every step in the cycle, often in the form of disillusionment and apathy.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the conclusions from the study are presented within the framework of the MOSAIC model of managing diversity. The MOSAIC model developed by Pearn Kandola (Kandola and Fullerton, 1994), is used as a benchmark to assess the extent to which the diversity within the population, specifically the Traveller community, is being managed by programme providers.

As in chapter 4, we have structured the recommendations around the five steps of the cycle. Finally, recommendations for policy makers and programme providers are formulated within the framework of the five steps of the best practice cycle as described in Chapter 4.

5.2 Conclusions

The MOSAIC model provides a useful and practical framework for analysing the extent to which diversity is managed by an organisation and for the purposes of this report, a group of organisations. The current efforts of the programme provider organisations as a whole are analysed within the MOSAIC model below.

The MOSAIC model consists of the following areas:

- M - Mission and values
- O - Objective and fair processes
- S - Skilled workforce: aware and fair
- A - Active flexibility
- I - Individual focus
- C - Culture that empowers

Mission and Values

How much is diversity built into the core vision and purpose of labour market programmes and how do programmes champion diversity?

Managing diversity is founded on the premise that harnessing visible and non-visible differences will create a productive environment in which everybody feels valued and where their talents are being fully utilised. For many programmes, Travellers have not been identified as a potential part of the target audience. Although the values expressed by many mainstream programmes refer to openness, awareness, tolerance and inclusiveness of Travellers, there is little evidence of concrete steps being taken or objectives being set to ensure this becomes a reality.

Objective and Fair Processes

Are the processes used to attract and select programme participants aligned to the aims of valuing diversity?

Traveller perceptions within the research would suggest that the selection criteria may discriminate against Travellers. There was little evidence that selection criteria and strategies for attraction of candidates were assessed for their impact on the Traveller population. The messages and media used to attract Travellers are often based on what has worked in the past within the settled community. There are few attempts to consider the context of Travellers, Traveller needs and the past experiences of Travellers.

Skilled Workforce – Aware and Fair

How skilled are programme providers in managing diversity?

As discussed earlier there was evidence of some positive relationships between programme providers and Travellers. However, there was also evidence of mistrust between these two groups as well as evidence of programme provider stereotypes of Travellers (for example a lack of accountability among Travellers). Evidently, the skills of trainers require further development in the areas of diversity awareness and facilitating integration.

Active Flexibility

How flexible are labour market programmes in responding to group and individual needs, for example, flexibility within courses and childcare?

There is a need to examine the additional supports that Travellers require to successfully participate in labour market programmes. Evidence suggests that some of these needs have been considered with the provision of flexible training, predominantly within Traveller specific programmes and crèche facilities. However, greater effort needs to be made to reasonably accommodate Travellers as a group and to meet the needs of individuals.

Individual Focus

Does the group identity of an individual preclude them from receiving the individual support they require?

Much work is required to provide programmes to the Traveller community as a group. However, there is also a need to work on an individual level with each participant, taking their unique circumstances into account. Currently, there is insufficient evidence of individual needs analysis and tailored career planning, which is lowering the likelihood that Travellers achieve the outcomes they desire.

Culture which Empowers

Does the culture of the system support the management of diversity?

The research found little evidence of targets being set or monitored for the inclusion of Travellers on mainstream programmes. Neither was there much evidence of programme providers being encouraged

to deliver improved services for Travellers. For many, this was the first time the issue had been brought to their attention.

5.3 Recommendations

The research suggests that Travellers cannot adequately and fairly participate within mainstream labour market programmes without the reasonable accommodation of their particular needs and culture at each step in the cycle of programme planning and provision. However it is not clear who is ultimately responsible for ensuring that care is taken to fully embrace the value of the Traveller community. For example, there is no central body to support and provide advice to programme providers and designers on the inclusion and participation of Travellers within mainstream labour market programmes. Gaps are also evident at the end of programmes in the progression of Travellers to their desired outcomes. The findings indicate that progress in this area will be impeded unless responsibility for the participation of Travellers in labour market programmes is designated to a specific body. Thus the overarching recommendation arising from the study is that the EHRDOP Managing Authority should, as a priority, designate a central body with responsibility for championing the participation and progression of Travellers within labour market policy and programme provision. This could be advanced in the context of more general arrangements for promoting the broader equality agenda within the EHRDOP.

In the remainder of this section recommendations to programme providers are presented, in particular to providers of mainstream measures, under the EHRDOP.

Identifying the Audience

The primary objective of the recommendations below is to increase the extent to which members of the Traveller community are identified as a potential audience for programmes in order for their needs to be accommodated. Recommendations in this section focus on two primary activities, creating links and developing objectives.

Creating links – it is recommended that networks be enhanced between the key stakeholders including Travellers, Traveller support groups and programme providers. This will help to create a shared understanding of the Traveller culture, the needs of Travellers, the efforts of support groups and programme providers. This has been echoed by programme providers within the study who have suggested the development of a national representative structure for Travellers.

At a local level, it is recommended that steps be taken to raise the awareness of front line programme providers about the Traveller community, their needs, ambitions and the challenges they face in pursuing training and subsequent outcomes. Challenging stereotypes about the Traveller community will be an important aspect of this work.

Developing objectives – to support this, it is recommended that concrete objectives and targets be developed at the programme provider level for the inclusion of Travellers in mainstream programmes.

This has also been supported by both Travellers and programme providers who have suggested specific targets for Traveller participation on training programmes. This will allow for the formal evaluation of programmes in terms of their inclusion of Travellers.

Attracting Participants

The recommendations below aim to attract Travellers to participate in labour market programmes. Two primary areas for action in this regard are highlighted.

Messages - It is recommended that efforts are made to understand as much as possible about Traveller perceptions of different programmes, programme providers, the types of messages that have worked in the past with Travellers and what types of reassurances need to be given to attract Travellers to programmes.

Messages should highlight different Traveller needs and dispel any fears, myths and misconceptions Travellers have about programmes. For example messages should address the implications of course participation for eligibility for social welfare or access to medical cards. Finally, messages should present positive images to Travellers, as participants within the research repeatedly highlighted the lack of role models for Travellers participating in labour market programmes.

Media - It is recommended that the current forms of media are audited to determine their suitability for use with the Traveller community. The media for attracting participants should be reviewed based on their suitability for the Traveller culture and context.

Interactive methods, such as repeated face-to-face interaction within the Traveller's own environment (for example at halting sites) should be considered for use in attracting Travellers to programmes. Interactive methods are resource intensive and time consuming. However, their use should result in the increased participation of Travellers on programmes.

Selecting Participants and Programmes

The primary objective of the recommendations below is to ensure that Travellers are encouraged to participate in programmes that will meet their short-term needs and align them with a longer-term career plan. Three primary activities are recommended – group-focused needs analysis, validity of criteria and individual needs analysis and career planning.

Group Focused Needs Analysis - It is recommended that the training needs of Travellers as a group be examined by programme providers to identify ideas for programme content, but also to learn more about the supports required by Travellers in pursuing particular programmes.

The research indicated that there is a need to gather the views of what does / does not work well across adult learning, and to identify the gaps in learning for Travellers.

Validity of Criteria - It is recommended that the validity of all criteria and entry requirements for programmes be audited to ensure that direct or indirect discrimination against the Traveller community does not occur.

Individual Needs Analysis and Career Planning - It is further recommended that programme providers take steps to ensure an individually focused needs analysis is conducted with all Travellers interested in pursuing training and development. This is undertaken by people who understand the Traveller culture and are trained in the skill of needs analysis. The output of this work should be a medium-term development plan for the individual that sets out a sequence of activities and supports that are likely to help them achieve their desired outcome. The work should be undertaken in a manner that leads to personal ownership of the plan and an enhanced ability to make future career decisions independently. Challenging the limits that some Travellers place on their own success will be an important part of this work. This may be done by exploring individual interests and providing information on programmes in non-traditional areas for Travellers.

Programme providers have described the approach to planning training for Travellers as reactive rather than proactive, with the provision of training on an adhoc basis with few longer-term interventions.

Sustaining Participation

These recommendations aim to ensure that the basic and higher level motivational needs of Travellers are met to sustain their participation in programmes and maximise the benefits to each individual. Two primary activities are identified in this regard – meeting basic needs and meeting higher level needs.

Meeting Basic Needs - There is a need to acknowledge that Travellers as a group may require additional supports to attend training. Supports may be in the form of a gradual build up of training, the provision of additional basic facilities such as study areas where appropriate, particular hours of attendance or help with childcare. It is vital to take the results of the needs analyses at the group and individual levels and attempt to accommodate these needs in the design of programmes.

Meeting Higher Level Needs - It is recommended that a three phase approach be undertaken to meeting the higher level motivational needs of Travellers. Firstly, in terms of the Traveller's sense of belonging, it is critical that all programme providers are trained in valuing diversity, can facilitate the integration of diverse groups, and champion these principles. It is essential, that should the need arise, there are procedures in place for Travellers to raise complaints about mistreatment.

Secondly, in terms of building the confidence of Travellers during programmes it is recommended that a flexible approach is taken to the accommodation of individual needs. This approach can be informed by learning from the previous needs analysis exercises at both the group and the individual level, and by providing supports in the form of induction, additional tuition and mentoring.

Thirdly, in terms of increasing self-esteem, it is recommended that programme providers make greater efforts to acknowledge the Traveller culture within the content of training. This may be in the form of designing training material that contains positive images of Travellers or by making explicit the practical application of the training within the Traveller community.

Monitoring Outcomes and Bridging the Gaps

The primary objective of the recommendations below is to ensure the evaluation of programmes and monitoring of outcomes to improve Traveller progression.

Monitoring Outcomes - It is recommended that the strengths and development needs of programmes be formally evaluated at regular intervals with all Traveller participants. Notwithstanding the challenge of some Travellers choosing not to disclose their cultural identity, it is recommended that this monitoring information be collected and reported for all relevant measures/programmes under the EHRDOP. This will increase the motivation of programme providers to continually adapt their programmes to the needs of Travellers.

Bridging the Gap - It is also recommended that targets be set for the uptake, participation and progression of Travellers within programmes. The targets set should measure the value added by the programmes to the lives of Travellers rather than simple targets for participation.

As stated previously, a further recommendation is that clarification be provided regarding where responsibility lies for ensuring Traveller progression from programmes and that there be clear responsibility assigned for an intermediary service to help Travellers secure outcomes. Traveller participants also mentioned the development of a Traveller mediator role that links Travellers to employers. This role has already worked well in one area and it is recommended that it be utilised further. Part of the mediator's role must be to ensure employers are educated on the skills and abilities of Travellers, the inaccuracies of stereotypes and the importance of promoting diversity within workplaces.

Finally, it is recommended that work experience elements be included in the design of labour market programmes.



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APPENDIX

Table 1: Key Stakeholders and Organisations Contacted

| Groups | Key Stakeholders and Organisations contacted |
|---------------------|---|
| Travellers | Pavee Point Travellers Centre Irish Travellers Movement Galway Travellers Support Group Tuam Travellers Group Tullamore Traveller Group St Basils Training Centre, Tallaght Kerry Travellers Development Programme Kerry Diocesan Youth Service Fingal Area Partnership Newcastlewest Traveller Group Abbeyfeale Traveller Group Limerick Travellers Development Unit Parish of the Travelling People, Philsboro Letterkenny Traveller Group |
| Programme Providers | FÁS Department of Education and Science Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform CERT Teagasc Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment Irish Vocational Educational Committees (VEC's) Local Employment Services (Paul Partnership Limerick, Galway, Dublin Inner City) |
| Employers | Chambers of Commerce (Galway, Dublin, Limerick, Tralee and Tullamore) |

Table 2: Numbers and Gender of Travellers Participating in the Study

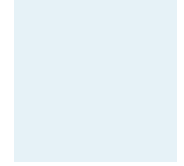
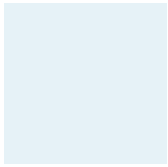
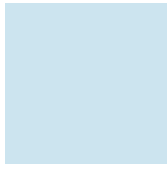
| | Galway | | Dublin | | Limerick | | Offaly | | Kerry | |
|-------------|--------|----|--------|----|----------|----|--------|----|-------|---|
| | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F | M | F |
| Focus Group | 3 | 15 | 0 | 31 | 0 | 24 | 0 | 15 | 0 | 6 |
| Interview | 2 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 5 | 15 | 2 | 35 | 0 | 25 | 2 | 15 | 0 | 6 |

Table 3: Sample of Programme Providers Participating in Interviews

| Programme Provider | No. of Interviews | Measure |
|---|-------------------|---|
| FÁS | 6 | Active Measures for the Long Term Unemployed and Socially Excluded Action Programme for the Unemployed National Employment Service Active Measures for LTU and Socially Excluded Skills for the Unemployed and Redundant Worker Apprenticeship – Education and Traineeship |
| Department of Education and Science | 6 | Traveller Education Measure School Completion Measure Early School Leavers – Youth Reach and Travellers Lifelong learning – National Adult Literacy Strategy Educational Equality |
| Department of Justice Equality and Law Reform | 3 | NDP Gender Equality Equality for Women |
| CERT | 2 | Tourism Tourism (School leavers) |
| Coillte | 1 | Forestry Courses |

Table 4: Participants in Programme Provider Focus Groups

| Programme Provider | No. | Measure |
|-------------------------------------|-----|--|
| FÁS | 3 | Active Measures for long-term unemployed Lifelong Learning – Back to Education Initiative |
| Department of Education and Science | 3 | Social Economy Third Level Access Train-The-Trainer School Modern Languages School Guidance Training for Trainers - Primary, Post Primary and Further Education |
| CERT | 1 | Tourism |
| Teagasc | 1 | Agriculture – Sectoral Entry Training |



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