

# Pavee Point Strategic Plan 2006-2010

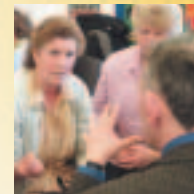
Working together in partnership to address  
Travellers social and economic exclusion



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## Vision of Pavee Point

*In Irish society Travellers are recognised and respected as a minority ethnic group who are proud and confident in exercising their full rights.*

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## Mission for Pavee Point

*Pavee Point's mission is to contribute to improvement in the quality of life, living circumstances, status and participation of Travellers in Irish society through working innovatively for social justice, greater solidarity, development, equality and human rights.*

## Introduction to Pavee Point

**Pavee Point is a national Traveller organisation whose staff and participants are Travellers and members of the majority population working together in partnership to address Travellers social and economic exclusion.**

The work of Pavee Point is based on two key premises:

- Real improvement in Travellers' living circumstances and social situation requires the active involvement of Travellers themselves.
- Non-Travellers have a responsibility to address the various processes which serve to exclude Travellers from participating as equals in society.

Pavee Point works at a number of levels:

- local;
- regional;
- national; and,
- international.

The organisation's work seeks to develop understanding and responses to a wide range of issues facing Travellers through programmes covering: community development; youth work and early years; education; health, drugs and violence against women; culture and heritage; mediation; local and economic development.

The work of the programmes includes:

- Direct work with Travellers and Traveller organisations;
- Piloting and disseminating innovative approaches on Travellers issues;
- Networking with and supporting individuals and organisations working with Travellers and other marginalised groups;
- Formulating and making submissions to influence policies;
- Dissemination of information and the commissioning of research and its publication.

# Travellers

## Who are Travellers?

Travellers are a small indigenous minority who according to historical material have been part of Irish society for centuries. They have a long shared history, value system, language, customs and traditions which make them a group which is recognised by themselves and others as distinct. This distinctive lifestyle and culture, based on a nomadic tradition, sets them apart from the sedentary population or 'settled people'.

In the Equality legislation the definition of Travellers used is based on the definition contained in the Northern Ireland Race Relations Order: a definition which evolved out of British case law on what constitutes an ethnic group. This definition says that:

*" 'Traveller community' means the community of people who are commonly called Travellers and who are identified (both by themselves and others) as people with a shared history, culture and traditions including, historically, a nomadic way of life on the island of Ireland."*

## Facts & Figures

### According to the 2002 Census:

- There are 24,000 Travellers approximately 0.6% of the population;
- 3.3% are over 65, compared to 11.1% of the general population;
- 63% are under 25, compared to 37% of the general population;
- 42% are under 15, compared to 21% of the general population;
- The average age of Travellers is 18, compared to 32 for the general population;
- 63.2% of Traveller children under the age of 15 had completed their education before the age of 15, compared with 15.4% of the national population;
- Primary school education was the highest level of education obtained by 54.8% of Travellers;
- 73% of Traveller men are unemployed in comparison to 9% of men overall; and,
- 64% of Traveller women are unemployed in comparison to 8% of women overall.

**In 2003 the Department of Environment and Local Government estimated that there were 6,229 Traveller families and of these:**

- 50% live in 4 counties;
- 1/4 Travellers not adequately accommodated;
- 459 families live in temporary accommodation;
- 323 families were doubling up;
- 788 families were living on the roadside.

# Traveller Issues

## Accommodation

A recent health report stated *"Conditions on Traveller sites are unacceptable. Travellers reported that the most common problems arising include: illegal dumping; sewage and drainage problems; poor building fabric; site design problems; water hygiene; pest infestation; and environmental hazards from land adjoining Traveller sites."*<sup>1</sup>

## Health

Traveller health status continues to resemble that of a developing country. The National Traveller Health Strategy was a welcome development. It identified and addressed some of the problems that Travellers encounter in relation to health and established an infrastructure for dealing with them which was inclusive of Traveller organisations. It is important that there continues to be a focus on Travellers' health in the on-going reform of the health service, and that resources are made available to address current and emerging health needs.

## Education

In recent years, debate and actions have focused on the numbers of Traveller children participating in schools, with the result that most Traveller children now attend primary school. There has also been an increase in numbers of Traveller children transferring to secondary school. However, very few Travellers remain in secondary schools after the second year of schooling.

Literacy rates among Travellers remain very low and most Travellers still leave school without qualifications. It appears that the education system is still failing many Travellers and that structural inequality including weaknesses in institutional and policy responses are key factors in this failure.

## Employment

Post the Celtic Tiger economic exclusion amongst Travellers persists and contrasts starkly with other sectors of Irish society. The only other group whose unemployment rates are comparable to the Traveller community are disabled people. At the current rate of development targets set within the National Anti-Poverty Strategy (2002) to reduce long-term unemployment amongst vulnerable groups down to the national average will not be met by 2007 for Travellers. Even for those Travellers who have secured employment in the mainstream labour market very few are in the sustainable / career building / well paid end of the labour market.

## Cross Cutting Issues

There are a range of cross cutting issues that should be incorporated in the issues above as well as dealt with both separately and they include: gender; youth; and culture.

1. Traveller Health Unit Eastern Region, (2004). Environmental Health Concerns of Travellers.



## Wider Policy Issues

1. The main policy document with regard to Travellers is the 1995 report of the Task Force on the Travelling Community. Arising from the recommendations of this report three committees were established on the issues of health; education; and accommodation. An overall monitoring committee was also established to oversee and report on progress to-date. Yet despite this infrastructure a major criticism, widely acknowledged, is the lack and/or slowness of the implementation of agreed Government Policy. For example:

***The United Nations CERD<sup>2</sup> Committee's Observations (2005):***

*'While noting the efforts made so far by the State party with regard to the situation of members of the Traveller community in the field of health, housing, employment and education, the Committee remains concerned about the effectiveness of policies and measures in these areas.'* (article 5(e))

2. The lack of recognition of Travellers as a minority ethnic group continues to present challenges. This situation arises though the Government have acknowledged Travellers as a separate social group with a distinct culture and identity. It impacts on the development and implementation of policies that impact on Travellers every day lives. It results in initiatives being rolled out that should automatically be inclusive of Travellers not necessarily being as the service providers themselves do not realise that intercultural or anti-racist work relates to Travellers needs.
3. The lack of adequate data and good information impacts on the State's ability to systematically identify problems and solutions. The Traveller question in the 2002 Census and the commitment of the CSO to gather data was a positive step forward and shed some light on the challenges faced in relation to Traveller Economic Development, Education, Health and Accommodation issues. However there is a need for a broader data strategy which encompasses data collection, collation, disaggregation, analysis and monitoring. This work needs to be progressed and pursued within a broader equality framework and Traveller organisations need to be involved in its development and implementation.
4. Travellers have been named and included in a wide range of policy developments for example: National Social Partnership Agreements; the National Anti-Poverty Strategy; the National Action Plan Against Racism; National Employment Action Plan; the National Women's Strategy. These wider policy instruments have provided a weight to Travellers issues that have proved very useful. But the lack of progress in many areas has also highlighted the issue: that a more informed and equality focused cross departmental and cross initiative approach is required if Travellers exclusion is to be truly addressed.

## Pavee Point Strategic Planning Process

**Our Strategic Plan has been developed through a collaborative process involving staff and Board members. A series of 'Hall Meetings' with all Pavee Point staff and training course participants – totalling over 40 – were held to develop the vision, mission and goals of Pavee Point over the next five years.**

In between these meetings a smaller group of staff progressed the plan, synthesising feedback and further revising earlier drafts. The Board of Management discussed and commented on an initial draft and were involved in agreeing the final Strategic Plan. Meetings were held with external stakeholders to seek their input and inform our thinking. In addition, staff members consulted with local Traveller communities and individuals to ensure as wide a range of Traveller views as possible has been included.

In the course of this work a discussion took place on the most realistic way for the organisation to develop its work with the Roma community in Ireland. This took place in light of the organisation's values which clearly spell out the organisation's commitment to the realisation of Roma human rights. In light of these discussions it was decided that the most appropriate way to developing this work is to include the work with Roma under the second Strategic Goal entitled 'empowerment'.

### **Implementation**

**The implementation of this plan will happen through Pavee Point's annual planning process and rolled out through the relevant programmes and other work undertaken by the organisation.**

Many thanks to all who contributed to the development of this plan - we look forward to working with you in implementing it.

2. CERD stands for the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

## Pavee Point Values

### ■ *Human Rights*

We believe that all people, including Travellers, Roma, and Gypsies, should have access to resources which enable them to meet basic human needs, to reach a socially acceptable standard of living, and to live with dignity in society.

### ■ *Community Development*

We believe a community development approach and its associated principles provide an appropriate way of working with Travellers. It means working with, rather than for, Travellers. It supports collective action, participation and empowerment, and gives priority to preventative actions.

### ■ *Multi-dimensionality*

We believe that single-factor explanations of the situation of Irish Travellers are simplistic and inaccurate. The problems Travellers experience, and issues of concern in relation to Travellers, are multiple and complex. They require a holistic, multi-dimensional approach.

### ■ *Equality*

We believe that we must be pro-active if all people are to enjoy equality of access, participation and outcomes. We therefore espouse an anti-racist, anti-sexist approach, and we also reject exclusion on the grounds of disability, sexual orientation, religion, social and national origin, age, family and marital status.

### ■ *Cultural Diversity*

We believe that a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society should be based on equality and mutual respect. Travellers and Roma have a right to assert and celebrate their distinct ethnic identities.

### ■ *Social Solidarity*

We believe that social solidarity should be based on efforts to bridge the divisions and inequalities based on wealth, power and social status. Traveller solidarity involves developing alliances among and between Travellers and Roma as well as with other minority groups and different sectors, nationally and internationally.

### ■ *Partnership*

We believe that Travellers and non-Travellers can be most effective in a partnership relationship that recognises their respective responsibilities, strengths and competencies. We also believe in the value of developing a range of partnerships with other organisations and agencies, voluntary and statutory.

## Strategic Goals and Objectives

### STRATEGIC GOAL 1 – IDENTITY

To achieve the recognition, by Travellers themselves and in the wider society, of Travellers as a minority ethnic group, whose culture and identity are celebrated, resourced and respected.

#### *Objectives:*

- i* To support Travellers to exercise their cultural and human rights.
- ii* To promote Traveller inclusion and participation in the cultural life of Ireland.
- iii* To seek Traveller visibility in anti-racism and intercultural policies and initiatives.

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### STRATEGIC GOAL 2 – EMPOWERMENT

To create conditions for Travellers and Roma to participate actively in their own community, in Traveller and Roma organisations and in wider society.

#### *Objectives:*

- i* To Increase confidence and leadership within the Traveller and Roma community.
- ii* To facilitate reflection and constructive debate on sensitive and challenging issues within the Traveller and Roma community that impact on the community itself and affect relationships with wider society.
- iii* To support increased Traveller and Roma representation in Traveller and Roma organisations and Political, Economic, Social and Cultural spheres in Irish Society.

## Strategic Goals and Objectives ctd.,

### STRATEGIC GOAL 3 - RELATIONSHIPS

To gain equality for Travellers while recognising diversity within the Traveller community and support better relations between Travellers and the wider society.

#### *Objectives:*

- i* To promote solidarity and respect for diversity within the Traveller community.
  - ii* To promote greater understanding and learning of the realities and dynamics of discrimination and racism against Travellers in Irish society.
  - iii* To undertake a range of relationship building, problem solving and conflict transformation initiatives with Travellers and other communities.
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### STRATEGIC GOAL 4 – POLICY

To support the development, implementation and monitoring of policies that respect Traveller cultural identity and contribute to positive outcomes for Travellers.

#### *Objectives:*

- i* To produce a body of evidence that informs policy development that is inclusive of Travellers and respects their culture.
- ii* To pilot innovative approaches to work with Travellers and support the emergence of new programmes and initiatives.
- iii* To promote Traveller inclusion in data strategies and initiatives across the administrative system.
- iv* To represent, promote and monitor Traveller interests at a range of fora and to promote Traveller participation in policy making and decision making.