



PAVEE POINT
TRAVELLER AND ROMA CENTRE

Roma Project Annual Report – 2016



International Roma Day Celebration 2016

The Roma project works to progress the realisation of Roma health and human rights in Ireland. This is done through research and policy analysis at the national level and engagement with Roma communities and service providers. We work to provide consistent and current policy analysis in relation to Roma issues in the context of the wider European Roma and human rights policy framework.

Our goals:

- Progression of Roma rights and health outcomes through the development of evidence based policy and interventions.
- Increase Roma access to and engagement with health and other services.
- Emergence of strong Roma leaders, working from community development and human rights principles.
- Positive images of Roma in Irish society.



Progression of Roma rights and health outcomes through the development of evidence based policy and interventions.



National Needs Assessment

In July 2014, the Report of the Inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the removal of two Roma children from their families was published (the 'Logan Report'). Following this a national needs assessment commenced in January 2015 and the Roma project has worked to drive this work. We designed the study to have a specific health focus, including mental health, maternal health and also the social determinants of health – education, accommodation, employment, income and discrimination.

The first draft of report was submitted by the researcher in the first quarter of 2016. This report has gone through the following steps:

- Draft one submitted by researcher
- Circulated to Departments by DJE

- Revised and edited by Pavee Point
- Re-circulated to Departments and research advisory group
- Further editing by external editor and Pavee Point
- Re-circulated to Departments by DJE

The latest draft of the report has uncovered the following findings in relation to health:

- 38.9% of respondents reported that they do not have a GP.
- 50% of respondents reported that they have a medical card.
- 51.3% of respondents in this study reported more than 14 days of the previous month when their mental health was not good.

- In 36% of households women had difficulty accessing maternity services.
- In 24.6% of households it was reported that women did not attend a doctor or hospital before birth.

Pavee Point organised training in presentation skills and media training for Roma peer researchers in January 2016 in anticipation of the publication of the report. Along with this the Roma team developed a media guide sheet for peer researchers to assist them with media work. The participants learnt skills in the following areas:

- Media interviews: what to expect?
- First impressions and the importance of appearances.
- Advance preparation for media interviews.
- Behaviour during interviews.
- Dealing with difficulties.
- Key messages about the peer research project.
- Sample media interviews and practice interviews.

The full report will be published and disseminated in 2017.

National Traveller Roma Inclusion Strategy Steering Group

In 2016 we attended quarterly meetings of the steering group and inputted into the terms of reference and workplan. We provided substantive feedback to the National Traveller Roma Inclusion Strategy at steering group meetings – detailed further below.

Roma working group

The Roma working group was established in 2016. This was a major achievement and is the first national Roma policy body in Ireland. We engaged in dialogue with the Department of Justice on how the working group would be established and

assisted in developing a draft terms of reference. We participated in 3 meetings in 2016 and supported Roma members on the working group through organisation of additional meetings in Pavee Point.

Revising the National Traveller Roma Inclusion Strategy

Pavee Point have campaigned for a revised progressive and inclusive National Traveller Roma Integration Strategy (NTRIS) since 2012 when Ireland's first strategy was developed. In 2016 we continued to campaign for strategy with the following key elements:

- Achievable national goals with targets for Traveller and Roma inclusion.
- Actions to explicitly address racism towards Roma and Travellers and include measures to address gender inequality.
- Clear objectives, actions, impact indicators, time frames, clear lines of responsibility, funding mechanisms and strong inclusive monitoring and evaluation methods.

The Roma team participated in phase 2 and 3 of the consultations in 2016 and with colleagues submitted a formal proposal to the Department of Justice for the revision of the strategy. This included a significant focus on health and on the social determinants of health. In particular we have recommended:

- The HSE will ensure that Roma who do not have a stated income have access to medical cards.
- A working group that includes representatives from the HSE Social Inclusion Unit, Primary Care Unit, Roma support groups, and the HSE Medical Card application processing unit will be set up to

develop a pathway by which these people can apply for medical cards.

- Develop and resource a national Primary Health Care for Roma project.

European Commission

We provided an update to the European Commission on Ireland's progress as part of the Commission's assessment of the National Roma Strategies throughout Europe. This resulted in very strong guidance being provided by the European Commission in 2016. Available at http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma-report-2016_en.pdf

We met with the non-discrimination policies and Roma coordination team of the European Commission in October 2016 to highlight issues facing Roma in Ireland and to discuss ways of strengthening Ireland's National Traveller Roma Inclusion Strategy. We briefed Commission members and facilitated meetings with members of the Roma community who are currently homeless , with Roma living in substandard accommodation in Dublin and medical staff at the Capuchin Centre.



UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

We inputted into Pavee Point's lobbying materials and submissions to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child. Ireland was heard before the Committee in February 2016 and the Committee made a host of recommendations for the realisation of Roma children's rights. The recommendations below relate to health.

- The State party should ensure that data is disaggregated to clearly allow monitoring of the situation of Traveller and Roma children.
- The Committee also recommends that the State party undertake all necessary measures, including programmes for the issuance of medical cards in Traveller and Roma communities, to ensure that children there enjoy the same access to and quality of health services.
- The Committee urges the State party to conduct transparent, accessible and meaningful consultations with the Traveller and Roma communities in the State party to ensure their effective participation in the further elaboration and implementation of the National Traveller and Roma Integration Strategy, while ensuring that these consultations inform the inclusion of a clear human rights basis for the National Strategy, and on that basis formulate goals, targets, indicators, timeframes and funding mechanisms for it; and,
- The Committee urges the State party to make Child Benefit payments a universal payment that is not contingent of the fulfilment of Habitual Residence Condition.

Ireland's examination under the Universal Periodic Review

We submitted a report highlighting issues facing Roma to the Human Rights Council

and participated in the collaborative civil society report, along with direct lobbying in Geneva. Final recommendations included:

- 135.145 Adopt a progressive Traveller Roma inclusion strategy with clear goals; indicators; timeframes; and budget in consultation with affected groups (India);
- 135.147 Give special emphasis to employment, access to health care and the right to housing in the application of the national strategy on the inclusion of Travellers and Roma (Spain);
- 136.84 Take concrete measures for the issuance of medical cards in Traveller and Roma communities, to guarantee that such children enjoy the same access to and quality of health-care services as others (Islamic Republic of Iran);

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

We also submitted to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to ensure the Committee would include Roma in the list of issues to be submitted to the State. The List of issues and questions prior to the submission of the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Ireland were published in 2016 and included a significant focus on Roma; including the following:

- Please also provide information on the health situation of Traveller, Roma and older women, women migrant workers, women with disabilities and women in detention.
- Please provide updated information and data on the human rights situation of elderly women, including widows, migrant women, Traveller

and Roma women, women with disabilities in respect of education, employment and access to health services as well as their protection from sexual violence and abuse.

Council of European Commissioner for Human Rights

We met with Nils Muižnieks, the Human Rights Commissioner for the Council of Europe in November 2016 to highlight the issues facing the Roma community in Ireland. The Commissioner's report on his visit to Ireland is forthcoming.

Attended the Council of Europe Dialogue with Roma and Traveller Organisations in Strasbourg - June 2016.

The dialogue forum was convened by the Council of Europe for Traveller and Roma representatives, Council of Europe staff and Member State representatives. It addressed issues including internal and cross-border migration of Roma and combating hate speech against Roma and Travellers. This was an extremely useful meeting for sourcing reports that could frame the national needs assessment of Roma.

Presented at "The Politics of Hate: Community, Societal and Global Responses!" for the INHS Biennial Conference at University of Limerick in May.

The Roma team presented on the subject of "Anti-Roma hostility in Ireland: A policy analysis". This presentation examined:

- 1) How "neutral" policies combined with a legacy of institutional racism across Europe place many Roma in vulnerable situations;
- 2) The experience of discrimination that Roma face across services and in public spaces with a particular focus on Roma women's experience of intersectional discrimination.

Increasing Roma access to and engagement with mainstream health services



GP Service, Tallaght

In 2016 we continued our work in the delivery of Roma specific GP services in Tallaght as a response to lack of access to medical cards (and thus primary care services) for Roma in the area. Our staff member played a key role as a liaison with Roma using the GP service, a supporting role for Roma volunteers working at the service and is a sitting member of the Tallaght Roma Integration Project. This included presenting at the launch of the TRIPS annual report and prepared Roma volunteers from Tallaght for their presentations.

Individual and service provider enquiries

We also worked with individual Roma families and social workers in relation to access to health services or in relation to issues impacting upon health. Over 50 unique enquiries were received by a variety of service providers and Roma over 2016. Pavee Point Roma staff worked with service providers on emergency cases to communicate with

Roma families and the relevant providers. Staff were requested to attend child protection meetings with practitioners working with families also. Along with this we engaged in outreach work with Roma in Dublin City Centre to build up trust and facilitate engagement with available services.

Access to social protection – paper for service providers

A key issue that has been articulated by service providers from across sectors including the HSE is the difficulty in supporting Roma to access social protection payments. In recognition of this we worked with the HSE social inclusion representative in the South East and the Waterford Roma Interagency Group to contract a piece of work to provide full clarity on rights to social protection for EU citizens. In early 2017 a paper will be completed by Derek Shortall, an expert in the area of social protection law. This paper will be accompanied by practical resources for service providers.



Supporting strong Roma leaders, working from community development and human rights principles

Events were held to progress Roma rights and also to engaging Roma in community activism. A selection of events from 2016 are outlined below.

International Roma and Traveller day – promoting Roma activism.

Pavee Point celebrated International Roma and Traveller Day in Pavee Point with an afternoon of music and performances. Up to 100 members of Roma and Traveller communities were in attendance at this social event. The event started with a performance of the Romani national anthem and some reflections on the day from Traveller and Roma representatives. This was a day to celebrate the culture of Traveller and Roma communities and also to highlight

the human rights issues that continued in 2016.

Visit to Dáil Éireann

We organised a visit for Roma activists to Dáil Éireann to do a tour of the Dáil and meet elected representatives to discuss issues including political representation. We were greeted by Deputy McGrath and met with party representatives to discuss issues facing Roma in Ireland.





I am Immigrant

We worked with RTE2 to participate in the documentary “I am Immigrant” on racism in Ireland. This documented the story of Ricardo Muntean as a young Roma man living in Ireland. It was extremely positive in challenging stereotypes about Roma.

Roma Christmas Celebration

We held a Christmas party for Roma children in Pavee Point. This was an initiative suggested and supported by Roma community members. Roma volunteers helped organise the event and toys were provided for over 100 children. This was an opportunity for people to show solidarity with Roma in Ireland through the donation of toys and the response was extremely positive.



Responding to issues and challenges

We responded in the media to ongoing topical issues relating to Roma. This included responding to reports that the Government was approving an amendment to raise the age of marriage to 18 with no exceptions.

The issue of anti-Gypsism online continues and negative stereotypes about Roma are perpetuated with impunity. An example of this is a post that was shared about Roma women robbing in a shop and which received over 7,000 shares, over 9,000 emoticons and hundreds of comments which were extremely racist.

We were also made aware of instances of trafficking and work exploitation of Roma in 2016 which are further issues that need to be addressed. The other major issue arising is homelessness and lack of eligibility to homeless services.

A major challenge in 2016 continues to be securing funding for a pilot primary healthcare project for Roma. The development of such a project has been supported by Minister Frances Fitzgerald in her capacity as Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and by the Office for Social Inclusion in the HSE. The report by Ms Logan (2014) "Garda Siochana Act 2005 (Section 42) (Special Inquiries relating to Garda Siochana)" refers to the need to "develop support and advocacy services to mediate between members of the Roma community and State agencies".