

# East Cork Travellers

## Research Report 2016



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# 1. Executive Summary

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This review and research of Traveller work and needs in East Cork took place over one full year during 2016. The work was carried out by Maria Power, Community Consultants and commissioned by the HSE Community Work Department and Traveller Health Unit. The research focused on reviewing work with Travellers carried out by service providers both community based and statutory, strategies for engaging Travellers in services and community development, examining models of good practice in other locations and meeting with Travellers living across East Cork (rural and urban) to hear about their needs, their experience of services and suggestions for enhancing Traveller work.

The report that follows is detailed and chapters were presented when different stages of the work were completed. Chapter 8 provides details on the research conclusions at the end of the research time frame and makes recommendations for moving forward.

In summary, it can be said from this research that current work with Travellers in East Cork lacks a coherent strategy and plan, many service providers lack capacity and the social analysis required to deliver on their responsibilities to Travellers and most are unaware of their Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty to their members, staff and the persons to whom they provides services. Travellers, on the other hand, have many and varying needs ranging from universal needs such as access to information, culturally appropriate services, respect and dignity, to more complex family support and mental health responses. In addition, current Traveller community development is weak, though it was acknowledged in many quarters that good work took place during the period 2005 – 2013. Community development work varies from place to place and lacks consistent support across service providers, which would ensure key goals and objectives are reached and sustained.

Travellers are an Irish minority ethnic grouping. As a culturally distinct minority, Travellers suffer from high levels of discrimination in their daily lives, are oppressed and socially excluded across a range of activities, e.g. access to jobs, services and culturally appropriate education and accommodation. The harrowing events of Carrickmines, Co. Dublin served to highlight some of the public hatred and oppression of Travellers in a time of great grief. These daily conditions can lead to poor self-esteem, negative self-image and despair, which can in turn lead to negative choices in life such as, dropping out of school and substance misuse, resulting in negative impacts on health and well-being. These constant negative conditions for Travellers, across a broad spectrum of the life-cycle, require those who work with Travellers to have an informed social analysis of Traveller culture and lives.

However, models of good practice in North Cork, West Cork and Tipperary Town<sup>1</sup> highlight some ways forward for East Cork. Good practice would suggest that there is a basic requirement to commit long term supports and resources to Traveller work, that outreach is a necessary component of carrying out the work and building Traveller community development work incrementally is the most effective and realistic approach.

To deliver such responses will require a partnership between Travellers and service providers in order to:

1. Develop a detailed interagency strategy for East Cork
2. Develop strong organisational support and steering by experienced community workers and Travellers in all locations, and
3. Agree the detail of the outreach and community based work required.

This in turn will require a commitment by all agencies and service providers to develop their knowledge and skills in relation Traveller work and the building of relationships with Travellers so that any new work is delivered in partnership with Travellers and responds to Traveller identified needs. Time spent in this first development phase with all relevant partners would contribute to relationship building and facilitating a shared understanding of the work.

The development of such a partnership could ultimately create the environment whereby Travellers in East Cork would be more effectively and meaningfully engaged with services (health, education, housing, social and community services). In turn this could lead to outcomes similar to those that are identified in Chapter 7, whereby there is, a raised awareness of Traveller discrimination, its effects and ways to combat it, an increase in trust by Travellers in the services who have a duty of care towards them, where Travellers experience solidarity and advocacy on their behalf, and where Travellers themselves (men, women and young people) take on leadership roles in their own community based projects.

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<sup>1</sup> All of these projects are in existence over ten years and have gathered significant experience and insight.

## 2. Background to this Research

During the first half of 2016 the HSE Community Work Department and the HSE Traveller Health Unit set up an interagency/organisation steering group in East Cork to review the needs and experiences of Travellers living in this region. The steering group was made up of the following representatives:

- HSE Community Work Dept – Mags Creed
- HSE Traveller Health Unit – Deirdre O Reilly
- Cork County Council Community Work Dept – Lorraine Hogan
- Southern Traveller Health Network – Anne Burke
- Cumann na Daoine Youghal – Dolores Corcoran, Angela O Loughlin, Margaret Kelleher

### East Cork

East Cork stretches from Glanmire to Little Island, Carrigtwohill, Dungourney, Midleton, Youghal, over to Ballycotton and Cobh and includes all rural areas in between these main urban centres. While Travellers in East Cork predominately live in standard housing in both rural and urban settings, some live on the roadside near Midleton and Little Island.



The steering group along with the HSE commissioned Maria Power of Community Consultants to carry out a study of the current status of community work and service

delivery to Travellers in East Cork, taking into account previous research, national policy context and by consulting with existing community based organisations, service providers and Travellers living in/near main towns and in rural areas located in East Cork. Anecdotally it is estimated that there are approximately 100 - 110 Traveller families living in East Cork.

Community Consultants is a social research company working in the community and voluntary sector for the past twenty-five years. Maria Power has worked with many Traveller projects at local level and at interagency level across eight counties and has taken part in several related national conferences and research studies. In addition, Maria has worked closely with the Traveller Health Unit in the south and south east and Community Work Departments of several state agencies, i.e. Health Service Executive (HSE), Local Authorities, Education and Training Board (ETB) and Local Development Companies.

## **Approach**

This East Cork Traveller research work was carried out in two stages: Stage 1 (May – July 2016) focused on consulting with locally based community organisations and government funded agencies/development companies who have a responsibility to deliver services to Travellers. The aim of these consultations was to gain knowledge on the location and number of Traveller families living in the immediate service area, understand the engagement level of Travellers with community based services and document the strategies used by organisations to engage Travellers. This stage also included meeting with a small random sample of Travellers across locations to assess their openness and willingness to engage in this research process later in the year.

During Stage 1 a review of previous research reports in relation to work with East Cork Travellers and a review of national studies was undertaken in order to provide a local, regional and national context for this current work. In addition, an examination of three successful models of Traveller work with a broad geographical and rural remit was undertaken with a view to informing potential strategies for moving forward, improving service delivery and developing work with Travellers in East Cork. These are reviewed in chapters three and five respectively.

Stage 2 (Sept – Dec 2016) of this study concentrated on direct engagement and consultation with as many Traveller families as possible in the East Cork area. This stage of the work facilitated a wide range of Traveller families to participate in the study, those living in urban, rural and roadside settings. As this stage progressed challenges to meeting families were encountered, particularly in relation to families who were most marginalised and those with complex needs. Challenges included: arrangements to meet being cancelled due to lack of transport; some members with responsibility for young children being homeless and having greater priorities in their daily lives; slow access to some roadside families due to poor relationships with service providers, lack of trust and therefore in some cases no contact was forthcoming. Towards the latter stages of completing this piece of research, and as a result of meeting with families, it became apparent that responses to needs were also



required from service providers who were not engaged with the project from the outset, such as Tusla social work teams, Probation and Welfare Services and Education and Welfare Services. Also during Stage 2, the inclusion of Roma Travellers was raised as some members of that community attend services in Cobh and Youghal. However, it was agreed that the Roma community was beyond the scope of this research at this point in time. These challenges resulted in a delay to completing the research project on schedule and an identification of further research work required in the future.

Towards the end of the research time-frame and as a result of the research process, agencies not part of the steering group from the outset expressed an interest in being involved in the next phase of the work. These included Probation and Welfare Services, Education and Welfare Services and Tusla Child Protection teams, though brief inputs were taken account of in this report.

The findings from both stages of the research are considered in detail and both inform the conclusions about the status of Traveller needs in East Cork. These collective findings in turn influence the recommendations made in relation to the most suitable approaches and strategies required for developing further a Traveller-led project and Traveller-focused services in East Cork.



## 3. Context for Travellers

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There are approximately 24,000 Travellers living in Ireland with approximately 100 - 110 of these families (400<sup>2</sup>) living in East Cork. Travellers as an ethnic minority group in Ireland suffer from significant levels of marginalisation and cumulative disadvantage. These can be summarised as:

- **Discrimination in daily life**

Discrimination emerges as a constant backdrop in this research, as it does in many others pieces of research (IPRT 2014, AITHS 2010). Discrimination against Travellers is encountered in all aspects of daily life, from going to the local shops, to attempting to get served in a pub/restaurant, to doing the school run. Sometimes it can be experienced through negative name calling, sometimes it is being excluded and not allowed in to venues and sometimes it is non-verbal, e.g. being followed around or stared at. Discrimination leads to feelings of embarrassment and shame, contributing to low self-worth and marginalisation. This can be carried through from generation to generation of Travellers, making it difficult to seek support or to see a more positive future.

External pressure on Travellers to live like settled people have put tremendous pressure on Traveller life, e.g. no official halting sites or appropriate group housing schemes have been provided and Traveller families negotiating change between the generations can be very stressful for all concerned. At the same time, pressure which limits or curtails traditional Traveller income opportunities causes even more stress when no viable alternative ways of living and being useful are being offered or created. This frequently results in Traveller men in particular having nothing to do and being bored. Lack of opportunities and hope about the future facilitates dropping out of school early, linked to a higher risk of alcohol/drug misuse and offending. These conditions combine to facilitate poor educational attainment levels, poor health outcomes, low self-esteem and despair amongst the Traveller community – in other words cumulative disadvantage.

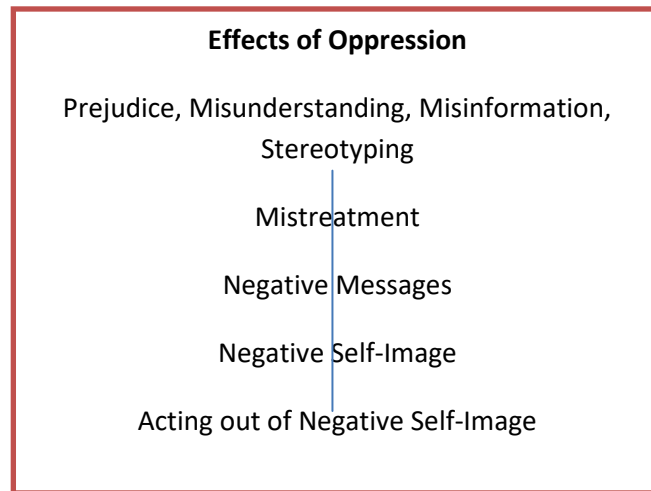
- **Oppression**

‘We can only fully understand the experience of a group, such as Travellers, by looking at it in the context of their experience of oppression’ (Ruth, 1996). The level of daily discrimination faced by Travellers leads to oppression and the effects of oppression can be summarised as:

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<sup>2</sup> Calculating an average of four members per family.





Because oppression is not random or accidental, the experiences of mistreatment will be repeated, thereby reinforcing negative self-images. Different effects of oppression:

- Low Self Esteem
- Powerlessness and Hopelessness
- Isolation and Divisiveness
- Narrowing of the culture
- Mistrusting thinking

- **Culture**

A key approach to liberating an oppressed group is the celebration of their diversity. Attempting to play down difference or focus only on what groups have in common is not a successful way to build unity with a diverse culture. The only workable approach to diversity is to encourage all cultures to be visible, proud and to celebrate the richness that lies within each. Therefore an appreciation and understanding of Traveller culture is essential in any work with Travellers.

- **Ethnicity& Identity**

Ethnicity is a term used to designate groups which are largely biologically self-perpetuating, share fundamental values and make up a field of communication and interaction – all of which hold true for Travellers, making them an ethnic minority culture in Ireland. Travellers across many studies clearly identify as Traveller, with Traveller culture first and foremost as a priority in their lives.

Ethnic identifier is the collection and use of ethnic group data, which enables service providers to identify and respond to service inequalities as experienced by different social groups in terms of, for example, health, education, housing status, access to services, experience of services and outcomes (Pavee Point 2002).

- **Racism**

The belief that all members of a race possess characteristics, abilities, or qualities specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races (Oxford Dictionary). Travellers as an ethnic group regularly face negative racist attitudes towards them as a whole grouping of people.

- **The State**

It is the duty of all states to respect, protect and fulfil human rights. Under their international obligations, governments are primarily responsible both for creating the conditions in which rights can be realised and for ensuring that rights are not violated. Ireland is committed to having human rights at the heart of both our national and foreign policy. The 1937 Constitution of Ireland, Bunreacht na hÉireann, predates both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights and contains strong emphasis on fundamental rights, which are in effect, human rights principles by a different name.

The state directly and indirectly through public funded services has a responsibility to protect and cater for all its citizens regardless of race, religion or ethnic background.



## 4. East Cork Research/Documentary Review

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Prior to meeting with agencies and service providers a number of research reports relating to East Cork Travellers were reviewed. A synopsis of this review is given below, along with concluding observations.

### 3.1 The following reports were reviewed:

- Irish Traveller Movement (ITM) submission to Oireachtas Committee on Housing and Homelessness (2016)
- Traveller Health Unit (THU) Engagement with East Cork – A proposal for the way forward (2016)
- Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty guidance paper by the Equality and Rights Alliance (2015)
- Travellers in the Irish Prison System: A qualitative study. Irish Penal Reform Trust (2014)
- Shadow Report to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on the Issues facing Irish Travellers and Roma. Pavee Point (2011)
- Report to the East Cork Traveller Forum (2011)
- All Ireland Traveller Health Study. UCD (2010)
- Connect Youth Project East Cork – Evaluation by Community Consultants (2008)
- East Cork Traveller's Advocacy Project – Evaluation by Gerry O'Sullivan, O'Sullivan Solutions (2007)
- An Assessment of Travellers Needs in the East Cork Area. Clarity Consultants (2004)
- The Needs of Travellers in East Cork (1998)
- An assortment of relevant brochures and booklets.

As a result of the 1998 and 2004 reports identified above and based on their recommendations, a new Traveller-led advocacy project was set up in April 2005, with funding for a part-time Traveller Support/Advocacy worker for East Cork. This project was evaluated in 2007 and it was found that the project had made many important gains and there was significant positive impact from the work. However, while the post and project remained in place until 2013, it was discontinued due to a key member of staff leaving. No alternative practical solutions were put in place until further consideration and analysis of the needs and alternative approaches required was completed. This report attempts to provide these insights.

## 3.2 Findings

Key issues are identified by the above reports in relation to Traveller work in East Cork and these issues remain valid today. I highlight below the issues from the reports that still remain a priority need/item in this research (2016):

The base line data for the All Ireland Traveller Health Study (2010) identified over 100 families living in East Cork at the time of the survey. Anecdotally several service providers and Traveller community health workers familiar with East Cork confirmed that approximately 100 – 110 families live across the East Cork region. The main health concerns of East Cork Travellers are those of the general population of Travellers; that of high levels of respiratory illnesses, heart concerns, poor mental health, high levels of suicide, substance and alcohol misuse.

An Assessment of Travellers' Needs in the East Cork Area (2004) identified issues regarding travelling to the city for crucial health services, with transport and cost being a barrier for many Traveller families who require these services. This report also identified the need for any project in East Cork to be Traveller-led and close to urban town centres as transport is a constant barrier for many rural Traveller families. This was confirmed by several rural Traveller families. The 2004 report also states that there are no official halting sites in East Cork therefore a number of extended Traveller families live unofficially on the roadside without piped water, electricity and adequate sanitation – this is still the situation in 2016. Most Travellers live in standard houses (local authority rented) in urban and rural areas.

The 2004 report, along with the other reports listed above highlight the low level of confidence, self-esteem and literacy among many Travellers living in East Cork. In all locations many Travellers identified as Travellers, but some in all areas did not and this was particularly notable in Cobh and Youghal. In previous reports, there are several reasons given for not wanting to identify as Traveller, such as the negative repercussions of doing so, facing higher level of discrimination if their identity was articulated/known and in some cases Travellers have integrated into the settled community over the past twenty-three years, are well known locally and have not identified as Traveller for a long time.

The 2007 evaluation report of the East Cork Traveller Advocacy Project highlighted the valuable role of the advocacy worker both in terms of one to one family support and group work with women and young Travellers. The report also acknowledged the work with Traveller men, which is still required. The evaluation of the Advocacy project strongly recommended the need for both strands of work (one to one family work and group work) to be continued and critical to making progress in relation to Traveller advocacy. The evaluation report specifically acknowledged the direct work with Travellers that is possible in Carrigtwohill and Midleton, while identifying Youghal as a strong support environment and Cobh as a more transient location for Travellers moving in and out of the city.

A key impact of the Traveller Advocacy Project was the positive image it had gained among the Traveller community, thereby building solidarity and collective confidence, whilst at the

same time building professional relationships between the Traveller community and agencies concerned with community development and social inclusion. This work was aided by initiatives such as the development of an information booklet on Travellers' rights, delivery of Traveller cultural awareness training, literacy and car driving schemes at local level. The evaluation report also highlighted the importance of personal development work, in addition to community/political development work.

The 2007 report highlighted the importance of having a Traveller worker to build confidence by facilitating a greater understanding of the experiences of being a Traveller, in addition to the positive role modelling it provides for all concerned. This, coupled with networking, strengthens Traveller identity and self-confidence.

Finally in the recommendations section of the 2007 report (listed in Appendix I), the 14 recommendations made all remain relevant in today's context. The key points that emerge strongly in this research and borne out by earlier research work are:

- The building of capacity in any community, but particularly the Traveller community, is an extremely slow process and this needs to be recognised by funders, service providers and those who initiate and manage projects. Traveller capacity in East Cork is at many varying levels across the region and requires a long term commitment to reach its full potential.
- It will always be necessary to maintain development work at both the individual and collective level.
- Anti-racism work and social analysis is required on an on-going basis if understanding of Traveller culture and lives is to be promoted and valued.

The Evaluation of the East Cork 'Connect Youth Project' in 2008 highlights many detailed findings in relation to working with Young Travellers. These are listed in Appendix II for future reference, but key points relevant to this review are the following:

- The importance of networking (and collaborating) among agencies and service providers in relation to Traveller work in East Cork. This helps to build capacity, reduce discriminatory attitudes and facilitates greater sharing of resources and agenda setting.
- Home family visits were seen as crucial in the development of the project.
- Traveller only groups/spaces were easier to be in than mixed spaces.
- There were some concerns expressed about raising expectations by piloting a project and then dis-continuing it one year later (commitment to the work is too short-term) and by the creation of a high level of dependency on one key worker.
- The rural nature of the project was seen as highly significant and raised concerns around travel and transport for many Travellers living in rural East Cork. The worker had to do a lot of outreach and travel.
- Training and capacity building of agencies and their workers on the ground was seen as critical to the successful development of a Traveller project.

In March 2011, a feasibility report considering the establishment of a Traveller Resource space in East Cork was undertaken by Joan Nolan (previously of Connect Youth Project in East Cork). This report made recommendations in relation to organisational and legal structures, and the capacity required to manage such a space. The report concluded that greater capacity building measures and increasing Traveller participation was required prior to the acquisition of any independent resource space.

This report was added to by the Irish Traveller Movement (ITM), who recommended that identity within the Traveller community in East Cork should be explored sensitively and that realistic goals for Traveller workers/groups should be developed and processed with Travellers in each of the four urban locations, utilising a steering group structure in each town. This research report would concur with those findings.

Finally, a review of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty guidance paper, by the Equality and Rights Alliance (2015), recommends that all publicly funded organisations have an obligation to be proactive and have regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination; (b) promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services and; (c) protect the human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services (Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty as provided for by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014). There was a commitment to require public bodies to take due note of this Duty in the Programme for Government 2011.

This guidance report (2015) is timely and very important in that it emphasises public bodies (including HSE, Local Authorities, Educational institutions and other public funded organisations) have responsibility to be proactive around anti-discrimination measures, promoting equality and protecting human rights. This requires public services to consider their role, work plans and evaluation tools for ensuring the proactive inclusion and protection of Travellers, their rights, identity and culture.

### **3.3 Conclusions**

All reports recommend an approach to working with Travellers in East Cork that is developmental<sup>3</sup>, Traveller-led and operates on a holistic family basis, i.e. Traveller engagement is crucial. All reports acknowledge the link between poor accommodation and health, making it a constant policy issue across all Traveller work. Travellers have well documented clear needs in relation to health, education and accommodation. However, without solid, sustainable community development work being pursued, the achievement of long term social change and sustainable benefits will be very difficult. The evaluation report of the last project in particular identifies the slow nature of the work required in East Cork, which needs to be acknowledged and accepted by funders and agencies concerned with

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<sup>3</sup> Being cognisant of the base-line level of work required, e.g. personal development, literacy, community development to more advanced group and interagency work.



Traveller-led development. This will require work with agencies and a long term commitment to Traveller development work by building a Traveller-led project, which can sustain its work on its own terms into the future.

All reports also acknowledge the need for diversity/cultural/anti-racism training among service providers in East Cork. This training is still identified as a priority in this current piece of research. Research and evaluation work already undertaken identify the significant levels of discrimination facing the Traveller community of East Cork. This is a substantial barrier to making progress and will require a multi-faceted strategy delivered over an appropriate time-frame in order to make real progress.

All reports recommend the appointment of a community development worker and the ongoing collection of data as part of building a detailed profile and needs analysis of Travellers in East Cork.

Finally the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty Act (2014) requires all publicly funded service providers to be proactive in eliminating discrimination, promoting equality and protecting people's human rights. Therefore all service providers should have a plan in place which actions these responsibilities in relation to all service users. This plan should specifically include Travellers who suffer from high levels of discrimination, do not always receive equality of opportunity across many services and whose rights are constantly violated and left unprotected.

## 5. Consultations with Agencies/ Service Providers and Community Organisations in East Cork in 2016

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This chapter reflects the views of agencies, service providers and organisations based in East Cork. Section 4.2 analyses the findings and section 4.3 draws conclusions from these views.

### 4.1 List of Organisations Consulted

During stage 1 and 2, consultation meetings (or phone interviews) were carried out with representatives from the following:

Southern Traveller Health Network (STHN)  
Traveller Visibility Group (TVG)  
Cork Traveller Women's Network (CTWN)  
HSE Community Work Department (CWD)  
HSE Traveller Health Unit (THU)  
HSE Public Health Nurses  
Healthy Minds – Traveller mental health project  
Cork/Kerry Traveller Community Health Network  
TVG finance and administration office  
TVG/Foroige CBDI worker (previously with East Cork Youth Project)  
South and East Cork Area Development (SECAD)  
Travellers of North Cork (TNC)  
Tipperary Rural Traveller Project (TRTP)  
West Cork Traveller Centre (WCTC)  
Cork County Council Housing and Community Department  
Probation and Welfare Services  
Education and Welfare Services  
Cloyne Diocese Pastoral Care  
Tusla Social Work Teams

#### **Local Community Organisations/Projects**

Carrigtwohill Family Resource Centre  
Midleton Community Forum  
Midleton Youth Services  
Avoncore Childcare Centre – Midleton  
Cobh Family Resource Centre

Cobh Youth Services – Chill on the Hill  
Cobh YMCA  
Youghal CDP Cumann na Daoine  
Youghal Community Health Project  
Youghal Foroige/CBDI/YDP<sup>4</sup>  
East Cork Youthreach Centre, Youghal  
East Cork Music Project, Local Training Initiative (LTI), Midleton

**The general focus of these conversations was:**

- What is your knowledge of Traveller work at local level in East Cork/own area?
- How many Travellers have you contact with/accessing your services – approximate profile: gender, age, location?
- What strategies do you use to engage Travellers?
- What is your organisations sense of where things are at in terms of Traveller engagement, participation and community development?

## 4.2 Findings

The findings below were collated at the end of stage one (July 2016) and represent the views expressed by service providers and community-based organisations. Most of these service providers do not have current working relationships with Travellers, except Carrigtwohill Family Resource Centre. Some organisations have worked with Travellers in the past, e.g. Cobh Youth Services, but most have not and others have an arms-length relationship, e.g. HSE and Cork County Council. The findings are presented collectively, except where it specifically relates to one area only.

- **Traveller Identity**

When services were asked about Traveller identity most of them said there is a mixed reaction to identity. Many Travellers identify with their Traveller culture and ethnicity, particularly young educated Travellers. However many older Travellers, particularly those living within settled<sup>5</sup> communities, often do not identify as Traveller. Some Travellers identify as Traveller at a personal confidential level, but not openly with their neighbours or community. It was suggested by one service provider in one location ‘that many young children do not know they are Travellers’. However, as will be seen in stage two of the research which consulted directly with Travellers – all Travellers said they identify as Traveller and were very proud to do so.

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<sup>4</sup> Community Based Drugs Initiative (CBDI) and Youth Diversion Project (YDP).

<sup>5</sup> Settled communities are taken to mean mixed communities made up of Traveller and non-Traveller residents living alongside one another often in local authority housing estates, though some live in smaller settlements in rural areas in rented accommodation.

- **Accommodation<sup>6</sup>**

Most Travellers in East Cork live in standard<sup>7</sup> housing – local authority and privately owned. There are a number of Travellers living on the roadside; two extended families live near a roundabout west of Midleton and another three large extended families are living near the railway line at Glountane, Little Island. The Travellers located at Little Island have no access to running water or sanitation facilities and electricity is provided by a generator. There is no official halting site or group housing scheme for Travellers in East Cork. The Cork County Council Housing Officer stated that she is aware of Travellers seeking housing accommodation, but that there is no housing supply available and no funds currently available to purchase or build houses. The housing officer did mention that the existing Traveller Accommodation Plan is due for review towards the end of 2016 and that having a Traveller specific project in the area would assist with identifying specific housing needs. In stage two it will be clear that Travellers have requested accommodation and completed application forms on many occasions and are on waiting lists for several years.

- **Homeless Travellers in Hotels and Hostels**

There were a number of families identified by one local community organisation in Carrigtwohill as living in hotels or hostels in Cork and Cobh, though their children had to get to school in Carrigtwohill every day. In some cases men and women were parenting large families alone and there was concern for the children's educational needs and for family stability given the level of daily stresses and travel required. These are precarious situations for members of these families and apparently the HSE child protection teams and education and welfare officers are aware of these circumstances. This aspect requires further exploration with service providers though it was mentioned that a Traveller support project, similar to TVG<sup>8</sup>, would be very helpful for services to link with.

- **Family Support Needs**

Several agencies and local organisations mentioned that Traveller families in their area have regular social worker visitations and sometimes the social worker contacts the local organisation or school to seek appropriate local supports and responses. In general, it would appear that the families who are engaged with social services are large in family size and are disadvantaged across many social indicators, e.g. poverty, education, health and parental capacity. Some Travellers require family support in relation to probation and welfare services and others in relation to significant levels of bereavement within their extended families. One childcare centre said that some Traveller parents didn't feel comfortable mixing with non-Traveller parents and occasionally they found Traveller parents were very defensive when approached with an issue. When asked if Traveller culture and diversity was promoted positively at the

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<sup>6</sup> See ITM submission to Oireachtas Committee on Housing and Homelessness (2016)

<sup>7</sup> Taken to mean houses built out of concrete blocks, wooden frames and tiled roofs.

<sup>8</sup> Traveller Visibility Project (TVG) Cork City.

centre, the answer was no that culture and equality was promoted broadly. 'All children are treated the same'.

During the research a Probation and Welfare Officer reported on her experience of working with a number of families, which included Traveller families. Probation and Welfare Services (PWS) use an ethnic identifier which assists positively with targeting their work, in addition to working closely with a Traveller led project, e.g. TVG. PWS identified that the key issue for Travellers accessing their services was the need for trust and good relationships. While PWS have many programmes within their services as options for service users, Travellers need to be in the criminal system and seen to be high risk before they are offered the services they need, including in particular employment related options for young men.

The Cloyne diocese pastoral care service for Travellers was also keen to play a role in connecting and offering services to Travellers in any new initiative in East Cork. They currently meet with families in north Cork, organise pastoral care activities with families and offer services in relation to marriage, counselling and support.

- **Mental Health**

Travellers are a high risk grouping vulnerable to mental health concerns and suicide as borne out by the All Ireland Traveller Health Study (2010) and Connecting for Life National Strategy for Suicide Prevention (2015) and this is also confirmed by services in this piece of research. Causes for such high levels of risk are mainly attributed to: Travellers living in sub-standard accommodation, isolation of some Travellers who live in rural areas especially if older and originally from an urban centre, and for men in particular a misuse of alcohol and drugs due to lack of employment, 'nothing to do, bored, and hanging around all day'<sup>9</sup>. While a range of responses are required, the mental health worker with 'Healthy Minds' identified the importance of meaningful activity-based programmes for young men and women, counselling and the specific need for peer-led fatherhood programmes for young fathers. These programmes could be extended and targeted in East Cork through collaborating with other service providers such as Tusla, Family Resource Centres and Community Health Projects.

General health: there was some confusion in relation to Public Health Nursing. PHNs reported visiting Traveller families in their homes, particularly those living in urban centres, but older Travellers particularly those living on the roadside had not recently been visited by a PHN. During discussions it was found that the referral pathways to PHNs was not always clear or did not always happen, e.g. for some Travellers being discharged from hospital, a referral to the PHN was not always made. This aspect of the

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<sup>9</sup> Hence the importance of horses to Traveller men/boys given the tradition of working with horses in Traveller culture.

research requires further probing in order to understand the breakdown in referrals for some individuals.

- **Urban Centres of Midleton, Carrigtwohill, Youghal and Cobh**

As identified in the Needs Analysis report of 2008 and the evaluation of the Advocacy Project in 2010, Travellers are located in each of the towns in East Cork, but have slightly different settlement patterns. Certain extended families live close to each other in standard housing accommodation in Carrigtwohill and Midleton, making their identity more transparent and public. These are large families and their children attend the local schools, youth and community centres and previously the Foroige connect youth project in Carrigtwohill, where they are known to the schools and community organisations. The Travellers located at Little Island engage with the schools and Family Resource Centre in Carrigtwohill, but some of the parents work or live in Cork city.

In Cobh, Travellers from two families attended the youth centre and occasionally the family resource centre in the past but many Travellers living in Cobh are transient, living in rented accommodation while they wait for housing in Cork. Many of those living in Cobh work in Cork city.

In Youghal most known Travellers are living in standard housing in the community and many are now 3<sup>rd</sup> generation settled Traveller families. Most do not identify as Traveller within the community. There are roadside Travellers who visit Youghal during the summer months but tend to move away at the end of summer.

All community organisations that took part in this research said they were open to directly including Travellers in their services and some are open to reviewing and developing their community work practice in relation to Travellers specific needs. However, it has to be acknowledged that all community organisations are very resource constrained at this point in time and are limited to indoor programme co-ordination and activities, with little or no outreach and targeting of potential users taking place.

- **Rural Travellers**

There are many Traveller families living in remote rural locations. Most of these families identify as Traveller, but not always to their neighbours as they may not feel safe to do so. Community projects in urban centres have difficulty reaching these Traveller families due staffing and travel budget constraints, but all acknowledge the need for responses and outreach. Travellers' experiences of living in more rural locations will be explored further in stage 2, but initially lack of transport and access to services has already been identified as a significant barrier to Traveller engagement and development, for both young and adult Travellers.



- **Traveller Culture and Awareness**

Many (not all) of the organisations who took part in this research had completed TCAT<sup>10</sup> with Traveller trainers. However, it appears to have had limited impact. In the consultations undertaken as part of this research, there were still strong undertones of a lack of understanding/social analysis of the lives and situation of Travellers. There was a charitable and sometimes patronising interpretation of their needs by some and an acceptance of high levels of discrimination and racist attitudes by others. In some cases it was stated that 'we don't get what they mean by culture' and some professionals said repeatedly that we do not have 'Itinerants' in our area. Several community workers identified that they had a poor understanding of equality and human rights legislation and the translation of those principles into practice. It was evident from the interview and lack of analysis in some cases that other professional workers had this same issue.

- **Young Travellers**

All youth projects in all locations had a direct involvement with young Travellers in their service but most of this was in the past. All youth projects said they currently have no Travellers engaging. In some cases this was attributed to Traveller families' needs changing (Cobh and Carrigtwohill) but in most cases no proactive work was taking place. The YMCA in Cobh, Midleton Community Forum and Foroige in Youghal all said they would welcome guidance on where and how to start working with and including Travellers. The exceptions were the ETB Youthreach service in Youghal where Travellers have been attending each year for the past number of years and the feedback from Travellers highlighted later in the report is very positive. Also Midleton Music Project have 4-5 Traveller participants, all of whom are doing extremely well, though obtaining work placements for them was proving extremely challenging.

While all projects felt that Travellers engaged well in their centre and in activities in the past, there was a sense of a lack of continuity/joined up approaches. In particular, support for Travellers into the teenage/adult phase of their lives was identified as lacking, including a severe lack of support for Travellers in secondary schools. This issue will be explored further with Travellers in stage 2. In addition, it was noted in two projects<sup>11</sup> that young Travellers faced issues and tensions with their peers when they reached early teenage years but that this would be expected in youth work practice. It was also stated that parental decisions allowing girls to attend programmes changed when they got to mixing with boys at early teenage years. This was also confirmed by the Midleton Music Project.

While everyone involved in the Connect Youth Project in Carrigtwohill agreed that it was a very successful project, there were many unhappy that it was a pilot project only and that fact in itself had negative consequences (this is acknowledged in the

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<sup>10</sup> Traveller Culture Awareness Training (TCAT).

<sup>11</sup> Midleton and Cobh

documentary review section also). There were questions about why other agencies with responsibility for youth, community and families did not continue the work but no clear answers were given by agencies to this question.

A brief input by the Education and Welfare Services (EWS) acknowledged that there were few Traveller referrals to their service. Most Traveller children they were aware of attended school full-time. The EWS service would welcome regular contact with a Traveller community development project, both to offer options to families (parents and young people) and take referrals from and advice in relation to improved approaches by schools in relation to school retention.

- **Traveller Community Development Work**

There was a lot of positive feedback about the impact of the East Cork Traveller Advocacy project both at a family and project level. An evaluation of this project is reviewed in chapter three of this report.

At the current time there is no dedicated Traveller community space, project worker in East Cork. It was acknowledged that some community workers employed by different agencies, e.g. HSE CWD and THU, Cork CoCo CWD and PHNs are very supportive of Traveller development work and are strong allies in making progress. However, when community based organisations, including the South & East Cork Local Development Company (SECAD), Foroige and other Community/Youth Services, were asked about their strategies to engage Travellers – most could not answer the question, had no specific plan to do so or had not considered it before. While constrained financial resources is certainly an issue, all publicly funded organisations have an obligation to be proactive and have regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination; (b) promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services and; (c) protect the human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services (Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty as provided for by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014). There is a commitment to require public bodies to take due note of this duty in the Programme for Government 2011. However, there is little or no evidence of proactive planning, actions or evaluation of any Human Rights or Equality obligations by service provider/agencies with responsibility for social services in East Cork.

## 4.3 Conclusions

**Agencies and Service Providers:** Traveller engagement and work by agencies with Travellers in East Cork appears very underdeveloped and is non-existent in many cases. Traveller work and engagement is not prioritised and there is a sense of agencies and community organisations waiting for Travellers to come ‘knocking’ on their door and seeking assistance. Traveller lives, culture, ethnicity and values do not appear to be well understood at

organisational/institutional level (although not necessarily at individual worker level) and the acceptance of Travellers as an ethnic minority, as demonstrated by the majority of service providers, in this research is very poor. This was evident by the lack of awareness of key issues such as ethnicity, culture awareness, racism and in the patronising language and paternalistic attitudes held by some professionals participating in this research. This lack of social analysis contributes to little or no strategising and little proactive targeted work taking place, therefore progress is very limited and the status quo is silently maintained. However, it must be acknowledged that Probation and Welfare Services do use an ethnic identifier in their work which assists positively with providing appropriate supports and services by working in partnership with Traveller community projects.

South East Cork Area Development Company (SECAD) which has responsibility for the Social Inclusion Activation Programme has no specific plan in place to work with Travellers in the East Cork area, and all other agencies while co-operating on this piece of research, are not currently engaged in any Traveller specific work in East Cork. The county Traveller Interagency Committee is supported by Cork County Council, but there is no Traveller representation from East Cork.

As stated earlier, publicly funded services have a duty of care under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty as provided for by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act (2014). This requires all public funded bodies to be proactive around eliminating discrimination, promoting equality and protecting human rights, but there was no evidence of service providers having an awareness of this Act or taking any proactive role in relation to these responsibilities.

On a positive note, most service providers who participated in the research were open to developing their work and engaging in any new structure that might be set up in East Cork. All community based organisations stated that they are willing to get involved in any new initiative proposed for their area but requested support and guidance in relation to carrying out the work required. It was the community organisations (including Traveller projects in the city) along with some professional services, e.g. healthy minds project, that were most helpful in identifying and locating Traveller families for the second stage of the research.

**Traveller Community Development Work:** As a consequence of the previous point any Traveller Community Development work has been relatively short-term or on a pilot basis. While there is no doubt that both of the projects initiated in East Cork (East Cork Traveller Advocacy Project and the Connect Youth project) have had important positive impacts, the lack of a sustainable project and supports in the past few years has left some negative feeling across the community and undermines confidence and expectations. Sustainable Traveller projects are required in order to build solidarity, collective analysis and advocacy on behalf of the Traveller community. In addition, as concluded by earlier research reports, baseline needs such as personal development, confidence and literacy supports are still needed across the region.

Developing strategies of engagement and reaching Travellers or any target group would be a common methodology in community work. However, in East Cork the use of this approach with Travellers is non-existent.

**Traveller Visibility:** Throughout this research all agencies and community organisations were positively disposed to meeting with the consultant and interested in working with Travellers if recommendations were made that involved them. In interviews with projects/agencies it appears that they are unsure of what to do, that they need support/guidance themselves and more capacity building in order to respond appropriately and adequately. In my experience of working with Travellers across several counties much of this learning comes from practice on the ground and regular engagement with Travellers and Traveller projects. This should be borne in mind specifically when agreeing new proposals for moving forward. The more services engage with Travellers and the more Travellers participate with services, the greater the potential for the shared understanding of roles and lived experiences.

**Traveller Identity:** This remains a key theme throughout the work in East Cork. According to service providers, some Travellers identify clearly and positively as Traveller, especially young Travellers, but others do not with each other, their neighbours or not at all. This could be a result of how safe Travellers feel in certain services/venues, whether they feel welcome or not, whether see themselves positively included in community or service settings and feel respected. In relation to my consultations with Travellers (detailed in chapter 5), Travellers were welcoming, friendly and very engaged in the process.

**Accommodation and roadside Travellers:** Most Travellers are living in standard housing in East Cork, either in housing estates alongside extended family members or within a settled community. There are several Traveller families living unofficially on the roadside (who were visited in stage 2), as there is no official halting site or group housing scheme in East Cork. Cork County Council have no specific plans to build an official halting site, group housing scheme or provide additional houses for Travellers in the immediate future despite many requests by Travellers (many of those with young families), for houses. In addition, in this research, homeless Travellers emerged as a theme identified by projects in Carrigtwohill and Cobh and this issue requires a specific initiative to examine potential responses.

**Rural and Urban Travellers:** While most Travellers live in and close to the urban centres of Midleton, Carrigtwohill, Cobh and Youghal, many are living in isolated rural areas. This poses significant challenges in terms of access to transport, services and the resources required to travel especially to specialised health services which are predominately located in the city. Lack of resources for community projects to carry out outreach work to Traveller families (rural and urban) was also identified as a real barrier to engaging Travellers.

**Young Travellers:** It would appear that young Travellers engage well with projects, but supports at a mid-later teenage stage fall away and this can be very challenging for young

people, parents and for services. However, the Youth Reach Project in Youghal which delivers on-going educational classes in addition to social programmes, and the Midleton LTI who engage Travellers in the arts, music and cultural programmes are both very successful at engaging and reaching Travellers. It would be important in the next stage of this work to identify the strategies used by both projects which are successful in engaging young Travellers.

**Future Work:** While piece of research is limited in its scope, as a result of service provider and Traveller family inputs into this research it is apparent that any future consultations should include Probation & Welfare Services, Tusla and the ETB who work with and have a responsibility for liaising with Traveller families and children. Finally, any decision to resource Traveller Community development work in the future should include a framework for gathering more detailed baseline information on Traveller lives, needs and responses and this could be on-going if an appropriate data collection system was to be agreed.

As a community, Travellers suffer from high levels of disadvantage across all social indicators in relation to employment, education and health, and suffer from high levels of discrimination and racism. All service providers, especially those set up on a statutory basis or publicly funded should be proactively prioritising Travellers. This is required under several national directives, in addition to the Duty of Care Act 2014, for example, the National Anti-Poverty Strategy, HSE Inclusion Strategy, Social Inclusion Activation Programme, Better Outcomes Better Futures, Connecting for Life National Strategy for Suicide Prevention, National Traveller and Roma Integration Strategy. Given the findings in stage one of this research, and taking into account the findings from the Traveller consultations, it might be wise to consider a dual strategy of engaging service providers and engaging Travellers in terms of future work.

Towards the end of the research period brief, contact was made with Probation and Welfare Services, Education and Welfare Services and Tusla Child Protection Teams. In summary, all agencies work with Traveller families in East Cork and the key themes identified were: the desire for more interagency and collaborative work with families to provide optimum supports and alternative options, the need for local Traveller community development projects in order to advise, liaise and work in partnership with service providers.



## 6. Consultations with Travellers

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Consultation meetings with Travellers took place over September and October 2016 and discussions were loosely guided by key survey questions which are shown in Appendix II. Over 15 Travellers families took part in this research, representing approximately 47 family members. This included 22 females and 25 males and children between the age of 7 and 22, though most of these were in their teenage years. Most of these meetings were with families in their own home and others were at community venues, e.g. Youghal and Carrigtwohill. Meetings were held separately with young Travellers in Carrigtwohill, Midleton and Youghal and some rural families were contacted and proactively included in one to one meetings. In addition, the consultant met with roadside Travellers in Midleton on two separate occasions and met at Carrigtwohill FRC with some members of the families living on the roadside at Little Island. Several attempts were made to visit families at their home in Little Island but this was not achieved within the research timeframe.

There were many other families identified through this research but no direct contact was made at this stage as either the timing for the family was not suitable or the research timeframe required a conclusion on the work to date. However, all these families can be contacted in any future work.

This section of the report is focused exclusively on the feedback from Travellers.

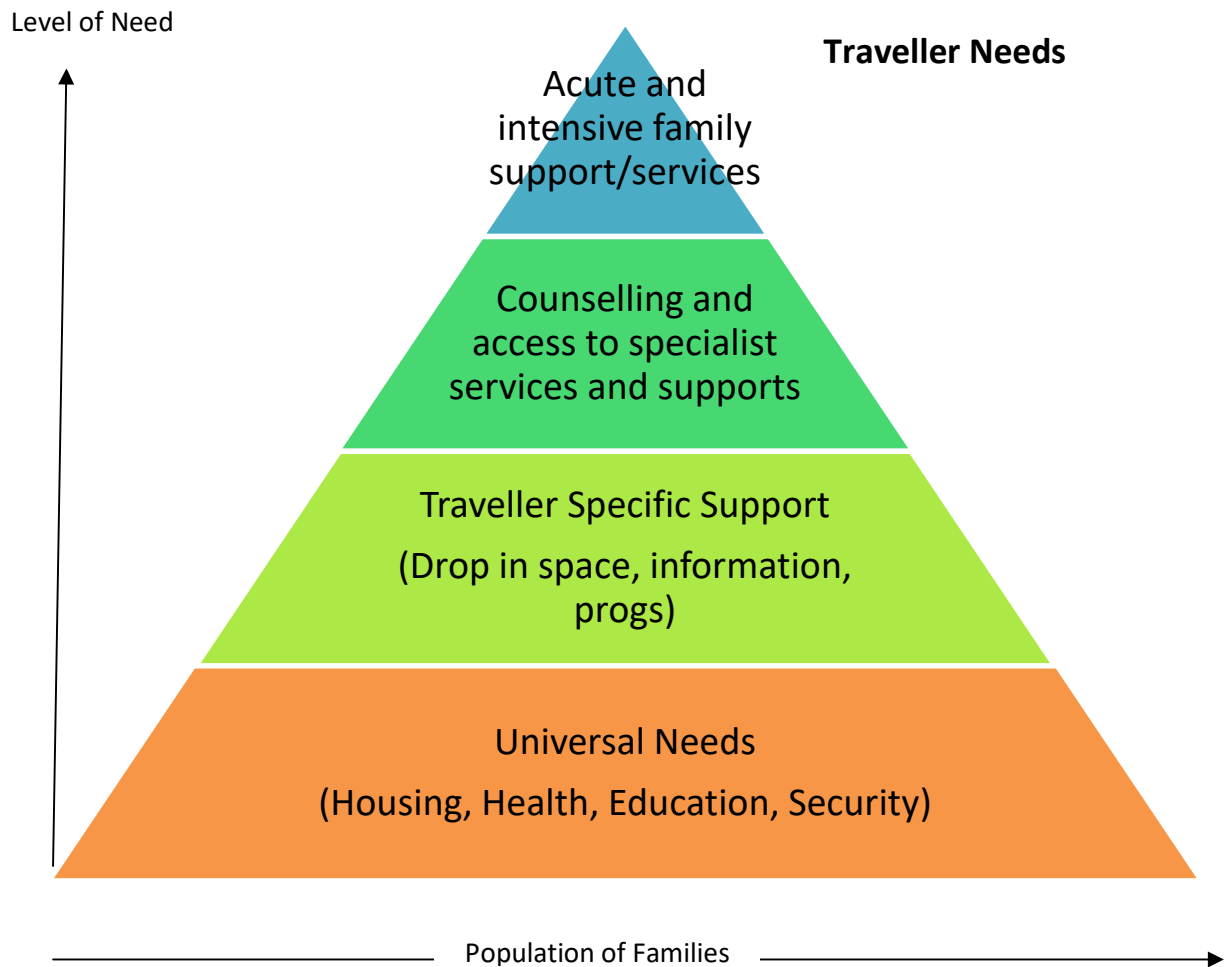
### 5.1 Findings

- **Family Supports**

Family support stood out as the highest category need in this phase of the research. The specific needs ranged from information provision, assistance with bureaucratic requirements to fill in many forms, school attendance/completion, and high level needs in relation to the criminal justice system, mental health and alcohol/drug addiction. In order to highlight and group the overall needs of families who participated in this research I have used the 'Hardiker' model of analysis in relation to Traveller families located in East Cork. This is a service provision model of categorisation.

While the 'Hardiker' model (Hardiker, Level of Needs Model, 1991) of categorising need is useful to service providers in organising responses to families, what is abundantly clear from the first stage of the research with service providers is that such responses need to go hand in hand with cultural awareness training, social analysis and a more in-depth understanding of the structural causes of poverty and cumulative disadvantage.





Many parents requested support for their teenage children which they named as: support with keeping their children in school, support with transition from primary to secondary school, accessing after-school activities including homework support and building linkages between schools, parents and work/apprenticeships.

A high percentage of women talked about their experiences of the criminal justice system, particularly in relation to their older children and partners (mostly male). There are several reports both at United Nations level and national level including the All Ireland Traveller Health Study (2010) that highlight the disproportionate level of Travellers in the criminal justice system where underlying causes of 'discrimination in daily life, low self-esteem and self-worth and no viable alternative ways of living and surviving' are all identified as significant contributing factors to offending behaviour (IPRT, 2014). These reports recommend the provision of a range of supports and interventions at local level, e.g. the provision of counselling services to families, the need for Traveller support groups, enhanced literacy supports, greater level of drug awareness and intervention programmes and the creation of meaningful work options in addition to enhanced cultural awareness training for service providers.

- **Traveller Women**

Traveller women were generally more confident in participating in the research<sup>12</sup>, talking and articulating their concerns. These concerns ranged from the responsibilities they have as carers for extended families, in addition to their own children and partners, the poor standard of accommodation being provided, e.g. leaking roof on trailers, porta-loos not being emptied, poor internal standard of housing, e.g. no heating, damp walls and ceilings. In some cases,(linked to the first point of family support) women, as the primary and the only carers of their children, worried about them not attending school, being at risk of drug and alcohol addiction and many told stories of loved ones dying by suicide. Some of these women were involved with social services, probation and/or education and welfare services and fulfilled the role of the primary carer with very high levels of responsibilities for large family groups.

Almost all of the women contacted across East Cork said they would love if a Traveller worker called to them and would be willing to go to a drop in centre to meet other Travellers though a few older Travellers were hesitant.

Many Traveller women said they were interested in paid work, e.g. childcare, cleaning, CE training placements and community health work.

- **Traveller Men**

Few men participated directly in this research, but those that did (8) were engaged and enthusiastic in having an input. Most of the men who took part, talked a lot about 'being bored', 'having nothing to do'. Most of these men were in their 30s-40s. Some of the men in the Youghal area said 'they would love to have a men's shed type project', with a focus on allotments and apprenticeships, e.g. woodwork, welding. The Midleton men (at the roadside) said they would be interested in 'doing stuff at their own site', while other Midleton men were busy and engaged in trade employment and not interested in attending a centre/drop-in space. This might change over time if they trusted a worker and heard of positive experiences from other male members. Many men live in and near Carrigtwohill with several having large extended families. Some of these men engage with services but direct contact with them by the researcher was not possible within the timeframe.

It is recommended to include more men in a men only focused piece of research and/or pilot initiative in the next phase of the work.

- **Young Travellers**

The needs of young Travellers are included in this research by virtue of discussions with their parents and some young Travellers who were willing to meet in Youghal. All the young Travellers (7) that took part in research discussions were female, except for one five minute discussion with a young man aged 14 in Midleton. In addition to being

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<sup>12</sup> Perhaps because the researcher was female also?

young (between the age of 17 and 22), those women that took part were vibrant, enthusiastic and proud Travellers. Efforts were made to contact young male Travellers but they were either not interested in participating (in Youghal and Cobh), or not easily contactable.

There are varying reports at community level about the role that schools play with Traveller students, some positive and some negative. There were positive examples of young Travellers engaging in school life and completing their education as a normal experience, and others where students attended class with no books or materials and apparently no one noticed or attended to the matter for over a year. Travellers' experience of school life requires a closer examination and will take time. In any future East Cork Traveller work, more contact should be made with the schools to consult with young Travellers and assess the status of supports and progress for Travellers in school.

From the young women's point of view, the key issues of concern for them were (1) the need for safe social and community spaces for Travellers to mix (female only) and (2) the tradition of 'grabbing' within their own Traveller community, especially at social venues and events. These 'grabbing' instances included acts of violence, beatings and kickings often ignored by security staff at public venues. It is acknowledged that in addition to these negative experiences described by the young women, 'grabbing' can be ritualistic and mutual as mentioned by other Travellers outside of these young participants. Young Travellers also suggested that more education and cultural awareness was needed among school populations and other group settings so that a greater understanding and appreciation of difference, including sexual orientation, could be promoted and shared. Those that attended Youthreach in Youghal said 'it was the best time of their life so far' and others in Midleton requested such a service or access to the Midleton Music Project (LTI) that is running at the old youth centre and which is positively acknowledged by Travellers.

- **Leadership**

Throughout this work, the potential for Traveller leadership and visibility was very strong and evident. However this potential is not fully explored and supported to develop. While many Travellers were clear and expressed a desire to take on visible community roles, there will be some strong challenges for Traveller workers/leaders. These are family connections and tensions within their own community, the high levels of discrimination to be faced on a daily basis and inserting their own cultural style into community development work and places. Up to ten community/youth centres were visited as part of this research work and there was no visible presence or images of Travellers in any of the youth and community centres visited. When organisations were asked about visibility or diversity – the general response was one of 'all are treated equally' and most acknowledged that they had not considered the positive impact that appropriate Traveller images might create for Travellers and others attending their centre.

- **Health**

This was not a health only survey but in many cases Travellers told the consultant or it was obvious that there were issues around diabetes, respiratory conditions, mental health concerns and heart health. This finding is in line with the findings of the All Ireland Traveller Health Study (2010). Specifically named health concerns among those adults that participated in this research were: depression, addiction, cancer and ADHD for young Travellers.

As most Travellers die at a younger age compared to the average age of the general population (for many reasons including suicide) – a family bereavement support service would go a long way towards providing solace and positive messages about the future. All Traveller families who participated in this study spoke about bereavement, loss and suicide.

Participants said that health professionals did not call out to roadside families, they did call to those (relations) living in houses with new born babies and those very elderly on occasion. GP's across the region were rated very highly, all Travellers spoke of their good relationship with their GP who listened well to them and most stayed with the same GP even if in a different location to where they lived, e.g. families living in Midleton but GP located in Mitchelstown. Some spoke of accessing South Doc and found that service inclusive and 'good to them'. This general approach is confirmed by health service providers in the first part of this report.

- **Education**

Again this was not a focused education survey but anecdotally, it was evident that most young Traveller parents saw education for their young children as vital and school as a good place for them to be (though not all young people agreed). Most of those attending secondary school were attending ETB institutions and school retention was a difficulty in some instances. While parents placed an emphasis on their children staying at school, it was very demanding and challenging as children moved into their mid-teens. One woman found the school, welfare system and justice system in which she was involved very stressful and others found it demanding but 'stayed strong'. In some cases families lived in Cork city, some in homeless accommodation units, but their children had to be transported to Carrigtwohill every day for school and many of these parents were parenting alone. This made for a very stressful and sometimes chaotic life for all involved.

- **Accommodation**

Most Travellers in East Cork live in standard housing. A number of Travellers families were visited in each urban location and a selection of families were located and visited in rural settings. In relation to standard houses, maintenance and conditions appeared to be average but in some cases very poor, e.g. damp walls and ceilings, leaking toilets.

For those living in trailers, one roof was leaking and sanitation facilities were very limited in for all.

There are two extended families living on the roadside by the roundabout in Midleton, who have been there for 22/23 years. The building of a new school in front of them has resulted in their physical privacy (roadside ditch) being taken away, leaving them exposed to oncoming traffic, public viewing and dangers. The families that live there wish to stay there, and the older Travellers would like that this area be turned into an official halting site with chalets. The older Travellers are happy and content there but younger members, mainly males with young families of their own would like a house to live in. They said 'they have filled housing application forms many times but nothing happens.' The older Travellers said that 'putting Travellers into houses and mixing families has not been a good idea and is bad for Traveller culture and their (mental) health'.

There are several members and families of a large extended family living on the roadside near Little Island. According to staff at the Carrigtwohill FRC, there are many issues of concern for those living there, for example sanitation is very poor, the unofficial site is overcrowded and near a railway line which is subject to a high level of rodents. There are child welfare, addiction and justice concerns and reports of poor general health. This requires further investigation by Travellers and agencies.

- **Rural based Travellers**

The rural Travellers that participated in the research reported the following: some were happy with their accommodation (rural houses with space available for activities/livelihoods) but many found the isolation from extended families and neighbours depressing and lonely. Transport was the biggest concern for these rural families both the high cost of running a car and/or not having access to public transport. All rural families said they would welcome a community worker visiting them on a regular basis to assist with form filling, directing them to appropriate services, letting them know about courses and options for them – this was particularly noted by the women and young people in their discussions. Some members said they would welcome the opportunity to drop in to a Traveller space and get involved in activities.

- **Urban Centres of Youghal, Midleton, Cobh and Carrigtwohill**

Most Travellers in East Cork live in and around these urban centres or within an 8 - 10 mile radius, though less so in Cobh. Community organisations/services in all these areas said they were interested in and willing to work with Travellers in their area, though none did any proactive targeting of Travellers in their work.

Travellers in Youghal (women and men) said they knew of Cumann na Daoine, suggested meeting there and were very comfortable organising themselves and chatting to the staff. Young Travellers attend Youthreach in Youghal (and reported very

positive experiences of attending classes), but none are attending Foroige or Youghal Community Health Project.

Travellers in Midleton do not attend the Midleton Community Forums' community centre or CDYS<sup>13</sup> 'My Place' youth centre and neither Travellers or service providers had really thought about why this was so. Traveller children did attend Avoncore childcare centre in the past, but there are none attending currently. Young Travellers do attend sporting organisations, e.g. GAA and Soccer clubs and a few attend the Midleton Music Project (LTI) located at the old youth centre.

According to two Travellers in Cobh, most Travellers live in standard housing and are married to settled partners. While the consultant visited all of the community and youth services in Cobh, none of them have Travellers attending currently, (Chill on Hill Youth Service did in the past) and all service providers said 'Travellers like to keep to themselves' as many of the adults in these families work in the city.

Many Travellers in Carrigtwohill attend the Family Resource Centre but not the community centre which is next door. The relationship between Travellers and the Resource Centre is engaged, there is regular attendance and active relationships.

While all community services expressed an interest and openness to working with Travellers, these community organisations have experienced severe cut backs in recent years in terms of staffing levels and budgets and most are just surviving within their own walls and not carrying out any outreach or targeted work.

- **Discrimination - 'tarred with the same brush'**

All Travellers talked about the discrimination they face on a daily basis, both racism and gender based. They are constantly being followed around. Those living by the roadside in Midleton said that 'local businesses were ok with them because they know them and their families over many years but if they travelled to another town and went into a shop they would immediately be followed'. 'We are all tarred with the same brush .... but there is a bad egg in every community'. All Travellers referenced the discrimination they face on a daily basis, based on their looks, speech or people knowing they were Travellers. This makes them careful about who they talk to and who they can trust. One roadside family talked about how wearing it is dealing with discrimination on a daily basis, how their future is very bleak and depressing, and raising their children is very difficult in these circumstances.

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<sup>13</sup> Cloyne Dioses Youth Service.



- **Division with the community/weak collective analysis and action**

In carrying out the research, many families told me that they did ‘not want to mix with other Traveller families, just do things with (their) own extended families’. This held true in all locations visited. In some cases, some families acknowledge other families right to participate and said they would be willing to go to a centre of their choice but some Travellers expressed strong negative feelings towards working and engaging in a project when other families are around.

This division within the community weakens Travellers collective analysis and activism but other models around the county and country deal with this through discussion with individual families, but more importantly in group sessions at their local Traveller Community Development Centre.

## 5.2 Conclusions

- ✓ Traveller engagement with services in East Cork is very weak and relationships between the two are in many cases non-existent. While many community services and facilities<sup>14</sup> were visited as part of the research, there was no proactive inclusion work taking place with Travellers, no outreach and no Traveller culture or identity visible in any of the community buildings.
- ✓ Travellers are very clear about their needs and concerns and these primarily relate to family supports which range from universal needs to acute specialist needs, support for young teenagers, a broad range of health concerns and the need for a culturally appropriate education. Further meetings are required with schools, probation and welfare services and the Child & Family Agency social work team for East Cork.
- ✓ There are accommodation concerns that relate to poor conditions in houses, outstanding repairs and water leakages in trailers. In addition, there is a shortage of appropriate social housing being offered to Travellers with many young families living in overcrowded situations in trailers and houses.
- ✓ Travellers (male and female) are very keen to interact with a key worker, in many cases are willing to drop in to a Traveller friendly community centre and many have expectations or a desire to access paid work.
- ✓ There is a strong sense of Traveller families being excluded silently with no proactive social or economic inclusion work taking place. There is a sense for many families of

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<sup>14</sup> 10 centres were visited and these are listed in chapter 1.

being forgotten, with no positive prospects for the future. 'It is all about survival, all the time, every day'.

- ✓ Additionally, within the Traveller community there is a need for greater exploration of community, identity, gender and related issues. In other words, safe and Traveller only community development work and space is required.
  
- ✓ The level of discrimination that Travellers face on a daily basis, the lack of meaningful employment, poor health and education levels lead some Travellers to despair and choose negative options for themselves, e.g. drug and alcohol misuse, offending, suicide.

## 7. Good Practice Models of Traveller Work

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Three Traveller projects in other locations were reviewed in the course of this research. Meetings plus phone conversations were held with co-ordinators to discuss their models of work, their experiences and learning from working across a large geographical area, which includes a significant amount of rural hinterland. The three projects who gave of their time were:

1. Travellers of North Cork.
2. Tipperary Rural Traveller Project.
3. West Cork Traveller Centre.

### Good practice themes emerging from across these meetings were:

#### **Communication through social media, texting and newsletters**

Travellers communicate extensively via texting and the younger Travellers use various forms of social media, e.g. Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, etc. These forms of communication are an essential tool in modern day community development work particularly when engaging with young people. In addition, North Cork produces a regular newsletter, which they feel is very valuable in communicating upcoming events and stories across a range of Traveller families and areas and West Cork have developed local drop programmes of interest to many Travellers.

#### **Outreach and support to families in rural locations**

All agencies, local community organisations and the Traveller projects named above were unanimous that outreach is essential when working in a large rural area. The purpose of outreach is to build trust and positive relationships with families, link families to agencies/services/programmes, provide information and assistance in relation to form filling and referrals, build solidarity and advocacy around rights and entitlements, and gather solid and wide-ranging base-line knowledge and data. Outreach could also in time encourage family members to drop in and take on leadership roles in Traveller based projects located in the urban centres.

#### **Outreach programmes/workshops to rural locations and villages**

All Traveller projects carried out community development at remote locations or villages when an issue arose, or on request. In the case of North Cork and West Cork, both these organisations have drop in centres and deliver programmes of work in the region in which they are based. This is done through renting rooms at Family Resource Centre's (FRCs), Community Centres or at agencies' facilities on particular days of the week in various towns.

## **Traveller-led groups and work**

All agreed that whatever work takes place it must be Traveller-led, must start with where Travellers are at and what they want to do. At the early stages this could be quite informal and focused on building confidence, trust and safety. On an on-going basis it is essential to build Traveller leadership across the board. This can take many forms, e.g. leading a piece of work with a co-worker, attending networks or interagency meetings and should be a constant objective of the work. It is also recommended by Traveller projects that community workers at local project level should advocate on behalf of Travellers with service providers and agencies, as there is a strong power dynamic at play in interagency work and in order for Travellers' needs to be heard and understood.

All the Traveller projects agreed that work with Traveller men increases significantly when there is a male Traveller worker involved and men have their own space to congregate and work in. This requires resourcing in its own right.

It was also agreed that the work agenda of a Traveller project can be enormous ranging from: intensive and crisis family support, literacy, personal development, Traveller culture training, advocacy, dealing with accommodation concerns, working with older Travellers, children and young peoples' services and needs regarding education, health and well-being, responding to environmental issues, horses, mental health, suicide prevention, community development, capacity building, inter-familial relationships/tensions, and work with probation and addiction services. A community worker on the ground cannot respond to all of these needs, therefore it is important to ensure that the appropriate organisational supports are in place, to focus and develop a work plan that is realistic and can be delivered locally, one step at a time.

Tipperary Rural Traveller Project recommended having both settled and Traveller workers working alongside each other as it builds capacity, cross community understanding and relationships.

## **Funding and sustainability**

All projects visited recommended taking a longer term view of the work required, building up and slowly focusing on one area at a time. All agreed that more than one worker is required with clear supports and supervision put in place for all workers and the work. It was also suggested that if a Traveller project existed in East Cork it could audit all agencies in the area and document their precise role and activity with Travellers. All agencies and service providers (under the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty) need to have a close link with any Traveller led project in the region. In order to develop Traveller work, a long term commitment is required both in terms of funding and supports by all concerned. Traveller projects and agencies who work with them all confirm the benefits and mutual gain of working together for all partners involved. All three Traveller projects named at the outset offered further support and contact with any new initiative established in East Cork.

## 8. Research Conclusions & Recommendations

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It must be noted at the conclusion of this research that there is a significant gap and often poor relationship between service providers and the Traveller community in East Cork. There is poor access to some services, little or no targeting of services to Travellers, poor understanding and social analysis of inequality and structural disadvantage (notwithstanding some very good individual efforts by committed community workers in several institutions).

As a result, the recommendations made in section 8.2 focus on a two pronged strategic approach to developing work and relationships with Travellers in East Cork. Below are main conclusions of the research carried out in East Cork.

### 8.1 Research Conclusions

- 8.1.1 It is estimated that there are between 100 - 110 Traveller families living in East Cork, living across a wide geographic area from Little Island to Cobh, Carrigtwohill, Midleton, Youghal and surrounding hinterlands. East Cork is approximately 56km long x 30km wide.
- 8.1.2 There is ample research and evidence available which articulate the disadvantages Travellers face on a daily basis and which result in: poor health, poor accommodation and living standards, and low levels of educational attainment when compared to the standards of the general population in Ireland. There are significant barriers to income generating employment opportunities, a disproportionately high level of engagement with the criminal justice system and addiction services, and with all Travellers facing high levels of daily discrimination, these conditions undermine self-esteem, confidence, hope in the future and can result in despair and depression. Many of these findings were highlighted in the East Cork reports from 1998-2008 and again in the All Ireland Traveller Health Study in 2010. This locally focused research confirms similar outstanding deep seated needs and barriers for Travellers in East Cork.
- 8.1.3 Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 requires public bodies to take proactive steps to actively (a) eliminate discrimination; (b) promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services and; (c) protect the human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services (Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty as provided for by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014). Many

publicly funded service providers in East Cork are not proactive, not sufficiently aware of their equality or human rights obligations in many instances and do little to address such lack of capacity and awareness.

- 8.1.4 Training and capacity building of agencies and their workers on the ground was poor or non-existent in relation to the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty or for working with minority groups. In some cases paternalistic and discriminatory attitudes were expressed by the professionals who have a duty and obligation to work with Travellers. High quality evidenced-informed anti-racism work and social analysis is required on an on-going basis if an understanding of Traveller culture and lives is to be gained and valued.
- 8.1.5 Similarly for community organisations, most were very willing to engage and work with Travellers but were unsure about how to do this effectively. Such organisations were open to guidance but recent budget cut-backs which have resulted in staffing levels being reduced, makes it difficult for them to do outreach work. Also, little or no training<sup>15</sup> had taken place across staff teams in relation to social analysis, equality, Traveller cultural awareness or anti-racist work practice.
- 8.1.6 The daily levels of discrimination, racism and marginalisation that Travellers face inhibits their individual, family and community development potential. These negative conditions undermine confidence, economic security and self-esteem which in turn facilitate poor self-worth, internalised racism and sometimes the choosing of detrimental options. However, it is also noted that many of the Travellers who participated in this research were eager to develop a Traveller project, engage in employment and collective community development work.
- 8.1.7 The building of capacity in any marginalised community, but particularly the Traveller community is an extremely slow process and this needs to be recognised by funders, service providers and those who initiate and manage projects. Capacity amongst Travellers in East Cork is at many varying levels across the region, and ranges from poor literacy levels, poor access and knowledge of services to lack of support for Traveller leadership and employment. As a consequence it will be necessary to maintain development at both the individual and collective level. Over time this approach will build solidarity, collective analysis and action among the Traveller community. However it must be noted that many of the Travellers who engaged in previous East Cork Traveller work were excited about the possibility of new roles and work becoming available to their community again.

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<sup>15</sup> For those who had relevant third level qualifications – some analysis was gained through academic input.

- 8.1.8 All agencies, community projects and Travellers contacted during this research are clear that a fully resourced Traveller project is needed in East Cork. This would provide an opportunity to carry out local community development work in each urban location in East Cork with an outreach approach to the rural catchment area. The establishment of an East Cork Traveller project would provide a partner for agencies to work with so that service providers could enhance and focus their Traveller work more effectively based on an informed analysis of Traveller culture, ethnicity and life. Further, it would provide an opportunity to build relationships amongst partners in order to deliver services more effectively to Travellers.
- 8.1.9 Some agencies working with Traveller families in East Cork do not participate at a collective interagency level with other partners in East Cork. It would be useful on a quarterly/half yearly basis if all agencies would come together to share information, and approaches to their work. Agencies such as Probation and Welfare Services, Education and Welfare Services and the Child & Family Agency social work team all work in East Cork and would welcome an opportunity to meet collectively with all partners.

## 8.2 Recommendations

As mentioned earlier and as a result of much discussion of the research findings at steering group level, the recommendations suggested below are made with two strategic objectives in mind: (1) The work required at institutional service provider level in order to increase awareness, social analysis and appreciation of the culture and diversity of the Traveller community in East Cork. (2) The work required at local level both with community projects and a dedicated Traveller project to build relationships, increase visibility and confidence and provide opportunities for Travellers to engage safely and on their own terms. Potential starting details with estimated costings are given in Appendix III.

Responding to Traveller needs in East Cork provides all organisations and service providers with a new opportunity to respond creatively to the needs identified by Travellers in this research and to the findings of the large body of research now available at local, regional, national and international level. Agencies working in partnership, learning from each other and from Traveller projects could promote real progress over the next five years. Any new initiative or project agreed must be SMART<sup>16</sup>, accountable to an oversight committee and resources need to be allocated by all partners with responsibility for actions agreed. Ideally, one overarching plan with agreed actions at interagency, service provider and local community level should be finalised and committed to – such a plan could be promoted and supported by the HSE<sup>17</sup> SIU, CWD, THU, and Cork County Council through the Traveller

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<sup>16</sup> Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timed (SMART).

<sup>17</sup> Health Service Executive (HSE), Social Inclusion Unit (SIU), Community Work Dept (CWD), Traveller Health Unit (THU).

Interagency Group. This focused intensive approach could be piloted in East Cork with a view to evaluating its impact and progress over a three to five year period.

### **Recommendations for Institutions/Service Providers**

- 8.2.1 All service providers should adopt an ethnic identifier mechanism in their work. Having an ethnic identifier in place would facilitate the gathering of accurate data in relation to Traveller life, access to services, needs, responses and outcomes. Brief information on accessing guidelines to assist with developing an ethnic identifier is given in Appendix IV.
- 8.2.2 All service providers should adopt the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty and agree specific actions to support capacity building and training of its staff in relation to understanding its role and obligations under this Act.
- 8.2.3 All service providers should agree an action plan specifically related to work with Travellers in order to build relationships, increase understanding and build their own capacity to carry out this work.
- 8.2.4 All service providers should engage in Traveller cultural awareness training, understanding racism, inequality, social exclusion and causes of marginalisation.
- 8.2.5 Agencies should report on progress and barriers at an interagency level on a regular basis and ideally this should be verified or evaluated externally. This meeting should be chaired and include all partners with responsibility for Travellers in East Cork.

### **Recommendations in relation to Local Traveller Community Development Work in East Cork**

**There are two strands being proposed for this aspect of the work:**

- 8.2.6 The setting up of an East Cork Traveller Community Development base in one key location in East Cork<sup>18</sup>. This base should have responsibility for administration, staff and steering group members. This base initially could be responsible for outreach and providing support to the development of the other 3 urban centres in East Cork on a realistic phased-in basis, with a view to each location developing its own local committee and taking responsibility for outreaching locally and rurally to Travellers. Work in all locations should be guided by the East Cork Steering Group who should identify the key principles and practices of work to be applied. The East Cork base will need to be staffed and resourced to co-ordinate and link with all other locations and agencies.

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<sup>18</sup> Potentially Youghal as it has an independent community development project.



8.2.7 On a phased basis, each key urban location, i.e. Youghal, Midleton, Cobh and Carrigtwohill should develop a local steering committee, a drop-in Traveller space and an action plan which responds to the Traveller priorities in their own area. The establishment of these local steering committees will require support/facilitation initially to come together, bond, agree terms of reference and an action plan for moving forward. These committees will also require capacity building in relation to carrying out Traveller culturally specific work.

Steering committees should be made up of local community organisations and agencies/service providers with responsibility in those locations. Other agencies with regional remits should sit on the East Cork steering committee at the project base.

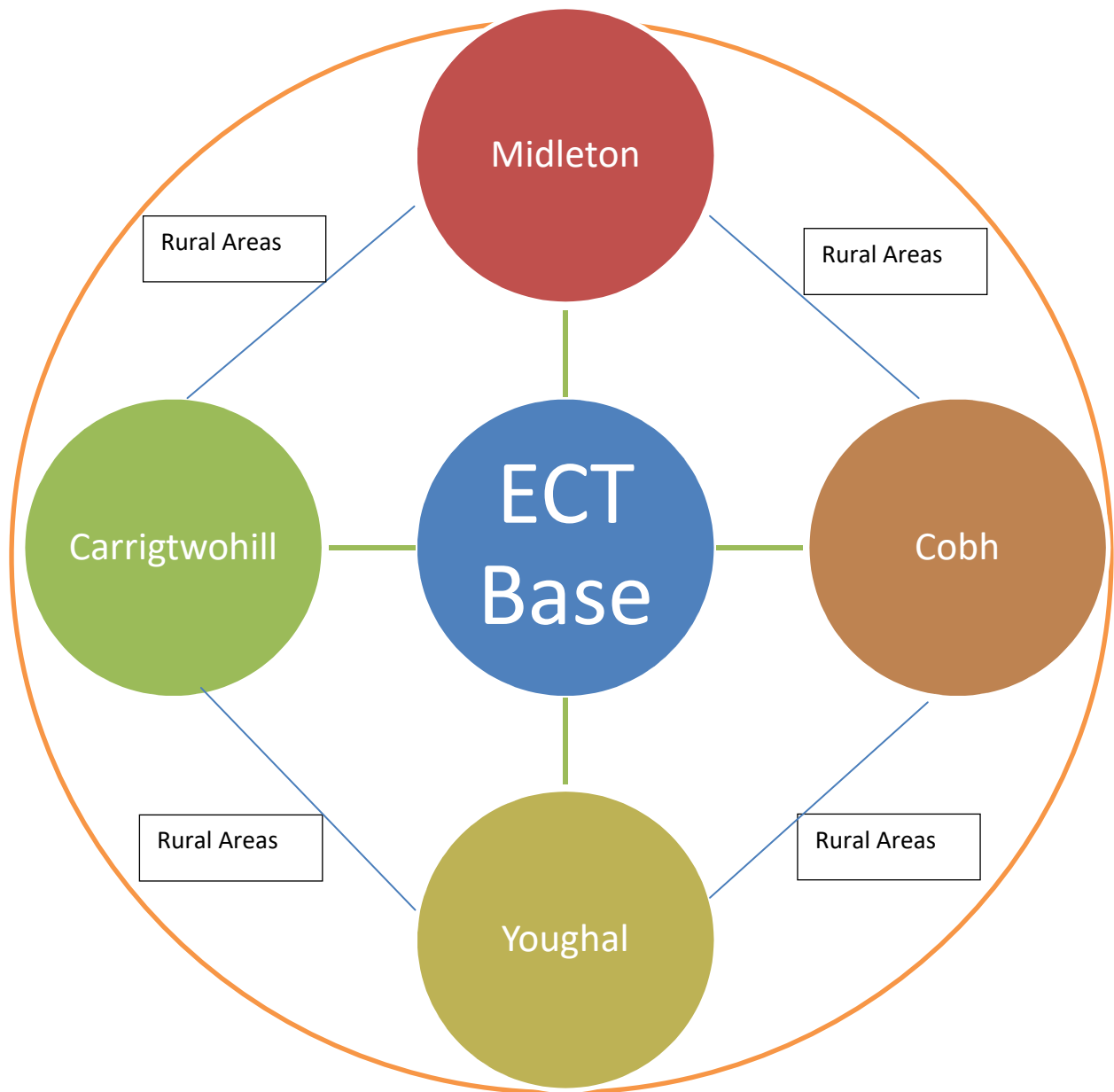
Outreach will be required in all locations and to rural areas. This will require resourcing but is an essential aspect of Traveller development work at this point and during early set up stages. The East Cork worker should start in one/two locations only and build experience and confidence with families in these areas prior to working in more areas. The exact methodology and driver of outreach will be determined by the resources in each location.

Below is an overview of the proposal:

The agreed base should host the governance of the East Traveller Cork project and provide guidance and support to each location. The regional steering committee should monitor progress using an overarching action plan framework (containing local action plans and agency actions plans) and consider a thematic approach to work in East Cork in partnership with service providers, community organisations and Travellers.

Local Steering Committees (LSC) should be set up in each location to drive the work. Ultimately the creation and facilitation of a drop-in Traveller friendly space and outreach to the Traveller community is required. This will require a long-term commitment and outreach by all organisations involved. Each area should develop its own work plan, using the guidance provided by the East Cork Steering Group and report on a regional basis every six months.

This work will be slow to set up initially and therefore a one year set up and pre-development period should be considered, followed by a three-five year plan. Consideration should be given to piloting work in one/two locations first by taking a pre-development approach concentrating on getting the structures right and delivering one/two local initiatives. For example, establish an initiative (Men's Shed/allotments) with Traveller men in Youghal, ensure adequate and appropriate committee development and Traveller engagement in all aspects of the work. Simultaneously, explore the development of a similar approach on one other location (e.g. Midleton) in East Cork – resources permitting.



Outreach = \_\_\_\_\_

### **Traveller Community Development Work**

- Resourcing: 1 full-time and 2 part-time workers (Traveller men and women), plus administration and outreach budget needed.
- Work to focus on: creating a Traveller only space/project and Traveller engagement/ leadership in each location.
- Local Steering Committees (LSC) will need to undertake training in relation to Traveller culture and commit to the principles of Traveller community development work and practice. LSC membership should be made up of community organisations, local service providers and Traveller community.

**Work requiring further consideration at ECT level by interagency partnership steering group:**

- Internal capacity building and training in relation to Traveller work and Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.
- Traveller health, education, justice and accommodation needs alongside family support work. Agreeing priorities and engaging Tusla, Education and Welfare Board and Probation and Welfare Services at interagency level is required.
- Providing long term support and resources to local Traveller community development work.
- Gathering more data/mapping more details/database in each location.

Developing responses along the lines recommended above will show commitment to the Traveller community, will facilitate a pace of development that will respond to each location's specific needs and capacity, and has the potential to be sustained into the longer term if capacity, relationships and partnerships are built slowly and genuinely over the next 3-5 years.



# Appendix I

## Recommendations from Evaluation of East Cork Advocacy Project (2007)

### Recommendations - Project Management and Staffing

- The parameters around working in partnership need to be discussed more clearly with full discussion taking place at the start of a project as to what partnership means, what are partner's expectations of each other and what are partner's responsibilities.
- The staffing resources of a temporary and part-time Advocacy Worker were not adequate for the work of the East Cork Traveller Advocacy Project until the post of the Advocacy Worker became full-time and mainstreamed. A project that is located in a geographic area that has had no history of Traveller development will need a lot of initial ground work done with Travellers and with organisations, and then it will need to be prepared to cater for the spin-off from its successful groundwork, as happened in this project.
- As the workload of this project grows, there will be a need to develop a strategy for integrating the work of the project into the work plans of other agencies and organisations in the East Cork area so that work with Travellers becomes part of their focus. However, the work needs to remain Traveller led.
- The employment of a Traveller in the position of Traveller Advocacy Worker has meant that the worker has needed to prove herself to agencies and organisations in a way that a development worker from the settled community would not have had to do. She has needed to ensure that she has all the necessary knowledge, and, when giving her views, she has had to provide supporting arguments to back up these views more than would be expected from a member of the settled community. In order to prepare for this situation, there is a need to continue training and supervision and support for the Advocacy Worker, and, when needed, immediate support to the worker before and after meetings.
- There is a need for the steering committee to ensure that colleagues are aware of why a Traveller is employed in the project, and the benefits of it. The response to having a Traveller employed as the Advocacy Worker on this project elicited a patronising response at times by some personnel in the Health Service Executive - South and in other organisations.
- Document the type of queries that Travellers have regarding access and entitlements to services so that the project has a good profile of the needs on the ground and so that it can make a sound analysis of the situation and can match those needs with appropriate actions. There is also a need to document the work done by the project in its representation on other fora.
- There is now a need for staff administrative backup and clerical support for the project from the North Lee Community Work Department. A structured format for the documentation of minutes of meetings, the documentation of the on-going work

of the project and documentation and recording of information for any evaluation process needs to be put in place.

- There is a need to ensure that review and evaluation sessions take place bi-annually.

#### Recommendations - Level of Development of the Travellers of East Cork

- The Traveller women in East Cork had come from a very low base with respect to their confidence levels and their knowledge, and, in some cases, their literacy capacity. The work of continuing to build up the capacity of Travellers in East Cork so that they are confident and are able to represent themselves needs to be continued. This needs to remain at the very basic level of literacy classes and other personal development inputs within a community development model. In time, there is a need to look at a training course for the group with reference to organisational development in order that they can move from their current informal group structures, to adopting a more formal approach. A project working from a very low base in terms of the capacity of its target group needs to take its work at a pace appropriate to the group members. There is a need to set achievable and realistic targets for group progress. There will be times when development may regress and this needs to be expected. It will be necessary to maintain development at both an individual and a collective level. It is also important to continue to attract other Travellers to participate in the East Cork Traveller Advocacy Project.
- There is an issue in East Cork with many Travellers not identifying as Travellers. The Travellers engaged with the project face questions and challenges from their own community around the fact that they are engaging in the project and are away from home. The positive and tangible outcomes from the project's work needs to be relayed to the broader Traveller community in order to give a positive view of Traveller's engagement in the project to date and to continue to build up solidarity among Travellers. There is a need to establish a loose feedback structure whereby other Travellers are aware of information and activities that may affect them.
- Cultural awareness training with organisations, and projects in East Cork needs to focus on the issue of the division between Travellers who identify with their culture, and those who do not, as this division could possibly be reinforced by some of the projects.

#### Recommendations - East Cork Traveller Women's Group Programme

- Childcare costs need to be factored into the overall operating programme costs at the start of a project. Develop a childcare payments policy and ensure that there is complete clarity and understanding among Travellers regarding the payment of costs for childcare reasons.
- While individual Traveller Women's Group members identified the need for personal support and counselling, the view in the Travelling Community is that if you need counselling then "*you must be mad*". There is a need to include inputs on the range of counselling and support services available and on the fact that accessing counselling is not a negative.

Recommendation - Work with Traveller Men

- Community development experience has shown that it can be difficult at times to engage Traveller men in community development projects. The employment of a female Advocacy Worker may not help this situation and so the project needs to continue to link with the Irish Traveller Movement and use its Traveller men to link with the Traveller men in East Cork. The majority of development work in Ireland has initially focussed on working with women because of the difficulty of engaging with Traveller men. However, this is a new initiative based in the context of existing Irish models of good practice that could be replicated. There is a need to research these models of working with Traveller men and replicate or adapt them to East Cork so that the development of all Travellers is in tandem.

## Appendix II

### Findings from Youth Mapping Exercise (2008)

- ❑ Continued discrimination against the target group in the East Cork area
- ❑ Lack of youth friendly spaces, adequate resources & facilities for youth and lack of community action about this issue
- ❑ Lack of parental involvement in services and projects
- ❑ Non participation or low participation level of parents and young people on management/ advisory/ steering committees
- ❑ Need for staff training, staff support, staff mentoring and staff supervision
- ❑ Continuing need for youth and community work to strive towards promoting and enabling positive social change and progression and for this to be key to youth and community workers
- ❑ Need for and value of reflective practice
- ❑ Need for funding agencies and bodies to involve project workers in decisions relating to funding
- ❑ Absence of a forum for youth workers to exchange and share experiences
- ❑ Transport is a key issue and barrier for the families living in the rural areas
- ❑ Staff turnover in youth organisations and difficulties of building new relationships an issue for retention of young people
- ❑ Young people's perception that existing voluntary clubs and organisations are not relevant to them
- ❑ Younger children not getting involved at an early age in sports/ clubs/ projects
- ❑ Older children not having the opportunities to get involved in local clubs when they were younger/ not having positive role models to encourage / influence them to get involved
- ❑ Young people having nowhere to go – in Midleton the recreational facilities cost money, in Carrigtwohill there are fewer again options for recreation
- ❑ Lack of training supports and training programmes for older teenagers and young adults
- ❑ Lack of supports for young adults experiencing difficulties or involved in substance use and mis-use
- ❑ Young people lacking focus or an idea of what their options are re career/ education
- ❑ **The Midleton Youth Project** stated that they are funded from the Department of Education to operate the only youth project in the area. As this project targets 12 to 18 year olds there is therefore no project and hence no youth services working with under 12s or over 18s.
  - Midleton does not have a youth friendly non-commercial space to congregate – it does now.
  - “Challenges lie in the perception of young people in our society”
- ❑ **The Carrigtwohill Area Youth Project** highlighted the uncertainty of funding and the fact that the project is a one person project as two key issues that present.
- ❑ **SECAD** also highlighted accessing funding in the current climate as a key challenge, as well as listening to young people in a meaningful way and responding to what they are saying.
- ❑ The **VTTS** highlighted key challenges as being:
  - Continuing concern re: levels of literacy/ numeracy of Traveller children

- Poor school attendance in some cases
  - Retention of Traveller children at second level
  - Few role models in employment / further education.
  - Parents/young people not always linking educational achievement to career outcomes.
- **Midleton Community Forum** are not currently operating a service for youth but hope to develop services and work more closely with local agencies in the coming months
- **The Carrigtwohill Family Resource Centre and the After School Project**
- Lack of suitable and sufficient premises
  - Lack of funding, and funders committing to funding projects in ways that are sustainable



## Appendix III

### **Local Area Recommendations**

All work must be underpinned by agreeing to adhere to community development principles and practices, a commitment to undertaking Traveller culture and awareness training and to working in partnership with Travellers.

While key actions are suggested for each location – all locations are obliged to proactively include their natural rural hinterlands.

- **Youghal**

It is recommended that the initiation of any new work with Travellers in this area commence in partnership with Cumann na Daoine, Community Development Project, Youghal. This organisation is well placed to lead out on any new work with Travellers in east Cork, has the capacity, connections with partners and understanding of the community development work that is required.

This work could include developing work with men who have identified key areas of interest e.g. allotments, woodcraft and metal work and work with women by securing an additional CE scheme placement for Travellers and the creation of a drop in space for and by Travellers.

Estimated budget required: €30,000 year one to €50,000 from year two/three.

- **Midleton**

It is recommended that a pre-development piece of work take place in Midleton drawing on all the offers of co-operation given during the research process. Midleton has local community organisations that are interested in working with Travellers but lacks the leadership/co-ordination around Traveller work. Further work should include: bringing together local Traveller families who expressed an interest in local Traveller work with local community organisations to develop a local action plan for Travellers in this area. This should include the development of a drop-in space, a sharing of service information and a new action plan with and for Travellers for the coming two years.

Estimated budget required: €5,000 year one to €10,000 year two.

- **Cobh**

Community organisations and agencies in this area require support and training around including and reaching out to Travellers. This will include the provision of Traveller culture awareness training and proactively outreaching and building positive relationships with Travellers to ensure inclusion.

Estimated budget required: Promotion, Trainer/facilitation costs: €1,000. Outreach to Traveller families to link them to services €4,000.

- **Carrigtwohill**

This area requires further research and consultancy work. There are many families in this area with high needs and with links to families and organisations in Cork city. There were barriers identified to completing the research in this area and reaching conclusions. Therefore further local consultation work is required in order to make meaningful recommendations in partnership with Traveller families, local organisations in Carrigtwohill and Cork city.

Estimated budget required: €5,000 - €7,000.

## **Work with Service Providers/Agencies**

It was agreed at the final east Cork interagency research steering committee meeting that a starting point with requesting agencies to respond to Traveller needs would be to:

- Invite members of all relevant agencies to a meeting where the results of the East Cork Traveller research would be presented;
- To discuss with agency representatives and their senior management how their obligations under the Duty of Care Act could be implemented with regard to Travellers (Commission to be asked to provide an input here);
- Ask all agencies to commit to one piece of work with Travellers, attend the east Cork interagency steering group meetings quarterly/every six months.
- Confirm that agreements reached would form part of the priorities for the Cork County Traveller Interagency Group and strategic plan from 2017.

Estimated budget required: €1,000

### **Suggested Leads:**

Community Work in East Cork – HSE THU and CWD with local community organisations

Work with Service Providers and Interagency Work – Traveller Interagency Group (Cork CoCo - TIG)

Family Support Work – THU with Tusla

## Appendix IV

### Guide to developing an ethnic identifier

The collection and use of ethnic group data enables health services to identify and respond to health inequalities as experienced by different social groups in terms of health status, access to health care, experience of health care and health outcomes (CRE, 2002). The following pdf link will assist service providers in developing their own ethnic identifier templates. The HSE is currently piloting an identifier with Pavee Point Dublin.

NHS UK: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO ETHNIC MONITORING IN THE NHS AND SOCIAL CARE.

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/monitrg-ehi-pos-paper.pdf>

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