Roma in Ireland: **Access to Fair and Decent Work**

> " Pavee Point works to address the needs of Travellers and Roma as minority ethnic groups experiencing exclusion, discrimination and racism using a community work approach based on the principles of human rights, participation, equality and interculturalism... "

Contents

Foreword

I am very pleased to support this important report on Roma employment. Roma in Ireland: Access to Fair and Decent Work builds on the previous advocacy and research work of Pavee Point, particularly the National Roma Needs Assessment report published in 2018, and provides new insight into the experience of the Roma community within the labour market in Ireland. I particularly welcome the report's recommendations, which aim to increase the participation of Roma in mainstream training and employment initiatives, and to address the obstacles in accessing and retaining employment through mainstreamed as well as targeted approaches.

The research emphasises the importance of educational attainment and training in the ability of Roma to access employment as well as the need to tackle language and literacy barriers, the impact of poor health and other adverse social determinants. The issue of intersectionality is raised, with a particular focus on Roma women, whose specific needs have to be addressed to ensure they have meaningful options to participate in the labour market.

We are now at a time of reflection on recent policy measures taken to further the full and fair inclusion of the Traveller and Roma communities in Irish society, and as we work to tackle and address the widespread challenges that remain.

While there has been progress in a number of areas, there is no doubt that persistent negative stereotyping and discrimination remains.

The report underlines the need to develop, and to implement, initiatives to address racism and discrimination faced by the Roma community, whether in accessing services, in the street, or in employment. The National Action Plan Against Racism, which I hope to launch shortly, will represent a national level, State-led, coordinated approach to eliminating racism in all its forms, including racism experienced by Roma. While they are welcome, national strategies are not sufficient. As this research report makes clear, all workplaces can, and should, do more to combat negative stereotyping and to foster an equality and diversity culture where individuals can, if they wish, identify themselves with pride as members of the Roma community, without fear of discrimination.

The National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021, or NTRIS, provides a framework for action on Traveller and Roma issues and sets out a wide range of specific and targeted policy approaches, designed in consultation with Traveller and Roma community representatives, to deliver improved outcomes for Travellers and Roma within Irish society. I am pleased that in the area of employment we will be able to draw from the present research report findings not only for the purposes of ongoing work on the development of the successor strategy to NTRIS but also for the upcoming Traveller and Roma Employment, Training, and Enterprise Plan, which is a commitment of the Programme for Government and of the Pathways to Work Strategy 2021 – 2025 led by the Department of Social Protection.

Finally, I would like to thank the Roma peer researchers and participants who contributed from their own personal stories and experiences to this insightful report, and to acknowledge the invaluable contribution of Pavee Point and of the Department of Applied Social Studies in Maynooth University.

I look forward to continuing to work constructively together with our partners to achieve our common goal of fairness and equality so that Roma will, as the report title states, have that Access to Fair and Decent Work that they so desire.

Roderic O'Gorman T.D.
Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre

Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre ('Pavee Point') is a national NGO working to promote Traveller and Roma rights in Ireland since 1985 through research, policy development, advocacy and collective community action. Pavee Point works to address the needs of Travellers and Roma as minority ethnic groups experiencing exclusion, discrimination and racism using a community work approach based on the principles of human rights, participation, equality and interculturalism.

Pavee Point Roma Employment Project

Pavee Point's Roma Employment Project aims to increase the participation of Roma in mainstream training and employment initiatives. The project supports implementation of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy's employment recommendations as well as supporting the implementation of the employment recommendations outlined in the National Roma Needs Assessment. The project also aims to focus on the creation of targeted, cross-government measures (involving the Departments of: Education, Enterprise, Trade and Employment, and Social Protection) to address the underlying factors that account for the employment gap between Roma and the majority population.

The Department of Applied Social Studies Maynooth University

The Department of Applied Social Studies (DAPPSS) Maynooth University works to promote human rights, social justice, equality and sustainability, nationally and internationally, through excellence and innovation in education, research and public engagement that contribute to the development of the social professions and applied social sciences. The Department aims to realise this mission through working in an applied context with practitioners and the communities affected by the issues at hand and to advance both knowledge and practice to inform policy making and public debates.

Research Partnership

The research uses a collaborative approach developed from the principles of community development: participation, empowerment, collective analysis and collective action, human rights and equality. It was framed, designed, developed and undertaken by a team of researchers from the Department of Applied Social Studies, Maynooth University and Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre including two Roma peer researchers who were involved in all stages of the research process.

Executive Summary

'Roma in Ireland: Access to Fair and Decent Work'

The aim of 'Roma in Ireland: Access to Fair and Decent Work' is to explore Roma experiences of employment in Ireland and to identify how best to improve Roma 'access to' and 'experience of' work. The research was commissioned by Pavee Point and funded by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The research was undertaken by a team of researchers from the Department of Applied Social Studies, Maynooth University and Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre.

The objectives of the research are to:

- Build on Pavee Point's previous research on the experience of Roma, such as the National Roma Needs Assessment, considering changes to the context since the COVID-19 crisis;

- Develop and use a methodology based on the principles of community development with significant Roma participation in the framing, design, data collection and analysis;

- Provide an employment opportunity for Roma peer researchers, and support the development of research skills;

- Provide detailed analysis of the experience of Roma in access to employment, as well as experiences of those in employment including precarious work and worker exploitation;

- Identify the challenges for Roma access and participation in the mainstream labour market;

- Link with the relevant stakeholders in the statutory and voluntary sector with a knowledge/remit supporting Roma employment;

- Consider the research findings in line with commitments made at the national policy level (National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy and Pathways to Work) and EU obligations (EU Roma Strategic Framework);

- Produce a report that clearly presents the findings, analysis and recommendations that can be used to influence policy-development, with a particular focus on informing the development of the Traveller and Roma Training, Employment and Enterprise Plan, as committed to in the Department of Social Protection's 'Pathways to Work' Strategy and Programme for Government.

The research used a collaborative approach based on community development principles collectivity, participation, empowerment, a structural analysis of inequality and a commitment for social change for equality and human rights. It was framed, designed, developed and undertaken by a team of researchers from the Department of Applied Social Studies, Maynooth University and Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre. This included two Roma peer researchers who were involved in all stages of the research process. The project provided education and training on research methodologies to create the conditions for full participation in all aspects of the research. Ethical approval was granted by Maynooth University's Social Research Ethics Committee. The research team interviewed 23 Roma living in Ireland with a particular focus on four areas with large Roma populations: Longford, Kildare, Wexford and Dublin. The research team also interviewed 11 staff from key state agencies, employment and training initiatives and staff from civil society organisations working with Roma.

The interviewees were invited to choose the language they wished to be interviewed in and to choose the location of the interview. Interviews with Roma were conducted in English, Czech, Slovak, Polish and Romanian. The interviews were transcribed and translated to English. The interviews were analysed collaboratively within the research team. Thematic analysis was used. This involved individual readings and group readings and deep discussion about the themes and what they meant in the context of Roma employment in Ireland.

The findings are presented in three sections. **The first section introduces Roma in Ireland.** The interviews portrayed a rich diversity within the Roma community. It revealed first generation Roma participants' motivations for migration as they actively seek a better life. Across all interviews, the strong desire and motivation of people to work was a core theme. Analysis highlighted the many barriers and challenges facing Roma as well as the significance of racism and discrimination. The experience of racism was reported in all aspects of life, including when availing of services, on the street and in employment. The analysis also showed how 'visibility as Roma' mediated this experience - where participants were able to hide their identity as Roma, they found it easier to access and remain in employment. Where Roma were easily identifiable as Roma, for example by dress or physical appearance, they reported experiencing significant racism and found it difficult to access or remain in employment. Interviewees reported that Roma women experienced more direct racism and discrimination than men. The interviews also showed how caring responsibilities for children, families with a member with a disability or older person in need of care, also impacted participants' ability to participate in the labour market, particularly for Roma women.

The research showed that there were some improvements for second generation Roma, who were born or raised in Ireland, however this wasn't across the board. Improvements were experienced where young people had access to primary and secondary education and opportunities for progression to further education or higher education. This was not the experience for everyone. Where families were marginalised and experienced unemployment, poverty and racism, where educational opportunities could not be accessed, poverty and exclusion limited opportunities for young people and families.

...caring responsibilities for children, families with a member with a disability or older person in need of care, also impacted participants' ability to participate in the labour market, particularly for Roma women...

Section Two presents the experience of those who tried to access employment and the experience of those who were working. The barriers to accessing work were both directly related to employment and broader than employment. Direct challenges included language, and literacy barriers, and access to training for employment. Broader barriers include racism, participants also reported health issues which were often caused by poor living conditions or poor employment conditions. Lack of appropriate transport and childcare support also featured as barriers to accessing employment for Roma, particularly for Roma women.

Many Roma interviewed also described how they faced racism in the workplace. Participants described how they had been targeted in work, treated differently to other employees and a power hierarchy where they were at the bottom. Participants also described how they were materially affected by racism, with experiences of not being paid properly, or at risk of injury where factory rotations or safety protocols were not followed for them. They found it difficult to address or challenge this racism and discrimination and described a lack of systems to report these experiences. Some participants also described significant delays in getting a PPS number; being emergency taxed for long periods; insecure employment and zero- hour contracts; issues with receiving full pay for their work done; and, losing jobs when it was learned that they are Roma. The issues faced in accessing and succeeding in employment are interconnected. In all cases, participants did not feel they could address the issues on their own and in most cases did not have somewhere to access the necessary supports.

In Section Three we present the findings on what works well in providing support to Roma families and communities. The interviews with Roma revealed the challenges they face but also provided some insight into how supports might be provided. Interviews with the service providers, gave insight into the challenges facing services delivery as well as possible ways in which these might be addressed. The issues faced by Roma in accessing and succeeding in employment are multifaceted and interconnected and thus the interventions must also be multi-dimensional. The key learning from this analysis is that targeted supports for Roma, that focus on employment, but also recognise the multi-faceted challenges facing the community and are resourced to support Roma families and communities, are the most successful way of providing support at a local level, in the short term. On the ground there is a need for interagency collaboration between state services/agencies and Roma/ community organisations to address these challenges.

In the medium to longer term, a specific action plan must be developed and resourced to make for how mainstream employment services accessible and effective for Roma. Clear pathways to employment services and basic social protection for Roma are needed, with specific supports to navigate the system and the digital divide essential. Clearly mapped access to Further Education and Training/ Higher education opportunities are also needed. The Roma Needs Assessment and this research provide some insights into the experience of Roma in Ireland, however, more research is needed.

Recommendations

Based on the analysis, the following recommendations are proposed:

Policy Recommendations

01 Develop a comprehensive Traveller and Roma Employment, Training and Enterprise Plan with clear targets, indicators, timelines, and allocated resources; in collaboration with Traveller organisations and organisations working with Roma as committed to in Pathways to Work 2021-2025 and Programme for Government 2020

02 Integrate and align the actions of the upcoming Traveller and Roma Employment, Training and Enterprise Plan with the implementation of employment actions on the next iteration of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy

03 Considering some of the additional regulatory barriers experienced by Roma and to equality proof mainstream empoloyment policy, implement ethnic equality monitoring (in line with human rights standards) across all relevant state departments (including Department of Social Protection, and Department of Entrerprise, Trade and Employment)

04 Review the application of legislation and policy, such as the Habitual Residence Condition and the PPS application process, which disproportionately impact Roma access to basic social protections and employment supports

05 Introduce clearly mapped access to employment services, social protection and other basic supports for Roma with specific supports to navigate the system, language barriers, and the digital divide

06 Introduce specific targets and targeted programmes to increase and improve particpation and outcomes for Roma in Further Education and Training, including in apprenticeship programmes

07 Review the Community Employment Scheme to facilitate better access and outcomes for Roma, including progressive pathways from the scheme

Recommendations

Recommendations for Targeted Supports/ Direct work with Roma

08 Ensure multi-annual and sustainable funding for Roma projects for meaningful engagement and better outcomes for Roma, including the continuation and expansion of DCEDIY Roma Employment Funding

09 Support interagency/collaborative approaches between State agencies and Roma projects for improved service delivery and employment supports at the local level

10 Develop targeted education programmes for Roma on employment rights (focusing on reporting mechanisms, supporting bodies, Equality legislation and Public Sector Duty)

11 Introduce specific measures for Roma women that incorporate flexibility in employment and childcare supports at a local level

12 Roma are a named target group in SICAP. An intersectional approach is needed to link community development work (in conjunction with organisations working with Roma) with supports for employment. This will strengthen this work at a local level and help to create the conditions to support local employment initiatives/social enterprise schemes

Workplace Recommendations

13 Develop clear mechanisms to address racism in work (anti-racism awareness, equality codes of practice), and ensure employers and State agencies are aware of their obligations

14 Workplace Relation Inspectorate to conduct targeted inspections of certain sectors, for example, sectors that feature in the research such as - waste management, agency work, factories, and fruit farms

15 Employment supports and services to include information on worker's rights, and complaints mechanisms (such as Work Relations Commission, Trade Unions, workers associations) and improve access to these mechanisms for Roma with targeted information and language supports

Chapter 01
Introduction and Background to the Research

Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre's Roma Employment Project aims to increase the participation of Roma in mainstream training and employment initiatives.

This research aims to explore the experience of Roma accessing and participating in employment in Ireland.

The research also reflects the current time and the impacts of emerging issues such as the accommodation and homeless crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pavee Point undertook a National Roma Needs Assessment in 2018. This research was commissioned by the Department of Justice and Equality in line with recommendation 4.2.3 of the Logan Report[1]. It was undertaken in partnership with the Department of Justice and Equality. The aim was to establish how best to improve state agencies' interaction with Roma in Ireland with a view to providing a better understanding of Roma experiences in accessing public services in Ireland; and identifying areas requiring further consideration. The data collection was undertaken by trained Roma peer researchers. The report covered key thematic areas such as; discrimination, language, poverty, employment and social protection, accommodation, health, and education.

The report revealed the stark finding that 20% of Roma surveyed were completely marginalised from services and supports. This included living in extreme poverty, in sub-standard accommodation, sometimes with no bathroom, kitchen or cooker. Accommodation was overcrowded, with reports of rats, damp and sewerage problems. Respondents reported children living in these situations of extreme poverty and deprivation, with children being sent to school hungry and with no lunch. A further 60% of respondents reported experiences of consistent poverty, including not always having enough fuel, food or heat.

Furthermore, the employment data showed that more than 83% of Roma surveyed were unemployed. Along with the high unemployment levels, Roma faced significant barriers in accessing any basic social protections, including some employment and training supports (e.g. Community Employment), social welfare payments (including child benefit), and housing supports. This is due to the way the European Directive 2004/38 (freedom of movement and residence) is implemented in Ireland, which requires applicants to meet the criteria of the Habitual Residence Condition (HRC) in order to access such services.

Nearly 20% of respondents reported that they did not have a PPS number which is vital for accessing a wide range of services, including applying for a medical card and social protection. This indicates a high level of marginalisation from services. Nearly fifty percent of Roma households surveyed were unsuccessful in their applications for social protection payments, even though these households had, on average, lived in Ireland for 8 years (2018; p. 62). Roma cited issues such as a lack of documentation on tenancy and employment history, inability to negotiate an unfamiliar system, discrimination, and language and literacy barriers as being key obstacles.

Beyond the information outlined above there is little reliable and up to date information on the Roma employment in Ireland. This research attempts to address this gap by exploring the experience of Roma in employment. In particular, the research is interested in the barriers Roma face in Ireland when attempting to access and participate in work. Similarly, the research aims to identify those facilitative factors that enable/ would enable Roma to engage with the labour market and the interventions, projects or supports that work well to support them. The study consisted of a literature review of available literature in Ireland and Europe; empirical research which entailed 23 semi semi-structured interviews with Roma in several locations around the country; and 11 qualitative interviews with policy actors involved in the design and delivery of policy and services. This research takes place in the context of ongoing policy development in relation to the Roma community and employment.

---

1   The Logan report was an inquiry into the removal of 2 Roma children from their families due to a suspicion that the children had been abducted based on their blonde haired/blue eyed appearance. The report was a milestone in Ireland as it acknowledged the mistreatment of Roma based on ethnicity and provided an impetus to take action in the political and policy sphere

Research with Roma in Ireland/ Europe

Research concerning Roma in Europe has most often been developed in the absence of Roma themselves (Matache, in Pavee Point, 2018).). At best, this is exclusionary and may lead to gaps and omissions. At worst, it leads to research that is based on presuppositions of otherness, inferiority, and subordination. Margareta Matache – FXB Center for Health and Human Rights, Harvard University in the Foreword to the 'Roma Needs Assessment', argues that collaborative research with Roma researchers 'should be understood beyond just the perspective of data collection and analysis; it is also a crucial means to give voice to the 'silent', to the Roma who lack discursive power, by strengthening their capacity and human capital'. To address these concerns, this research is collaborative and built on community development values with, alongside and for Roma.

The Roma Community in Europe and in Ireland

The Roma community are the largest minority ethnic group in Europe. It is estimated that there are 10-12 million Roma across Europe though it is also acknowledged that Roma in Europe are dramatically undercounted in official data. Roma share a common lineage, however, their migrations over the centuries to many different countries, mean that Roma in Europe are a diverse group with diversity of languages, religion, ways of living and economic situation. The term 'Roma' used at the Council of Europe refers to Roma, Sinti, Kale and related groups in Europe, including Irish Travellers and the Eastern groups (Dom and Lom). ' Roma' is the preferred term used by Roma representative groups across countries including Romania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland which are the main countries of origin for Roma groups in Ireland (Pavee Point, 2018, 22). Across Europe, Roma experience severe poverty, profound social exclusion, discrimination and barriers to exercising their fundamental rights (FRA, 2020).

Anti-Roma racism has continued to be a primary factor in disenfranchising Roma, both socially and economically in Europe and Ireland (Pavee Point, 2018). In a 2016 survey conducted by the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency, one in four Roma reported being discriminated against in the past year, and four out of ten reported it at least once in the past five years (FRA, 2016).

Since the mid-1990s Roma have lived in Ireland, some as economic migrants and some seeking asylum. Since the enlargement of the European Union, Roma have migrated to Ireland as EU citizens (Pavee Point, 2018). There remains a significant gap in the availability of reliable and comprehensive data in relation to the socio-economic, political and legal situation of Roma in Ireland. This is crucially linked to the lack of statistical and research data by ethnicity. Currently, ethnicity is not included as an administrative category in official data collection systems or in state surveys such as the QNHS and SILC. This results in serious gaps in knowledge about the situation and needs of both Travellers and Roma and absence of evidence based policies and practices to ensure the needs of minority ethnic communities are met. The lack of data contributes to significant obstacles in gathering evidence about racism and discrimination, making it difficult for relevant stakeholders to monitor effectively the implementation of any measures to combat discrimination (Pavee Point, 2016).

There have been some developments to this in recent times in Ireland including collection and publication of data in primary schools through the Primary Online Database since 2015 and post-primary schools return data to the Department of Education since 2016/17[2]. An ethnic identifier was also implemented in the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) in 2015 and the addition of a 'Roma' category in the Census under 'ethnic/ cultural background' in the most recent census collection in 2022. However, in relation to Roma participation in employment or data on access to or utilisation of social services, we know very little.

---

2   Ethnic or cultural background is an optional question that is asked to all parents and can only be recorded on the POD with a parent or guardian's written consent. The 2016/2017 POD shows that 1,323 students indicated that they were of a Roma ethnic or cultural background. Available at· https·//www.education.ie/en/Publications/Statistics/Primary-Online-Database-POD-/POD-Interesting-Facts-First-Look-at-Data-from-POD-2016-2017.pdf

The National Roma Needs Assessment, undertaken in 2018, estimated a small population of Roma, approx. 5000 in Ireland. These were thought to be mainly EU citizens, a mixture of first, second and third generation Roma from Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland with the majority from Romania (approx. 80%) (Pavee Point, 2018). This study noted that the largest communities of Roma were living in Dublin, Louth, Kildare, Wexford, Cork, Kerry, Clare and Donegal. At this time 70% of respondents had been living in Ireland for five years or more, with 14% living in Ireland 15 years or more. 63.3% of children in households were born in Ireland and 52.2% of children are Irish citizens (Pavee Point, 2018). From work across the country, supporting Roma, during and since the Covid-19 pandemic, local organisations estimate that the current Roma population is significantly underestimated.

Report Structure

Following this introduction, the report is structured into four subsequent chapters.

- Section Two provides a literature review of international and domestic literature relating to Roma and employment in Ireland and Europe.

- Section Three provides an overview of the methodology of the research.

- Section Four presents the findings from the qualitative interviews with Roma paticipants by the peer researchers, as well as the findings of interviews with service providers.

- Section Five discusses the main messages arising from the primary data of this research, together with the analysis of current literature and the current policy context. We conlude the report with key recommendations.

Chapter 02
Research and Policy Context in Europe & Ireland

This section provides an overeiew of the international and domestic literature relating to Roma and employment in Ireland and Europe.

It begins by exploring the experiences of Roma in the European context. It then reviews the wider context of the Irish labour market and. a brief introduction to the Irish policy context as it relates to Roma and employment.

Roma Employment in Europe

The most comprehensive study regarding employment for Roma in Europe is a EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA), undertaken in 2014, in cooperation with the UN Development Plan, the World Bank and the European Commission which described the situation of Roma in relation to poverty and employment in eleven EU Member States including Romania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary (where many Roma in Ireland originate from). The study revealed the extreme poverty that many Roma live in in Europe. 90 % of the Roma surveyed live in households with an income below national poverty lines. Approximately 40 % of Roma lived in households where somebody had to go to bed hungry at least once in the previous month. Fewer than one in three Roma surveyed reported to be in paid employment. One third of the Roma respondents said that they were unemployed. One third reported that they are homemakers, retired, not able to work or self-employed (FRA, 2014).

In 2017, FRA's second large-scale European Union-wide survey on migrants and minorities – EU-MIDIS II found that minority ethnic groups continue to face widespread discrimination across the EU and in all areas of life – most often when seeking employment. At the end of 2018, FRA undertook a second survey on Roma and Travellers in six EU Member States: Belgium, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom as the 2017 study research did not cover these countries (FRA, 2020, 12).

In Ireland this research focused solely on Travellers. Nevertheless the findings more broadly pertain to the experience of Travellers and Roma across Europe. The findings of this research show that twenty five percent of Roma and Travellers who had been looking for work in the 12 months before the survey felt discriminated against because of being Roma/Travellers. Almost half of all job-seeking Roma and Travellers felt discriminated against at least once within the last five years (FRA, 2020, 53). The share of Roma and Travellers who had paid work in the four weeks preceding the survey was very low across all survey countries and well below the employment rate of the general population. (FRA, 2020, 53). A striking finding is that among Roma and Travellers, 26 % of men and 11 % of women think it is hopeless to look for a job or think they will not be hired because of their Roma and Traveller background (FRA, 2020, 53). The effects of this include poverty and financial exclusion. In all countries 25% of Roma and Travellers do not have a bank account (FRA, 2020, 53). Actual and perceived exclusion from society in many areas of life are major barriers to accessing the labour market. In response to the specific question about the main reason not looking for work, resignation and lack of hope 'because there are no jobs/it's hopeless' and 'Nobody hires me because of my Roma/ Traveller background (FRA, 2020, 53).

A Snapshot of Slovakia and Romania

Many Roma living in Ireland come from Slovakia and Romania. This section provides a short overview of the situation for Roma in some of their countries of origin.

Slovakia has one of the largest Roma communities in Europe yet the social and employment situation is dire (Kahanec et al. 2020). The Roma population suffers from a high risk of poverty and social exclusion. In the 2020 report, 87% of Roma in Slovakia were at risk of poverty compared to 13% in non-Roma population. Only 20% of Roma aged 16 years and older described their main activity as employed or self-employed, only 43% of Roma living in Slovakia claim any paid work done in the last four weeks and almost half of the Roma households are unemployed (48%). This is the highest number in the region, compared to 32% in Czech Republic and 23% in Hungary. The data also shows a substantial difference between the outcomes of Roma women and men in the labour market: Roma women experience lower rates of paid work (32%) than Roma men. The proportion of young Roma not in work, education or further training is 65% compared to 14% for the majority population (Kahanec et al. 2020). The worst situation is observed for young Roma women in Slovakia, of which 77% are not in work, education or further training, compared to 52% of young Roma men. Almost half of the unemployed Roma in Slovakia participate in public works schemes, which often provide the only available income for Roma; however, these programs do not improve relevant skills for the participants who end up unable to escape the unemployment trap and find work in the open labour market. 54% of Roma in Slovakia also felt discriminated against because of their Roma origin in the last five years. The report highlights the need for targeted and gender-sensitive measures to address the inequalities faced by Roma.

The EU-MIDIS report 17 highlights the extreme poverty and social exclusion experienced by Roma in **Romania**. The report states that 80 % of Roma lived below the 'at risk-of-poverty threshold'; one in three Roma lived in a dwelling without running water; one in 10 lived in a dwelling without electricity. The income gap between the Roma population and the majority population remains and is even widening. According to the FRA Fundamental Rights Report 2019, Roma continue to face discrimination in access to education, employment, healthcare and housing. Anti-Roma hatred remains an important obstacle to their inclusion. According to FRA data, the social and economic situation of Roma across the EU has changed little in recent years, undermining national and EU efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular Goal 10 on reducing inequalities within countries.

The Irish Labour Market

Recent research show that Ireland has a diverse workforce. The 2016 Irish Census shows that 17.3% of the population in Ireland was born abroad and that 14.9% of the workforce are nationals from other countries. Research also highlights that ethnicity and nationality have an impact on how people access and participate in the labour market. Discrimination and racism against migrants have been evident in the labour market for decades. In 2008, non-Irish nationals were three times more likely to experience discrimination while looking for work. Moreover, in the workplace non-Irish nationals were twice as likely to experience discrimination as Irish nationals ((ESRI and Equality Authority, 2008). Research carried out by the Economic and Social Research Institute into the impact of Ethnicity and Nationality in the Irish Labour Market showed that Black non-Irish people are less than half as likely to be employed as White Irish and five times as likely to experience discrimination when seeking work (ESRI and Equality Authority, 2008). The research also showed that White EU-East nationals had no difference in employment rates, but that this group is more likely to experience discrimination in the workplace. Members of this group are also considerably less likely to occupy managerial and professional jobs. The recent 'Monitoring Decent Work in Ireland' research by IHREC and the ESRI highlighted that White Irish Travellers had lowest rate of employment among any of the listed groups (11 per cent) (2021, 49). In 2014, the National Employment Rights Authority (NERA) carried out 5,591 inspections. 43% of these inspections uncovered incidences of labour exploitation. The highest incidences of exploitation were in the hotel and catering sector where migrant workers are concentrated. NERA identified the 'active exploitation of workers whether through control by employers, undocumented and invisible work, or long hours' as a particular challenge (MRCI, 2020).

Recent research also highlights precarity as a key feature of the Irish labour market. According to the Think-tank for Action on Social Change (TASC), (Pembroke, 2020, 21) one in four people work for low pay in Ireland, and about 44% of workers are 'precariously employed'. The Nevin Economic and Research Institute (NERI) (Sweeney, 2015, 25) also points to a hidden precarity in the Irish labour market and Social Justice Ireland highlights the issue of underemployment (Social Justice Ireland, 2019)..

The 2020 Quarterly National Household Survey shows that migrant workers are concentrated in service sectors such as food, retail, health-related services and personal household services. These jobs are essential to the functioning of the labour market, yet they remain undervalued, and underpaid. These sectors also have a higher incidence of labour exploitation (MRCI, 2016, 2).

Furthermore, the Migrant Integration Policy Index (2020) identified labour market mobility in the Irish labour Market as below average for migrants. Research by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) found that the migrant pay gap widened from 19 % to 21% from 2015-2020. Research by the Migrant Rights Centre Ireland found that migrants still face many barriers in accessing and progressing within employment. Underemployment was a key feature of people's experiences. The experience of discrimination was a common theme across the majority of respondents, both racism and gender based discrimination. Harassment and bullying were also highlighted. The lack of recognition of experience and qualifications by employers was an issue as well as poor pay rates and lack of promotional opportunities (MRCI and IHREC, 2020).

Roma in the Irish Labour Market

Similarly, research with the Roma community indicate that 78.9% of Roma reported feeling discriminated against in attempting to access employment. 83.3% of Roma are unemployed and 17.6% of Roma households report begging as a source of income in order to survive (Pavee Point, 2018). In addition, 84% of Roma feeling reported discriminated against in attempting to access social protection and almost two-thirds of Roma who were successful in obtaining a social welfare payment, felt they were discriminated against in accessing payments. Roma with fluent English were less likely to report experiencing discrimination in accessing social protection, than Roma with limited English. Nevertheless, data collected by Crosscare in 2022 shows that 95% of the Roma households they worked with had a right to work in Ireland (National Roma Network, 2022, 13). Despite the impact of COVID-19 on the economy, of those that Crosscare engaged with, at least 74.4% were either still working or had attained worker status (National Roma Network, 2022, 13).

Educational disadvantage is also an issue in the community and relates to how Roma participate in the labour market.. The average duration of schooling is only five years (Pavee Point, 2018). In addition, 39% of adults in households reported that they had never been to school, with a marked gender difference - 41% of women reporting they have never been to school, compared to 22% of men (Pavee Point, 2018). Proficency in English is also a challenge with 71% of respondents reported having difficulty in reading English (Pavee Point, 2018). This, coupled with low levels of educational attainment, mean that employment supports for Roma need to consider literacy issues as well as language barriers for this community.

Health is also a challenge facing the Roma community both in terms of community well being and in the ability of the community to access and participate in employment (Pavee Point, 2018). In the Roma Needs Assessment, nearly half of respondents reported that they do not have access to medical cards and GP care. Poor mental health rates were extremely high with 51.3% of respondents reporting more than 14 days of the previous month when their mental health was not good (Pavee Point, 2018, 14).

Roma experience a lack of access to state supports and benefits where they fail to satisfy the Habitual Residence Condition and/or where they cannot prove a right to reside (Pavee Point, 2018; 2019). There is also a failure by statutory stakeholders to provide culturally competent services and to address the levels of social exclusion and socio-economic disadvantage that hinder access to education, training and employment networks and opportunities (Pavee Point, 2019; Watson et al. 2017).

Policy Context in Europe and Ireland

The development of Roma inclusion policies in Europe can be situated within the context of the work of the European Union (EU), Council of Europe (CoE), and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). United Nations human rights bodies, in particular the UN Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, have also made important recommendations for the realisation of Roma rights.

In 2011, the European Commission published an EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020 with the aim of making a 'tangible difference in Roma lives' through coordinated action at the national level, across Europe. The Framework document required each Member State to draw up a national Roma Integration Strategy up to 2020 with specific actions and funding streams in areas of education, employment, health and housing. The strategies are required to follow the '10 Common Basic Principles on Roma inclusion' by the Council of the European Union and have a robust monitoring mechanism to ensure concrete results for Roma.

The first EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies ended in 2020, and the new EU Roma Strategic Framework for Equality, Inclusion and Participation (the EU Roma Strategic Framework 2020-2030) was introduced. The European Commission issued a communication to all Member States, including Ireland, to further develop and update their post 2020 National Roma Strategic Frameworks (NRSFs). Developed during the COVID-19 crisis, the EU Roma Strategic Framework takes into account the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on Travellers/Roma by setting out guidance on addressing key challenges, supporting digital inclusion and ensuring environmental justice. The Framework sets clear European targets for 2030 under seven common objectives.

EU Roma Strategic Frameworks Objectives for 2030

- **01** Increase effective equal access to adequate desegregated housing and essential services
- **01** Fight and prevent anti-gypsyism and discrimination
- **02** Reduce poverty and social exclusion to close the socio-economic gap between Roma and the general population
- **03** Promote participation through empowerment, cooperation and trust
- **04** Increase effective equal access to quality inclusive mainstream education
- **05** Increase effective equal access to quality and sustainable employment
- **06** Increase effective equal access to quality and sustainable employment
- **07** Improve Roma health and increase effective equal access to quality healthcare and social services

Ireland's EU Framework is the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (NTRIS) 2017 – 2021. This Strategy is monitored by the NTRIS Steering Group comprised of officials from relevant Departments, Traveller and Roma civil society representatives, and chaired by the Minister at the Department of Children, Disability, Equality, Integration and Youth. This strategy is currently under evaluation, along with the National Migrant Integration Strategy, and the National Strategy for Women and Girls. Following this evaluation, a second National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy will be developed based on the EU Roma Strategic Framework 2020-30 and the outcome of the national evaulation. The publication of the next iteration of NTRIS is expected at the end of 2023.

In Ireland, Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 outlines a positive duty requirement on public sector bodies to have regard for the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and protect human rights. In their strategic plans, public bodies are required to assess equality and human rights issues relevant to their functions, take proactive steps to address these by setting out policies and plans; and report on developments and achievements in their annual reports. The Local Government Reform Act 2014 created new structures called Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) comprised of stakeholders from local government, local development, state agencies and the community and voluntary sector to enable Local Authorities to lead on economic, social and community development at a local level. As part of this, the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), managed and overseen by the LCDCs, named Roma as a target group.

The Implications of the Habitual Residence Condition on Employment

Along with high unemployment levels, the European Directive 2004/38 on the freedom of movement and residence and the habitual residence condition have had a negative impact on Roma (Pavee Point, 2018). The application of the habitual residence condition and the 'right to reside' test has meant many Roma are not entitled to any social protection measures. Roma face difficulties meeting HRC requirements due to endemic discrimination in education and in the workplace, making it difficult for Roma to demonstrate a strong pattern of employment in the formal workforce. With low literacy levels and language barriers for Roma, applicants may have difficulty producing the documentation needed to prove habitual residency and may face difficulties responding to the Department. They also may not have proof of address if they are living with extended family. There is little support for applicants in making their applications, in particular the availability of suitable translators and interpreters; inconsistency in decision-making is also a concern.

The impact of this means that many Roma are often not entitled to employment and training supports (e.g. Community Employment), social protection including child benefit and housing supports. 48.1% of respondents who had applied for social protection were unsuccessful, 17.6% of adults reported begging as their source of income and 14% reported having no income (Pavee Point, 2018). A lack of access to social protection was also identified as a barrier to accessing supports for women experiencing domestic violence. 19.8% of respondents reported that they do not have a PPS number which is vital for accessing a wide range of services, including applying for a medical card and social protection. This indicates a high level of marginalisation from services (Pavee Point, 2018).

Barriers to public services were ineligibility for medical cards, training and employment schemes, social protection payments and homeless or other supports. This was either due to lacking the right to reside or the habitual residence criteria or the application of the Housing Circular 41/2012 (Cairde, 2016). In 2014, Pavee Point made several recommendations to the Department of Social Protection that would alleviate some of the inequalities faced by the Roma community. These include the recommendation to provide a humanitarian response and ensure that Roma are not living without basic food and shelter in Ireland, as well as an equality review of the HRC criteria,, in particular in relation to ethnicity and gender. Pavee Point also called for Child Benefit to become a truly universal payment that is not contingent on the fulfillment of the Habitual Residence Condition, as well as better support for aplicants, particularly interpreters; that training be delivered to deciding officers, and disaggregated data on applications refusals, appeals and appeal outcomes, be collected and published, in relation to the HRC.

Accommodation

According to the Roma Needs Assessment (2018) 46% of Roma report being homeless at some stage in their lives. The major issues that emerged in relation to access to accommodation are related to discrimination. The majority of Roma live in Private Rented Accommodation, and 93% report facing discrimination when trying to rent a home, with landlords refusing to accept Roma as tenants (Pavee Point, 2018). The 2017 European Value Survey highlighted negative attitudes towards Roma in housing noting that 62% of the population over 18 years of age oppose having Roma as their neighbours (REF, 2017). Other issues relating to safe and affordable accommodation are severe overcrowding; poor living conditions, a lack of security of tenure; homelessness; and a lack of access to public services

including social housing and housing assistance payment. The Roma Needs Assessment study revealed that many Roma are living in severely overcrowded and unsafe conditions . The RNA report highlighted that 12.4% of respondents do not have a kitchen. 9.6% do not have a cooker and 13.5% do not have a fridge.

In Ireland, the Housing Circular 41/2012 was introduced in December 2012 for the stated purpose of providing "advice [to local authorities] considering whether to accept an application for social housing support from a non-Irish national". Paragraphs 5 and 6 of the Circular state that local authorities should only assess housing applications from non-Irish EU/EEA nationals where: they are in employment in the State; they are unable to work due to accident or injury, or; they are a jobseeker with a record of 52 weeks employment in the State (FLAC, 2020, p. 37). According to the FLAC report, two serious issues with the Circular have repeatedly arisen in FLAC's casework. First, there is no clear legal basis for the circular but it is rigidly applied by local authorities. Second, the Circular is contrary to EU law in a number of respects.
This is very important context for this research. Accommodation is a significant issue in the Roma community as even if working in mainstream employment, many Roma can't register with the local council for housing supports.

Roma can face difficulties establishing their local connection.. It is often the person's place of employment that determines this, which can negatively impact Roma, as their place of work can change more regularly due being in precarious employment (National Roma Network, 2022, 5). Also for Roma families living in temporary homeless accommodation, they can be moved regularly and this can make it difficult to maintain employment.

Employment Policy: Pathways to Work

The Pathways to Work 2021-2025 document is the most significant mainstream employment policy for addressing Roma employment needs currently. This aligns with actions in National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (NTRIS) which aim to address barriers to Traveller and Roma employment.

Actions in Pathways to Work include:

- **Reserving places** on public employment programmes for people from disadvantaged and minority backgrounds (Commitment 66)

- **Developing** a Traveller and Roma Training, Employment and Enterprise Plan (Commitment 67)

- **Exploring** the feasibility of introducing Traveller (and/or Roma)-specific Group Information Sessions over the lifetime of the strategy (Commitment 68)

- **Engaging** with community representative bodies to produce Traveller (and/or Roma)- specific employment service engagement tools (Commitment 69)

- **Consulting** with stakeholders from the Traveller (and/or Roma) community to advise the Public Employment Service (Commitment 70)

- **Implementing** the Public Appointments Service Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2021-2023, including by supporting engagement with representative organisations and individuals from diverse backgrounds to understand employment barriers and to raise awareness of public sector employment opportunities among these individuals (Commitment 71)

- **Considering** the proposal to make the higher level of the JobsPlus subsidy available to all employers who recruit an unemployed person of Traveller or Roma ethnicity (Commitment 72)

Some progress has been made on these commitments. A consultation for the Traveller and Roma Training, Employment and Enterprise Plan is due to take place Q2 2023. The Traveller and Roma Internship Scheme announced in October 2022, which offered 12 month paid internship contracts in clerical and executive officers roles is also a welcome step.

Conclusion

This section provided an overeiw of the international and domestic literature relating to Roma and employment in Ireland and Europe. The next section will outline the research objectives and the methodology.

Chapter 03
Methodology

The aim of 'Roma in Ireland: Access to Fair and Decent Work' research is to explore Roma experiences of employment in Ireland and to identify how best to improve Roma 'access to' and 'experience of' work.

The objectives of the research are to:

- Build on Pavee Point's previous research on the experience of Roma, such as the National Roma Needs Assessment, considering changes to the context since the COVID-19 crisis;

- Develop and use a methodology based on the principles of community development with significant Roma participation in the framing, design, data collection and analysis;

- Provide an employment opportunity for Roma peer researchers, and support the development of research skills;

- Provide detailed analysis of the experience of Roma in access to employment, as well as experiences of those in employment including precarious work and worker exploitation;

- Identify the challenges for Roma access and participation in the mainstream labour market;

- Link with the relevant stakeholders in the statutory and voluntary sector with a knowledge/remit supporting Roma employment;

- Consider the research findings in line with commitments made at the national policy level (National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy and Pathways to Work) and EU obligations (EU Roma Strategic Framework);

- Produce a report that clearly presents the findings, analysis and recommendations that can be used to influence policy-development, with a particular focus on informing the development of the Traveller and Roma Training, Employment and Enterprise Plan, as committed to in the Department of Social Protection's 'Pathways to Work' Strategy and Programme for Government.

The research used a collaborative approach based on community development principles collectivity, participation, empowerment, a structural analysis of inequality and a commitment for social change for equality and human rights.. It was framed, designed, developed and undertaken by a team of researchers with members from Department of Applied Social Studies, Maynooth University and Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre including two Roma peer researchers involved in all stages of the research process. The project provided education and training on research and research methodologies to create the conditions for full participation in all aspects of the research. Ethical approval was granted from Maynooth University Social Research Ethics Committee. The research team interviewed 23 Roma from across Ireland with a particular focus on four areas with large Roma populations: Longford, Kildare, Wexford and Dublin. The research team also interviewed 11 staff from key state agencies, employment and training initiatives and Roma employment support programmes.

The interviewees were invited to choose the language they wished to be interviewed in and to choose the location of the interview. Interviews with Roma were conducted in English, Czech, Slovak, Polish and Romanian. The interviews were analysed collaboratively within the research team. Thematic analysis was used. This involved individual readings and group readings and deep discussion about the themes and what they meant in the context of Roma employment in Ireland.

Community Development Principles

'Research is inevitably politically engaged, be it by default, by design or by simple recognition. No matter how deep the commitment to value neutrality, decisions regarding choice of subject, paradigmatic frameworks and even methodological tools inevitably involve political choices, not only in terms of the discipline, but even in terms of the wider political purposes and goals' (Baker et al., 2004, 169). The methodology for this research is based on the principles of community development/ community work. These include:

- Collectivity - collection analysis and collective action

- Participation

- Empowerment

- Structural analysis of inequality

- Commitment to social change for equality and human rights

Community Work is a developmental activity comprised of both task and a process, working in, with and alongside communities to achieve a more socially just society in which human rights are realised and discrimination is addressed (AIEB, 2016). The community work approach to research is concerned with collective analysis and collective action, community knowledge is valued alongside knowledge of the research process. Research used within the frame of community work is used as a practice tool for social change. Community development led research can contribute to a deeper and more nuanced understanding of a range of social issues and provide a basis for taking research informed action within and alongside those communities as well as for policy makers.

The research team included a researcher from Maynooth University, two Roma peer researchers and members of the Roma Programme in Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre who worked collaboratively throughout the entire research process from identifying the research focus, through the methodology analysis and write up.

Principles of Co-Production

All members mst be part of the conversation from the beginning	The team must consider POWER and act on this at all stages	The research is value-based
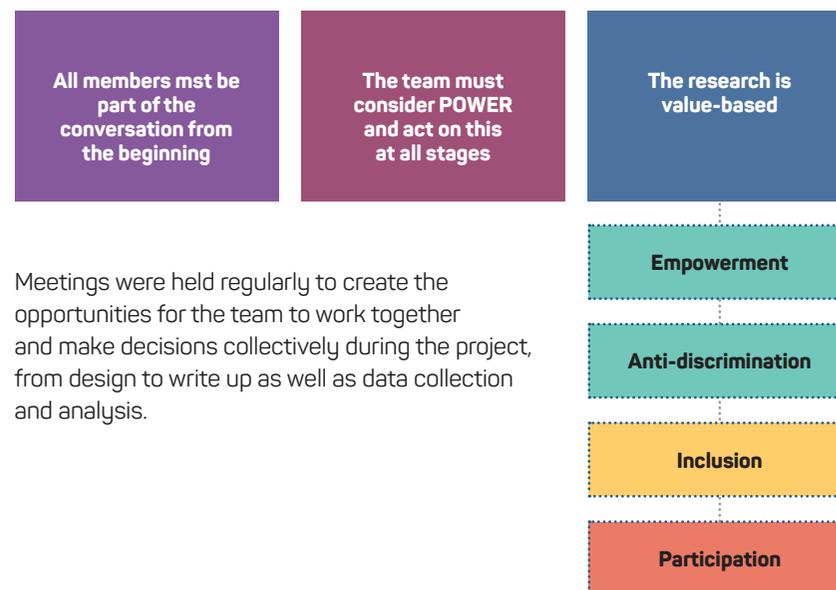
Meetings were held regularly to create the opportunities for the team to work together and make decisions collectively during the project, from design to write up as well as data collection and analysis.

Empowerment

Anti-discrimination

Inclusion

Participation

Training Sessions for Research Team

Full induction in Pavee Point

Training and mentoring in research and interview skills

Child protection and Safe-guarding training

Research Anaylsis – Thematic Analysis

Writing the Research Report

The team carried out desk research and wrote the literature review and the policy context. The team led the communication about the research in the community, led the recruitment, and support for participants who had questions about the process or who wanted to talk to someone after they were involved. The team facilitated the one-to-one interviews. Each of the team analysed the interviews. Two of the team are Roma and this created a connection in the community that would have otherwise been a challenge. It also facilitated a much deeper analysis of the interviews with the Roma community.

Research Ethics

Ethics approval was granted by the Social Science Research Ethics Committee in Maynooth University. Researchers worked to establish a good rapport with all participants to create an environment for an empowering experience. Immediately before each interview each participant was introduced to the study. The researchers talked through the research information sheet and consent form with the participant to ensure that issues of literacy would not act as a barrier to informed participation. In all cases, consent forms were signed, and verbal consent was recorded at the beginning of each interview. Interviewers also discussed the right to stop the interview at any stage or indeed to withdraw from the research at any time without reason.

They made it clear that the team were grateful for participants time and participation. These actions aim to address the inherent issue of power imbalance that comes with any research project. Power differentials in research do not simply dissipate just because a community developement approach is used, ongoing dialogue and agreed actions are required between the researchers, peer researchers and participants to address these concerns throughout the research process. To further support the peer researchers, the interview schedule included a structured debrief for the interviewers after each interview with their Coordinator.

Profile of Interview Participants

The research team interviewed 23 Roma. Participants originated from Slovakia (5), Czech Republic (5), Romania (7), and Poland (2), as well as 4 Roma who are second generation, born/raised in Ireland. Ages ranged from 18 years to over 65 years. The research aimed to have a gender balance with 9 men, and 14 women interviewed. Interviewees also had a wide variety of worker status: unemployed, employed, student, retired, working in the home, not working due to injury/disability.

Profile of Interview Participants: Policy Makers and Service Providers

The research team also interviewed 11 key stakeholders who have a knowledge of Roma and employment. This included staff working at both national and local level - working in policy, service provision, and civil society organisations working with Roma. These interviews provide a wider context and analysis to the Roma participant interviews.

Post-Interview

Participants were offered the opportunity to check the content post interview in one of two ways: through listening to the audio tapes or checking the transcript of the interview with a further opportunity to consent or decline consent.

Reseach participants were invited to a presentation and discussion of the research findings in advance of publication.

Analysis & Write-up

The research team analysed the qualitative data together using thematic analysis. The final report was drafted collaboratively across the research team. The draft report was also shared with the wider team in Pavee Point, the Pavee Point Research Advisory Group as well as community members for checking and insights. The Roma peer researchers continue to work on the issues identified in this research for Pavee Point as dedicated community workers during and after the research project.

Chapter 04
Findings

This chapter presents the findings from the qualitative interviews carried out with Roma by the peer researchers.

It also presents the findings of interviews with service providers.

The first section introduces the Roma Community in Ireland. Section Two presents the experience of those who tried to access employment and experiences of working. Section Three presents the findings with a particular focus on what works well in providing support to Roma families and communities.

Section 1:
What do we know about Roma in employment in Ireland?

This section introduces Roma in Ireland. The interviews portray a rich diversity within the Roma community and reveal participants' motivations for migration as they actively seek a better life. Across all interviews, the strong desire and motivation of peoples to work was a core theme. The interviews reveal the different barriers and challenges facing Roma as well as the significance of racism and discrimination. The experience of racism was reported in all aspects of life, including in availing of services, on the street and in employment. The analysis also showed how 'visibility as Roma' mediated this experience. Where interviewees were not visibly identifiable as Roma they found it easier to access and remain in employment, however, where they were easily identifiable as Roma, for example by dress or physical appearance, they experienced significant racism and found it difficult to access or remain in employment. The findings revealed ongoing health inequalities across the community, many from poor living or working conditions as well as marginalisation from services. This is also related to how caring responsibilities, for children, family memberswith a disability or older persons in need of care, also impacted participants' ability to participate in the labour market.

Motivations for migration

Many of the interview participants described why they left their country of birth, as well as other European countries, and why they came to Ireland. Participants decribed escaping endemic racism and discrimination in their home countries. Motivation to live here was not just about employment but also quality of life. Many described their ambition to secure a better life for their children including educational opportunities.

> ▪▪▪I decided that for the sake of a better life, for the sake of my children, to have a better life, to have a better future(p9)▪▪▪

Aspirations for Work

Every interviewee expressed a strong desire to work and commitment to work. The majority had an experience of working/ being self-employed. Many of the participants had worked across a number of employment sectors. Participants described how they adapted to opportunities as they arose or were needed. One young male participant had worked as a forklift driver, a painter decorator and as a barber at different times.

■■■that's great...as long as I find a job... I'm satisfied... but the children go to school, they come from school and they have everything, they have food, they have everything(p22)■■■

Many participants expressed a commitment to learning the English language as this was understood as an important dimension to participating in the Irish labour market.

■■■when you are coming to live in Ireland, you just have to learn the language - if you want to build a future for you, for your family in this country(p22)■■■

■■■speaking English creates opportunities(p12)■■■

Racism & Discrimination in Daily Life

Racism and discrimination is a feature of the daily lives of all Roma in Ireland and across Europe. Participants described the racism they experienced throughout their lives and across all dimensions of their lives. Participants had many examples of having the experience of racism.

These experiences ranged from comments made in passing to the participants as they navigated life/ engaged with the community/ public to stronger experiences that shaped their ability to work and thrive. Participants reported experiencing racism from Irish and from other migrants.

▪▪▪There were tones from school until the point where I was literally embarrassed of my mom coming into my class for my class mates to see her.

Imagine going through that when you're five. The amount of time my mom was thrown out of a store and refused service because they all thought she was a stealing Romanian gypsy(p19)▪▪▪

▪▪▪And one day I walked to the shop just to buy myself clothes and I had of course, I had money in my pocket, you know, and the lady kept following me and I asked her politely I says, is there any reason why you're following me?

Like I'm just trying to do a bit of shopping. Ah, no, no, I'm just fixing something here, I'm just fixing the clothes. Okay. I kept going, I kept going, and she kept following me, so I said to her, I'm not going to steal, like, you don't have to be following me. She goes, I'm so sorry, but there's people, your kind of people she said to me, that were here stealing and we're just trying to avoid it(p19)▪▪▪

Hiding Identity

The research showed that there were some improvements for second generation Roma who were born or raised in Ireland - however this wasn't across the board. Improvements were experienced where young people had access to primary and secondary education and opportunities for progression to further education or higher education. However, this was not the experience for everyone. Where families were marginalised and experienced unemployment, poverty and racism, where educational opportunities could not be accessed, poverty and exclusion limited opportunities for young people and families.

Second generation Roma, with positive experiences, especially younger Roma felt that they could be more open about their ethnicity.

■■■I'm pretty open, everyone knows, I don't mind talking to anyone about it (p6)■■■

However, this was not true in all cases and was most often related to length of time since migration to Ireland, language aquisition, education, and access to social supports in Ireland. Many Roma do not identify publicly as Roma.

■■■Second generation Roma are having a better life and we're having, we're given opportunities, but there is still this stigma going around, and regardless there is a stigma going around, there's still barriers for us (p18)■■■
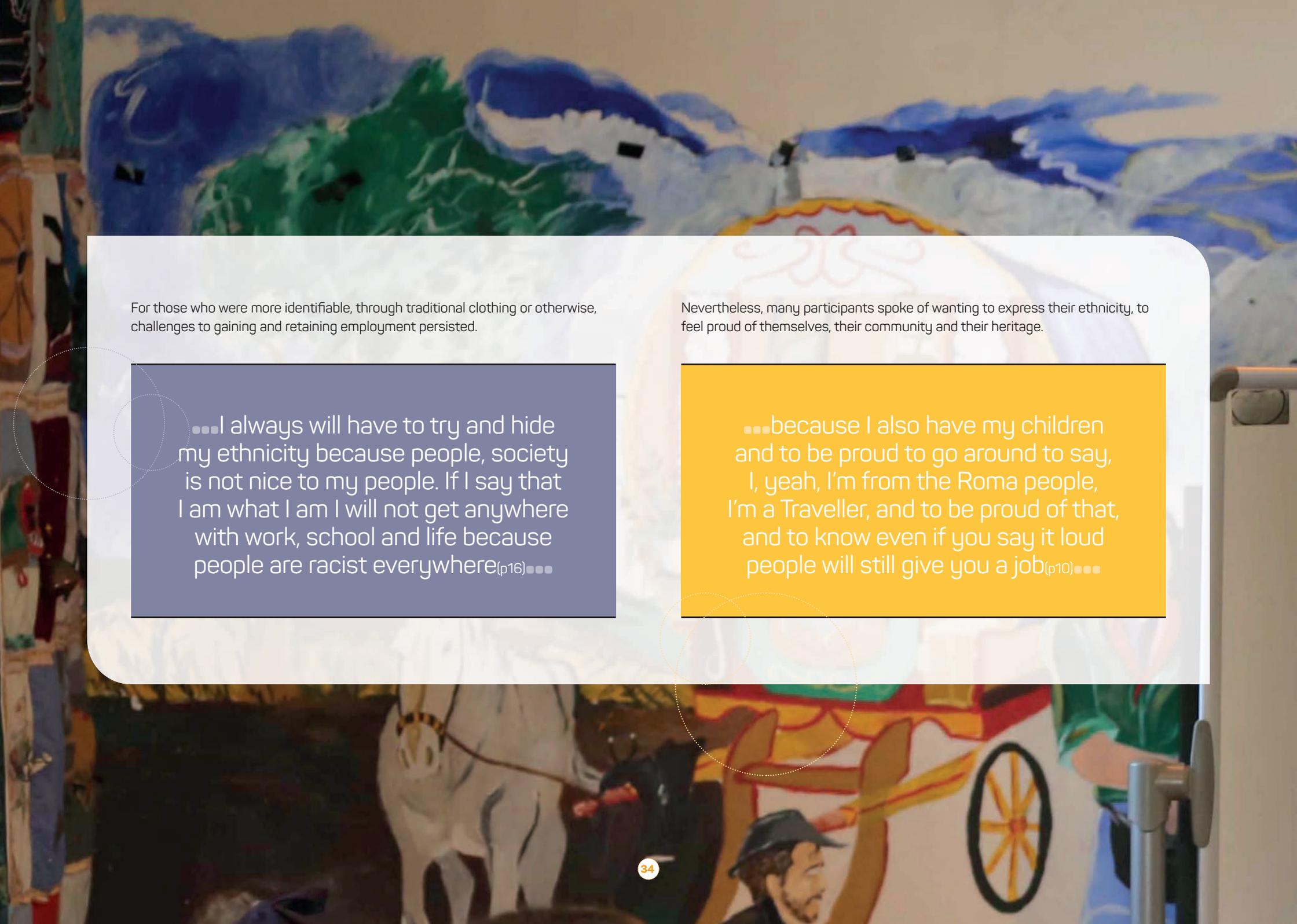
For those who were more identifiable, through traditional clothing or otherwise, challenges to gaining and retaining employment persisted.

Nevertheless, many participants spoke of wanting to express their ethnicity, to feel proud of themselves, their community and their heritage.

⬤⬤⬤I always will have to try and hide my ethnicity because people, society is not nice to my people. If I say that I am what I am I will not get anywhere with work, school and life because people are racist everywhere(p16)⬤⬤⬤

⬤⬤⬤because I also have my children and to be proud to go around to say, I, yeah, I'm from the Roma people, I'm a Traveller, and to be proud of that, and to know even if you say it loud people will still give you a job(p10)⬤⬤⬤

Section 2 – The experience of Roma accessing employment and participating in employment

Introduction

This section presents the experience of Roma participants in accessing and participating in employment, including experiences of precarious work and worker exploitation. The barriers to work were both directly related to employment and broader than employment. Direct challenges to accessing or continuing in employment included language, and literacy barriers. Being able to access the necessary training or qualification for the employment was also an issue. Broader barriers included racism experienced when trying to access employment; health issues often caused by poor living conditions or poor employment conditions. Lack of appropriate transport and childcare support also featured as barriers for Roma who were trying to access employment, particularly for Roma women. The majority of Roma interviewed who are in employment now or had been in employment also described how they faced racism in the workplace. They found it difficult to address or challenge this racism and discrimination and described a lack of systems to report or address these experiences. There were also examples of more extreme exploitation for example: insecure employment and zero- hour contracts; issues with receiving full pay for their work done; losing jobs due to their ethnicity.

Challenges in Work: Bad Working Conditions and Insecure Work

All of the Roma who were interviewed in this study were working, had been working or were actively seeking work. However, the types of work that were available to Roma and that Roma could access often had poor conditions. Both Roma and support workers described the difficult conditions that many Roma worked in.

> ▪▪▪He also worked for a week in the slaughterhouse, where it was very... It wasn't good at all, because my co-workers didn't like me, he didn't like my husband, either, we were very marginalized (p13)▪▪▪

Insecure Work

Many participants and support workers described Roma having insecure working conditions:

...people are rarely working full time(R6)...

...people, like, might work for a while, and then suddenly loads of people get laid off(R6)...

...We worked night shifts for two weeks, we didn't even have a day off, and when I was exhausted, I didn't go to work for one day, so they fired me(p9)...

...Roma are very disposable within this kind of, you know, within employment and particularly within that sector (R6)...

...When there are business (we have work) and when there is no business, they don't hire us anymore... now we've been home for 2 weeks(p9)...

Participants described having to adapt to changing schedules including staying late at short notice. Others described not knowing if they would be working the next day until very late the night before. Support workers reported a fear in the community to speak up or try to address these issues:

> ...they scared to say something because they were scared to don't lose them work, you know, and to make any complaint or something like this (R5)...

Underemployment

Participants and support workers also described the challenges of making decisions in employment that manage current and future needs.

> ...Well first of all I think it's the context of the entire family, the context of secure accommodation, education for children if there are any secure - how to say - the trust in the company and the long-term kind of employment that they are looking for.
>
> unofficial employment it's easier to access, and then you know, kind of the... yeah, the easy access to the fact that, yes, you can start tomorrow, and there are no papers involved or no commitment, no signing, no... so they take that as a first glance benefits(R3)...

The immediate need for work and income to support family, and barriers to accessing basic social protections, means that Roma often take the first job they can access such as flower picking rather than being able to take the time needed to sort out qualification transfer or improve language skills that would facilitate them to access employment with better conditions and more opportunities.

> ▪▪▪so I got this job in the nursing home, but I have to do the housekeeping (p10)▪▪▪

Exploitation

Both participants and those working to support Roma described situations of exploitation where Roma workers were not being paid.

> ▪▪▪they're working like 60 hours and they're only getting paid 40 hours, this is a young person who decided to literally walk out of his workplace one day because he was sick of it, you know, he was just like, I'm sick of working all these hours and you just not paying me, so he told them to go and clean the dishes himself and walked out (R8)▪▪▪

> ▪▪▪Yes, so we have - people are coming in and complaining a lot about their final wage, and at the end of the week they realise that what they've been working throughout the week is not the equivalent of what they should be getting, so they're kind of being robbed on their hours and that's because again they don't, they maybe can't read a payslip, they don't actually understand maybe how much they're getting an hour and other things would be like (R8)▪▪▪

There were also many examples where Roma workers were working in unsafe environments. One interviewee described a situation where a young person he was working with, aged 14 was employed to drive a fork lift. Interviewees also described little opportunity to resolve issues when they did try to address them.

■■■the agency won't really do anything because they don't want to maybe damage the relationship that they have with the actual employer, so, the easiest way is to just get maybe let go of the person and get somebody new (R8)■■■

Accidents at work

Bad working conditions also caused more serious problems for some participants including accidents and injury. One Roma participant suffered an injury at work due to the conditions:

■■■ because I worked for two years[...] I had a 12-hour shift and for a while I was still working 12 hours and it was hard... those boxes were 45kg and I lifted maybe 400 maybe 500 in a day and I lifted them at a height of 2m (p1)■■■

■■■I kept telling those managers that it was written there that after 4 hours the position should be changed (p1)■■■

Those supporting the community also described how this is an issue:

> ...People with injuries and everything like that, and then they're being dismissed because of those injuries, and simply new people are just brought in and that's it (R8)...

> ...if you don't know the language - speak, read and writing - you don't have, like, I don't know, like, 10% chance to get a job. If you don't know the language you will go outside, I don't know, picking up flowers, cutting trees, you know, those kinds of jobs (p10)...

Overlap between lack of English language and insecure work

Not speaking the English language made some Roma more vulnerable to insecure work and exploitation. Participants highlighted that there was a big difference in the experience of access to employment with/ without English language. For older Roma this was particularly an issue and also exacerbated the experience of social exclusion and in some instances led to loss of employment.

> ...he was working well, not have complaint, but after six months the supervisor, the manager changed and they was looking to get him out from the work because they said he doesn't speak English (p6)...

Discrimination in the Workplace

Racism and discrimination made it more difficult for Roma to access employment.

●●●So, that's kind of similar in Ireland, in Romania, if they know you as a person they will employ you, but if they don't know and they know you as a gypsy they'll be less likely... (p14)●●●

Where Roma were employed, there were many reports of discrimination in the workplace.

●●●There was an incident in work where the was something stolen from the stock. I was the main suspect all because it a stereotype for my people (p16)

I do feel even by customers getting treated differently because I feel like they might not have as much respect (p6)●●●

One young woman described racism from midline managers, how she and other Roma were treated worse than other staff, not rotated as they should be on the factory line, while other staff received better treatment. She described her lack of power in the situation to respond or address this. She described how she ultimately lost her job.

●●●but no one said a word to me do you know what I mean, so I don't know why I was kicked out of work, I don't know why (p7)●●●

Participants also reported the experience of losing their job when they believed it became known they were Roma.

A young woman described how she lost her job when her employer became aware that she was Roma. She didn't get full payment. She believed that they had seen her facebook profile, where she believes it was obvious that she was Roma and they stopped calling her for work after that.

●●●I was so like heartbroken, you know, cause like, how could a person treat another person like that like, what if it was them, how would they feel (R19)●●●

Another participant described how her husband lost his job where his employer realised he was Roma.

> ■■■The manager changed and they wanted to fire him because he was Roma…(p14)■■■

An employer said this directly to one young Roma woman

> ■■■I need staff and you are my only option, that's why I'm hiring you (p16)■■■

Fear of Discrimination /Hiding Ethnicity

For many Roma who are working there is a fear of discrimination, and as a result many hide their ethnicity.

> ■■■I think most people that are working they don't even say that they're Roma because they will be treated differently (p19)■■■

> ■■■when they asked me where I was from I would only say the Czech Republic but I would never say that I'm a Roma. So kind of I was hiding my identity because I was worried what can happen. 'Til now, I'm actually hiding my identity because I don't know what will happen if they find out (p20)■■■

> ■■■I am a single mom and it's not easy and then to just go and to say, I'm Roma, I'm from the Roma people, and then you will be like you won't get the job…(p10)■■■

Roma workers were very aware of the negative stereotypes that circulated about them.
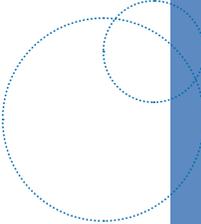
> ...we steal and that we don't talk nice and that we're smelly and all this you know, so I felt the need to hide it just because I wanna get, like, I wanted people to like me for who I am not because I'm a gypsy, do you know what I mean?...

There was a strong fear among participants that they would be found out.

> ...I was so worried because I am in the area and there's Roma people living there, like they would be coming in the shop and obviously they knew that I was Roma, you know (p19)...

> ...I used to have this fear in me that if any money goes missing that I would be blamed for the money and it was just, oh my goodness, so difficult for me (p19)...

> ...I'm afraid. I'm afraid of what I've built in those years, all the friends and everything. I'm afraid if they... if they find out, what can happen (p20)...
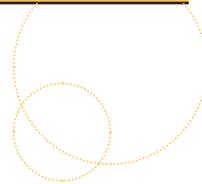
...I think that you have to be lucky to have good job or boss, manager. It is about luck (p1)...

...the women who work, it's usually the women who don't always, now they do sometimes, but they don't always dress Roma (R6)...

Gender and Discrimination

Women experienced additional barriers to employment. Many of the women describe how they changed their dress style so that they could conceal their identity. In particular they wore trousers, or changed the style of skirt they wore when they were working or trying to access employment.

Many participants expressed that they felt that it was more difficult for women to hide their ethnicity in the work place, especially when traditional dress was a feature of their culture.

...So, I always wear jeans or put my hair down and made myself look more not Roma, so that I can be treated equally on the interview and not be judged for my ethnicity but rather for me as an individual and the things that I can bring to the job (p18)...

...I was not allowed to wear my cultural clothes at work. My manager told me there was a dress code. So, I followed it until there was a non-Roma white employee that started wearing long maxi skirts in work and had nothing said to her (p12)...

Challenging Racism

Some people challenged the racism they saw and experienced.

▪▪▪I've seen and I've seen like Irish people being racist towards Roma people and I just look at them and I'm just like, [....], listen what are you doing that for? (p12)▪▪▪

▪▪▪why would you call them Gyppos, they're human like you are" and it makes me so uncomfortable listening to it, knowing I am a Roma. And so it's kind of... it's sad to see. (p20)▪▪▪

But many people silently accepted the stereotypes and discrimination.

▪▪▪And often if it happens to me I won't say, I won't say to the people I am Roma because it happen to be discriminated and not to have a job and then you just be silent because you need to support your family (p10)▪▪▪

▪▪▪You feel just really bad, because you want to do something but you just can't stay there and to explain to everyone, hey, I'm a good person, you know (p10)▪▪▪

Other Barriers to accessing and participating in work

Participants highlighted many issues that made it difficult for them to access or remain in employment.

Health

The Roma community experience significant health inequalities. Health issues affected how Roma are able to participate in employment as well as education and training for employment. One project worker described how health affected the participation of Roma women in training.

▪▪▪Something like 93% of my absentee rates were connected to health, either children's health or the parent's health, but it was almost always directly related to health of somebody in the family, so, I think the health inequities, you just can't separate them, and so that means then that their ability to participate is hugely impacted by their health (R6)▪▪▪
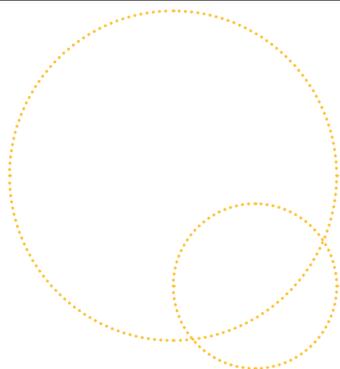
Accommodation/ Homelessness

Accommodation featured as a big challenge for the participants in this research. Living in insecure accomdation, living in homeless accommodation or frequent moving all affected participants ability to access and maintain employment.

▪▪▪This presents huge challenge in accessing employment (p12)▪▪▪

Transport

▪▪▪Transport was also a significant barrier to employment for some participants, especially those living outside of Dublin or engaged in work in rural areas (p2) (p14)▪▪▪
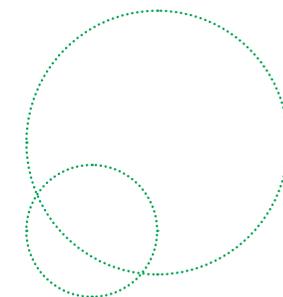
Section 3:
Social Exclusion and the Labour Market Needs of the Roma Community

The interviews with Roma support workers, service providers and policy makers also explore the current policy provision and supports available for Roma in accessing and participating in employment, as well as generating insights about what is working well in supporting Roma. Eleven interviews were conducted involving actors covering a range of national and local statutory and voluntary agencies involved in formulating policies or who provide services directly to Roma. This section presents the findings of these interviews along with additional analysis of the interviews with the Roma community. It addresses the three final objectives of the research:

- Identify barriers to access and participation in the labour market;

- Link with the relevant stakeholders in the statutory and voluntary sector with a knowledge of Roma employment supports;

- Produce a report that clearly presents the findings, analysis and recommendations that can be used to influence policy-development, with a particular focus on informing the development of the Traveller and Roma Training, Employment and Enterprise Plan, as committed to in the Department of Social Protection's Pathways to Work Strategy.

The interviews highlight a number of issues pertinent to the current policy provision and relevant to future policy developments including barriers to accessing employment related public services, for example, significant delays in getting a PPS numbers resulting in workers being on emergency tax for long periods with significant impact on people's lives and well being.

The issues faced by Roma in accessing services, accessing employment and succeeding in employment are interconnected. In all cases, participants did not feel they could address the issues on their own and in most cases did not have somewhere to access the necessary supports. Non-statutory actors were concerned about the impact of policy and highlighted the importance of the services on the ground. Difficulties in accessing services in rural areas were also a significant concern for those living outside major towns. The following sections describe the key issues faced by Roma.

Lack of Information Regarding Services and Entitlements

Many participants in this study identified challenges in navigating the Irish system of employment supports and social protection. This was expressed as an acute issue by new arrivals to Ireland but it was also expressed by participants who have lived in Ireland a long time. They reported finding it difficult to access information. The participants' experience is that the onus is on the individual to find out about what is available to them. They found some services not forthcoming with information about entitlements and services. The rules and regulations surrounding services and entitlements are regarded as far from straight forward. These experiences were corroborated by support staff in voluntary organisations.

> ...They just make it so hard to access them that only somebody that can understand fully English, like can speak English, is actually able to go and fill these applications, enquire about, you know, what they're entitled to, but if you don't know any of that, it's, you know, you're not gonna be getting it. (R8)...

Negative experiences with service provider were reported.

> ...There is services out there and the help is out there, but not everybody's willing to give it to you based on your ethnicity (p18)...

Quite often one bad experience with a representative of an organisation/ state agencies can leave a lasting impact on the respondents and can often make them reluctant to return for information.

Getting accessible information into the community is a priority. Information is needed on employment rights, social protection rights, supports and services available, education and training opportunities.

National and Local Integration

The Habitual Residency Condition and how it is applied in Ireland was noted as a big challenge. Support workers identified a lack of transparency in the process and they cited examples where it was used as a tool to exclude Roma from accessing basic supports.

Another worker describes supporting a family who had not been able to access child benefit for nine months:

> ▪▪▪With families who they haven't had their, for example, their child benefit paid for I think over nine months, there was five children involved and it was only because I supported them and I helped them and I called them, they were able to get that money back for those months (R8)▪▪▪

Participants also reported a fear that they would lose what they had.

> ▪▪▪Also fear about losing services, like housing - this continuous fear that they have about services discriminating them (R2)▪▪▪

Many participants, both Roma and support workers spoke about the difficulty of accessing services online, which is a particular feature of the post pandemic service provision. They highlighted the digital divide that the community experiences.

> ▪▪▪a major digital divide not only with maybe older people or people with disabilities but, you know, people with language and literacy difficulties (R6)▪▪▪

> ▪▪▪We learned that education and employment goes hand in hand, and then there is one other team which kind of influences employment which is poverty, because if a person needs some sort of training or need to as we say to invest some time in education, they can't do that, they can't afford that, because they have to provide for the family. (R7)▪▪▪

PPS Number

Accessing PPS numbers is still one of the key challenges to Roma arriving in Ireland in search of work.

> ...you need a PPS number, you can have a job without the PPS number because you have no idea, because you think it's working like in other countries.
>
> You have to work first. You won't get a PPS number without a job and you don't have a job without the PPS, it's very complicated, the situation you know, but then I found out you can have a job and then you can have your PPS number.
>
> You can't do almost nothing without that you know, and if you don't have anyone to help you, to tell you what to do, you're just lost (p17)...

The period of waiting between accessing and taking up employment and obtaining a PPS number causes huge stress on families. It means paying emergency tax, with participants reporting that they couldn't afford to eat as they had to pay rent.

> ...we waited a long time for the PPS (p9)...

One participant noted how things have become worse in this regard:

> ...Yeah, so... but if you look at it years ago and if you look at now, how everything is slow, and working with the Roma community, it can just show you how everything is so different prior... when I came to Ireland it was such an easy thing to do things. And now everything is harder and harder. And especially now, I can see it because I'm so much involved with the Roma community and it's just unreal how from easy to hard it can go within two decades, you know? You would thought that in two decades since 2000, things would go better. But I think it went backwards with everything... people waiting so long for... to get a doctor, a GP, PPS number, so you could see the different things, it changed a lot (p20)...

Poverty Traps and Secondary Benefits

The interaction of social protection payments is also a crucial issue and has a big impact on the lives of Roma families. Roma have difficulties in accessing payments/supports due to barrieres such as the HRC. This results in a lack of safety net for many Roma – they must take whatever work is available, they cannot access pre-employment supports, they cannot access additional supports that improve quality of life for example housing payments, child benefit etc.

When people are in receipt of benefits, the fear of losing them can deter from contemplating engaging in paid employment. Poverty and marginalisation will only be addressed if a family's financial situation improves as a result of going back to work. Yet employment and poverty traps (in particular those relating to Rent Supplement, the Medical Card and the Back to School Allowance) form a significant barrier for participants entering employment.

> ...Motivation for work is high – barriers are: discrimination, childcare, fear of really, of losing their entitlements (R8)...

Supporting Roma: What is working well?

The research shows that there is much positive and impactful work happening in the community. Roma support workers in various civil society organisations and community projects support Roma in a multitude of necessary ways, with some projects focusing specifically on Roma employment.

In each of the project workers' accounts of their work, they noted that while the project might be focused on employment the community had many more needs for support and many of the issues experienced were interconnected, for example accessing PPS, social welfare, accommodation, medical card, education of children, and adjustment to the Irish society. One participant noted how the pandemic in particular highlighted many issues facing the community, and also created an opportunity to directly address these.

Project support workers and service providers made a strong argument for the need for integrated supports.

> ...because we can only do so much, even family support, you know, that could help separately to what we're doing. But we're trying to do everything and it just feels like we're being pulled from every angle (R8)...

Interviewees shared an example of good practice in an interconnected projects with five dimensions, each addressing different components of the issues that were facing Roma in the community.

> ...We found out that the community had much more expanded needs that kind of actually everything related to employment .....we had to find ways to because it was the only program dedicated to Roma people within the company (R2)...

> ...We have the Roma employment, Roma education, Roma Health, Roma equality and then the Roma women's group (R8)...

Other recommendations were that there needs to be connection with statutory service providers, and work done directly targeting and working with employers. The interviewees shared an example from Wexford where an initiative like this worked well on the issue of transport.

> ...transport was a big problem there and I managed to organise a taxi company to transport to and from work which costs them 30 Euro per week for each individual (R7)...

Flexibility

Both support workers, service providers and Roma participants shared their views on what was important in providing support to the community. Flexibility in how support is provided was one of the key points made. Flexibility applied to all aspects of support from service provision like language support or information clinics as well as childcare provision and how a support might be offered.

> ...Formal language classes do not work always as many people have no formal education (R7)...

> ...There needs to be flexibility in CE for Roma (p4)...

Those working with Roma also highlighted the benefit of specific interventions to support employment:

> ...We provided a course in Romanian and had good success, all 12 participants passed the course (Safe Pass)(R8)...

Relationship building

Relationship building with the community was highlighted as crucial to providing support.

> ...I think it's more like relationship building, I believe a lot in relationship building, I think once you have a good relationship with young people, they trust you more (R8)...

> ...I think if I would do it differently, it would be worth having on the same premises a different set up, but I think even a bit of prework of work with the parents and the kids so that they know who is going to be minding their kids, and they're not just thrown in, so I think a lot of it is very much around a tailored approach (R7)...

Issues in employment / Challenge in Resolving issues/ Support Needs

Roma interviewees also reported facing some challenges in work and described how project workers on the ground were central to resolving issues when they arose.

> ...he was working on a farm, and he was working 12-hour shifts, 12-hour day shifts, and they didn't even let him off for Christmas Day, you know, so they can be exploited to be honest, so yeah, more rights for them really, and make them more aware of the rights rather than just coming to us (R1)...

Support workers highlighted the need for ongoing support.

Working with Young People

Those supporting Roma families and young people noted that poverty, as well as lack of family experience of education, influences young people's commitment to staying in education. They noted, across the country, that many young people, around the age of 15 or 16, tend to leave school early to seek employment to contribute to their family income. They highlighted the importance of engaging with young people in a particular way that meets them where they are at, takes account for the various challenges they face and supports them to realise their own high ambitions and the many opportunities that are available.

Interviewees working directly with young Roma highlighted the value of specific initiatives that would meet their immediate personal, social and cultural. They also noted that youth work provision more generally needs to ensure that spaces are created for inclusion and interculturalism with Roma young people alongside other diversities.
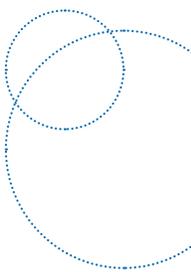
> ∎∎∎we would have worked with over many years that we are still trying to support, because unfortunately people, what tends to happen if something goes wrong they end up coming back to us (R6)∎∎∎

Interagency Work

The need for more interagency/collaborative approaches to resolving these issues was identified by support workers. The Traveller and Roma Interagency strategy and implementation group in Kildare was highlighted as an example of a useful structure to enable coordinated working to support Roma accesing and participating in employment and other services.

Summary and Conclusion

The key learning from this analysis is that targeted supports for Roma, that focus on employment, but also recognise the multi-faceted challenges facing the community and are resourced to support families and communities, are the most successful way of providing support at a local level, in the short term. On the ground there is a need for interagency collaboration between state services/ agencies and Roma/community organisations to address these challenges.

In the medium to longer term, a specific action plan must be developed and resourced make mainstream employment services accessible and effective for Roma. Clearly mapped mechanisms to address racism in work, employers, state and public sector duty may go some way to address this. Clear pathways to employment services and basic social protection for Roma are needed, with specific supports to navigate the system and the digital divide is essential. Clearly mapped access to Further Education and Training/ Higher education opportunities are also needed.

Racism and discrimination need to addressed on multiple levels: systems to report it, systems to address it and wider anti-racism education with the majority population. The Roma Needs Assessment and this research provide some insights into the experience of Roma in Ireland, however, more research is needed.
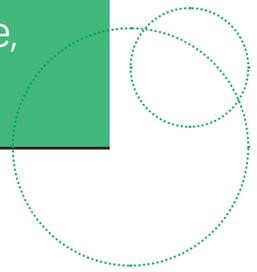
> ∎∎∎the whole community in Ireland should learn about the Roma, then see what we are, what is our culture, what we can do with it. (R20)∎∎∎

Section 5: Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of this report portray a rich diverse Roma community in Ireland.. Participants expressed their strong motivations for coming to Ireland, and seeking employment. However, many barriers and challenges face Roma in accessing and participating in employment, in particular, racism and discrimination.

The experience of racism was reported in all aspects of life, including in availing of services, on the street and in employment. Other barriers to employment included language and literacy barriers, lack of access to necessary training or qualification, and health issues often caused by poor living and employment conditions. Lack of appropriate transport and childcare support also featured as barriers for Roma who were trying to access employment, particularly for Roma women.

Racism was prevalent in the workplace, with participants describing being targeted in work, and treated differently to other employees Patricipants also described not paid properly, at risk of injury where factory rotations or safety protocols were not followed for them. They found it difficult to address or challenge this racism and discrimination and described a lack of systems to report these experiences.

Some participants also described extreme exploitation for example: significant delays in getting a PPS number; paying emergency tax for long periods; insecure employment and zero- hour contracts; issues with receiving full pay for their work done; losing jobs when it was learned that they are Roma. The issues faced by the community in accessing and succeeding in employment are interconnected. In all cases, participants did not feel they could address the issues on their own and in most cases did not have somewhere to access the necessary supports.

The interviews with Roma revealed the challenges they face but also provided some insight into how supports might be provided. Interviews with the service providers, provided insight into the challenges facing services delivery as well as possible ways in which these might be addressed. The issues faced by the community in accessing and succeeding in employment are multifaceted and interconnected and thus the interventions must also be multidimensional. The key learning from this analysis is that targeted supports for Roma, that focus on employment, but also recognise the multi-faceted challenges facing the community and are resourced to support families and communities, are the most successful way of providing support at a local level, in the short term. On the ground there is a need for interagency collaboration between state services/ agencies and Roma/community organisations to address these challenges.

In the medium to longer term, a specific action plan must be developed and resourced to make mainstream employment services accessible and effective for Roma. Clearly mapped mechanisms to address racism in work, employers, state and public sector duty may go some way to address this. Without an ethnic identifier we know very little about how Roma engage with employment services. Clear pathways to employment servicesand basic social protection for Roma are needed, with specific supports to navigate the system and the digital divide is essential. Clearly mapped access to Further Education and Training/ Higher education opportunities are also needed. Racism and discrimination need to addressed on multiple levels: systems to report it, systems to address it and wider anti-racism education with the majority population

Recommendations

Policy Recommendations

01 Develop a comprehensive Traveller and Roma Employment, Training and Enterprise Plan with clear targets, indicators, timelines, and allocated resources; in collaboration with Traveller organisations and organisations working with Roma as committed to in Pathways to Work 2021-2025 and Programme for Government 2020

02 Integrate and align the actions of the upcoming Traveller and Roma Employment, Training and Enterprise Plan with the implementation of employment actions on the next iteration of the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy

03 Considering some of the additional regulatory barriers experienced by Roma and to equality proof mainstream empoloyment policy, implement ethnic equality monitoring (in line with human rights standards) across all relevant state departments (including Department of Social Protection, and Department of Entrerprise, Trade and Employment)

04 Review the application of legislation and policy, such as the Habitual Residence Condition and the PPS application process, which disproportionately impact Roma access to basic social protections and employment supports

05 Introduce clearly mapped access to employment services, social protection and other basic supports for Roma with specific supports to navigate the system, language barriers, and the digital divide

06 Introduce specific targets and targeted programmes to increase and improve particpation and outcomes for Roma in Further Education and Training, including in apprenticeship programmes

07 Review the Community Employment Scheme to facilitate better access and outcomes for Roma, including progressive pathways from the scheme

Recommendations

Recommendations for Targeted Supports/ Direct work with Roma

08 Ensure multi-annual and sustainable funding for Roma projects for meaningful engagement and better outcomes for Roma, including the continuation and expansion of DCEDIY Roma Employment Funding

09 Support interagency/collaborative approaches between State agencies and Roma projects for improved service delivery and employment supports at the local level

10 Develop targeted education programmes for Roma on employment rights (focusing on reporting mechanisms, supporting bodies, Equality legislation and Public Sector Duty)

11 Introduce specific measures for Roma women that incorporate flexibility in employment and childcare supports at a local level

12 Roma are a named target group in SICAP. An intersectional approach is needed to link community development work (in conjunction with organisations working with Roma) with supports for employment. This will strengthen this work at a local level and help to create the conditions to support local employment initiatives/social enterprise schemes

Workplace Recommendations

13 Develop clear mechanisms to address racism in work (anti-racism awareness, equality codes of practice), and ensure employers and State agencies are aware of their obligations

14 Workplace Relation Inspectorate to conduct targeted inspections of certain sectors, for example, sectors that feature in the research such as - waste management, agency work, factories, and fruit farms

15 Employment supports and services to include information on worker's rights, and complaints mechanisms (such as Work Relations Commission, Trade Unions, workers associations) and improve access to these mechanisms for Roma with targeted information and language supports

References

...The experience of racism was reported in all aspects of life, including in availing of services, on the street and in employment. Other barriers to employment included language and literacy barriers, lack of access to necessary training or qualification, andhealth issues often caused by poor living and employment conditions...

Baker, J., Lynch, K., Cantillon, S., Walsh, J (2004) Equality: From Theory to Action Basingstoke: Palgrave & Macmillian.

CSO (2017) Census Profile 7 Migration and Diversity https://www.cso.ie/en/csolatest news/pressreleases/2017pressreleases/pres sstatementcensus2016resultsprofile7-migrationanddiversity/#:~:text=Economic%20 Status,for%2014.9%25%20of%20the %20 Workforce

Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, (2012) 'Access to social housing supports for non-Irish nationals – including clarification re Stamp 4 holders' Housing Circular 41/2012.

Department of Justice and Equality (2017), National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy, 2017 - 2021.

Department of Justice and Equality (2017), The Migrant Integration Strategy – A Blueprint for the Future Department of Justice and Equality.

European Commission (2011), 'An EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020. Available at: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combatting-discrimination/roma-eu/roma-equality-inclusion-and-participation-eu/national-roma-strategic-frameworks-commission-assessment-and-implementation-reports_en

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), (2014) The situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States: Survey results at a glance. Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union.

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), (2017) Second European Union and Minorities Survey: Roma- Selected Findings. Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union.

European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), (2020) Roma and Travellers in Six Countries. Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union.

FLAC (2020) FLAC Annual Report 2020. Available at: https://www.flac.ie/assets/files/pdf/flac_annual_report_2020_-_final.pdf?issuusl=ignore

Government of Ireland (2017) Census 2016 Summary Results - Part 1; Available at: https://static.rasset.ie/documents/news/census-2016-summary-results-part-1-full.pdf

Government of Ireland (2017) 'Census of Population 2016 - Profile 4 Households and Families'

Government of Ireland (2017) Population and Diversity https://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/releasespublications/documents/ population/2017/Chapter_5_Diversity.pdf

International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2020) The migrant pay gap: Understanding wage differences between migrants and nationals; https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/ groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms_763798.pdf

KAHANEC, M., Lucia KOVÁCOVÁ, Zuzana POLÁCKOVÁ, Mária SEDLÁKOVÁ (2020) The social and employment situation of Roma communities in Slovakia Policy Department for Economic, Scientific and Quality of Life Policies. European Union. Available at: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/supporting-analyses

McGinnity, F., Grotti, R., Groarke, S., & Coughlan, S. (2018) Ethnicity and Nationality in the Irish Labour Market. Economic and Social Research Institute and the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission. https://www.esri.ie/publications/ethnicity-and-nationality-inthe-irish-labour-market;

Migrants Rights Centre Ireland and Irish Human Rights Equality Commission Access (2022), Progress, Thrive Towards an Inclusive Labour Market in Ireland. https://www.mrci.ie/2020/12/22/access-progress-thrive-towards-an-inclusive-labour-market-in-ireland/

Migrants Rights Centre Ireland (2016) All Work and Low Pay. Available at: www.mrci.ie

National Roma Network (2022) Briefing on Roma housing experience February 2022. Available at: www.paveepoint.ie/publications

Nugent, C. (Feb 2020) Evidence of persistent precariousness in the Irish Labour Market NERI https://www.nerinstitute.net/blog/evidence- persistent-precariousness-irish-labour-market

Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre (2016) Policy and Practice in Ethnic Data Collection and Monitoring COUNTING US IN - HUMAN RIGHTS COUNT! Available at: https://www.paveepoint.ie/document-library/

Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre & Department of Justice and Equality (2018) Roma in Ireland – A National Needs Assessment. Available at: https://www.paveepoint.ie/document-library/

Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre, Cairde, HSE Social Inclusion, Crosscare, Safetynet, Focus Ireland. (2021) Briefing Report: COVID-19 Roma Response Partnership Supporting Roma during the pandemic: Key Learning & Pathways Ahead. Available at: www.paveepoint.ie/publications

Pembroke, S. (2018) Precarious Work, Precarious Lives, how policy can create more security; TASC https://www.tasc.ie/assets/files/pdf/ precarious_workersweb_version.pdf

Social Justice Ireland (2019) Under-Employment Still a Persistent Problem. Available at: https://www.socialjustice.ie/content/policy-issues/under-employment-still-persistent-problem

Sweeney, R. (2020) The State We are In; In-Equality in Ireland; TASC Foundation for European Progressive Studies. Available at: https://www.tasc.ie/assets/files/pdf/the_state_we_are_in_tasc_final_030320.pdf

Watson, D. Kenny, O. and McGinnity, F. (January 2017). A Social Portrait of Travellers in Ireland. 71: Research Series Number 56, 15. The Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin. Page 29.
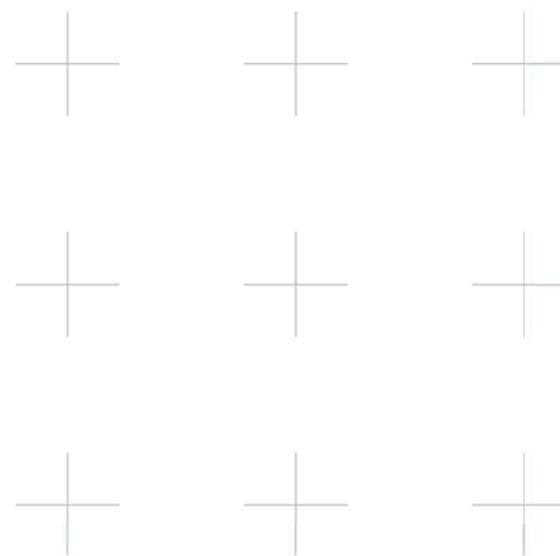
" The key learning from this analysis is that targeted supports for Roma, that focus on employment, but also recognise the multi-faceted challenges facing the community and are resourced to support families and communities, are the most successful way of providing support at a local level, in the short term. On the ground there is a need for interagency collaboration between state services/agencies and Roma/community organisations to address these challenges.… "

APPLIED SOCIAL STUDIES
STAIDÉAR SÓISIALTA FEIDHMEACH

An Roinn Leanaí, Comhionannais,
Míchumais, Lánpháirtíochta agus Óige
Department of Children, Equality,
Disability, Integration and Youth

**Maynooth
University**
National University
of Ireland Maynooth

PAVEE POINT
TRAVELLER AND ROMA CENTRE