

Stepping Stones to Improving Labour  
Market Participation Rates for  
Travellers in the Greater  
Blanchardstown Area



**BAP**

**Blanchardstown Area Partnership**

Dillon House 106

Coolmine Business Park

Clonsilla, Dublin 15

Tel: +353 1 820 9550

Fax: +353 1 820 9551

Website: [www.bap.ie](http://www.bap.ie)

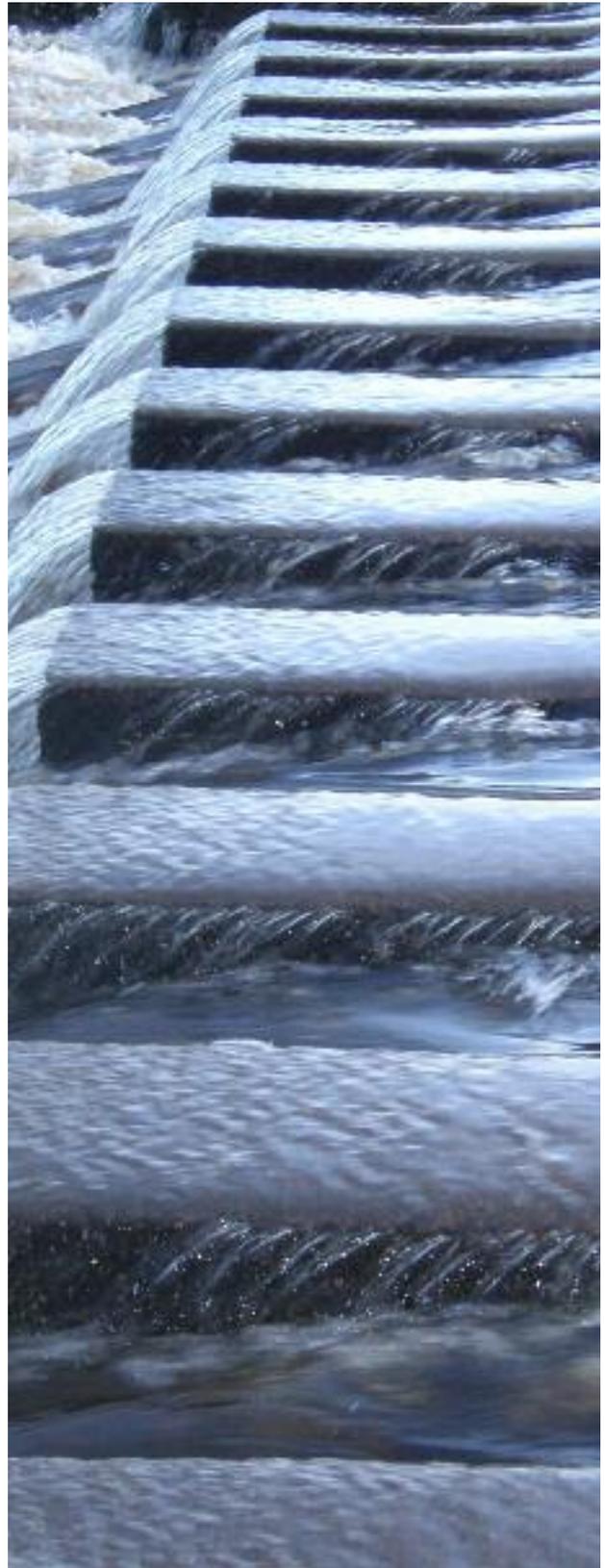
Copyright ©Conor Ryan, 2008

Email: [cryan@bap.ie](mailto:cryan@bap.ie)

Designed by Barbara Croatto

Photography courtesy of Siobhán Ryan

Dodder River, Terenure, Dublin 6W



# Contents

<b>PART I</b>		
Acknowledgments		PAGE 1
The Research Content		PAGE 2
Introduction		PAGE 3
<b>PART II</b>		
Socio-Economic Profile of Travellers in Greater Blanchardstown		PAGE 5
<b>PART III</b>		
Field Research Findings		PAGE 9
<b>PART IV</b>		
Conclusion		PAGE 27
<b>PART V</b>		
Recommendations		PAGE 34
<b>PART VI</b>		
<b>Appendices</b>		
Community Employment		PAGE 38
Research Methodology		PAGE 40
Map of Greater Blanchardstown		PAGE 42
<b>PART VII</b>		
Bibliography		PAGE 44

The background of the page is a solid gold color. Overlaid on this are several large, thick red curved lines and circles. On the left, a large red semi-circle is partially cut off by the edge. In the center, a large red arc curves from the top left towards the bottom right. On the right side, there are two concentric red circles, with the inner one being smaller than the outer one. The overall composition is abstract and modern.

## PART I

'The aim of this research study is to examine what prevents and discourages some members of the Traveller community in Dublin 15 from entering the labour market and/or setting up their own business.'

# Acknowledgements

The researcher would like to thank the following individuals.

In particular the Traveller men and women from Blanchardstown who freely gave up their time and agreed to participate in this research project.

Members of the research steering group:

- ◉ **Terry McCabe**, Deputy Manager of Blanchardstown Area Partnership.
- ◉ **Gerry Keogh**, Co-ordinator of Blanchardstown Local Employment Service.
- ◉ **Catherine Joyce**, Co-ordinator of Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group.
- ◉ **Tom Toner**, Community Employment Supervisor.
- ◉ **Carmel Fitzpatrick**, Blanchardstown Centre for the Unemployed.

Other contributors and interviewees:

- ◉ **Lilian Harris**, Community Development Officer, Blanchardstown Area Partnership.
- ◉ **Brenda O'Brien**, Mediator Blanchardstown Local Employment Service.
- ◉ **Audrey Travers**, Women's Training Programme.
- ◉ **Marion McKenna**, FÁS Worker, Coolock.
- ◉ **Brian Mooney**, National Education and Welfare Board.
- ◉ **Alan Breathnach**, Clondalkin Enterprise Centre .
- ◉ **Tony Nolan**, Tallaght Local Employment Service.
- ◉ **Pauline Mangan**, Community Development Officer, Blanchardstown Area Partnership.
- ◉ **Fergus Dunne**.
- ◉ Central Statistics Office
- ◉ FÁS Social Inclusion Unit
- ◉ EQUAL

The views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of Blanchardstown Area Partnership, Blanchardstown Local Employment Service and the Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group.

# The Research Content

Since 2001 a FÁS sponsored, Community Employment<sup>1</sup> course has been delivered specifically for Traveller women via the Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group from Unit 1A Damastown Business Park.

A women's training programme, which is a local training initiative has also been delivered from this same unit. This programme started on a voluntary basis and the participants only received expenses for participating in the programme.

FÁS became centrally involved afterwards and now the participants receive a basic training allowance and expenses. This is a part-time morning training programme that provides a variety of courses. Different levels of literacy programmes are covered. FETAC accredited courses from hairdressing, personal and interpersonal skills, personal care and presentation, preparation for work, office work, computers and childcare. FÁS funds the programme and the local VEC also offers some tutor hours.

Unfortunately, not many female Travellers have successfully made the transition from the CE Programme into the open labour market. This outcome has been a source of disappointment for the team of people at the Blanchardstown Travellers' Development Group supporting local Traveller women.

The Blanchardstown Travellers' Development Group approached the Blanchardstown Area Partnership with a request to complete an independent piece of research, and examine why Traveller women were having difficulties taking up part- or full- time employment. It was envisaged that the report would inform the education and training strategies of both organisations in progressing Travellers into employment.

To facilitate this task, a research proposal was drawn up by the Partnership's Research and Evaluation Officer. This proposal was accepted by both organisations and helped guide the research process.

---

1. The Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group has a deliberate policy of not accepting persons under 18 years of age onto its scheme. Please refer to appendix for a full overview of Community Employment.

# Introduction

The *aim* of this research study is to examine what prevents and discourages some members of the Traveller community in Dublin 15 from entering the labour market and / or setting up their own business.

## OBJECTIVES

- ◉ To examine if Travellers have any apprehensions about taking up mainstream employment and self-employment.
- ◉ To examine what the barriers are for Travellers availing of employment opportunities.
- ◉ To identify and document Travellers views and experiences of long-term unemployment.
- ◉ To examine the lack of targeted initiatives for male Travellers.
- ◉ To examine why previous planned initiatives and actions never ‘took off’ or succeeded.
- ◉ To examine approaches in other Partnership areas to supporting Travellers from an employment, self-employment, and training perspective.
- ◉ To examine if there are any ‘attitudinal barriers’ amongst employers to hiring members of the Travelling community in Blanchardstown.
- ◉ To examine why participants are not progressing in expected numbers from Traveller specific programmes into part-time and full- time mainstream employment.

The background of the page is a solid gold color. Overlaid on this are several concentric red circles of varying sizes. The largest circle is centered in the lower half of the page. Above it, there is a smaller red circle, and above that, an even smaller one. The circles are partially cut off by the top and bottom edges of the page. The text is positioned within the gold area, overlapping the circles.

## PART II

### Socio-Economic Profile of Travellers in Blanchardstown

'The age profile of the Traveller community in Blanchardstown differs markedly from that of the general population.'

# Socio-Economic Profile of Travellers in Greater Blanchardstown

A specific question on ethnic or cultural background was included on the 2006 Census form for the first time. A request was submitted to the Central Statistics Office to extract small area population statistics from the 2006 census. The following socio-economic profile of Travellers in Blanchardstown will draw upon this data set.

## POPULATION

The 2006 census enumerated 645 Travellers<sup>2</sup> living within the Blanchardstown Area Partnership's catchment area.

In contrast a survey by CROSSCARE conducted in 2002 counted 196 Traveller families in Blanchardstown, which translates to about 990 individual Travellers resident in Dublin 15.

## YOUNGER AGE PROFILE AMONG TRAVELLER COMMUNITY

The age profile of the Traveller community in Blanchardstown differs markedly from that of the general population. The distinctive age structure of the Traveller Community resulted in a median age of 18 compared with a national figure of 33.

41.7% of the overall Traveller population are aged between 0-14 years of age compared with 20% for the population as a whole in Ireland. The high birth rate prevalent in the Traveller community contributes to higher proportions in the 0-14 age groups.

## HEALTH STATUS

An Economic and Social Research Institute report in 1986 (ESRI, research series 131) found that Traveller life expectancy was equivalent to that of settled people in Ireland in the 1940s. However, there are no specific national statistics available on Traveller health and mortality. Death certificates do not record a person's ethnicity and as a result it is not possible to determine the life expectancy of Travellers in Blanchardstown.

A Health Research Board study<sup>3</sup> found that Travellers had higher death rates for accidents, respiratory ailments and congenital related illnesses when compared with the settled community.

Persons aged 65 years and over accounted for 2.17% of the total Traveller population in the Greater Blanchardstown area in comparison with 3.78% of the general population.

## LABOUR MARKET CHARACTERISTICS

Since 2002 the total number of people at work in Blanchardstown has increased significantly. An additional 7,231 persons are now in employment and as a result the labour market participation rates for Blanchardstown rose from 69.1% to 74.50%. The labour market participation rate for Travellers in Blanchardstown is lower at 60.37%.

When broken down into separate industries, the wholesale and retail trade categories contained the highest numbers of Traveller

---

2. Some Travellers recognise themselves as an ethnic group, and have been trying to persuade the Irish government to recognise this as part of a national campaign. A specific question on ethnic or cultural background included on the 2006 Census form for the first time. This change in terminology on the Census form could explain the lower reported number of Travellers counted in the GBA vis a vis 2002.

3. Travellers' Health Study. Dublin: Health Research Board, 1986.

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

employees. There are cultural factors which explain this lower participation: for example, the higher proportion of Travellers engaged in 'home duties' (27.12%) compared with the general population, (9.24%)<sup>4</sup>.

### UNEMPLOYMENT

The level of unemployment in Blanchardstown (11.13%)<sup>5</sup> remains significantly higher than the national average of 8.5%. This overall average percentage for the Blanchardstown area disguises the double-digit unemployment rate that still prevails in several neighbourhoods. 25.89% of the potential labour force are unemployed in Tyrrelstown ED compared with 5.07% in Roselawn.

When the corresponding employment data for the Traveller community in Blanchardstown is analysed it reveals that the unemployment rate of Travellers differs significantly from the wider population.

82.38% of the Traveller working population are unemployed in the Greater Blanchardstown Area. In the absence of specific labour market programmes such as Community Employment and the Women's Training Programme the figure would probably be higher.

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

A strong link exists between educational attainment and earning capacity. As a result the level of educational disadvantage in an area could be regarded as a proxy measure for social and / or economic deprivation.

There has been a continuous improvement in the level of education among adults over the past 4 years in Blanchardstown. For instance the

percentage of the overall population, who reported having no formal or primary education fell from 15.7% to 12.42%.

The percentage of Blanchardstown's overall population who have a third-level qualification rose from 29% to 36.63%. This was higher than the national average of 30.5% although slightly lower than the Dublin average of 38.5%. However, there are wide variations in educational attainment even within Blanchardstown.

25.1% of adults in Tyrrelstown have either no formal or only attended primary education. The comparable figure in Blakestown ED is 8.8%.

49.7% of residents in Abbotstown attained a third-level qualification compared to 12.5% in Tyrrelstown, which is the lowest in Fingal.

66% of Traveller population in the GBA whose education has now ceased comprised people aged 15 years and over with no formal or primary education.

Excluding 'not stated' 82 per cent of Travellers in Blanchardstown ceased their education before the prevailing statutory minimum age of 15 years.

### SOCIAL CLASS

The entire population is divided into seven social class groups, which are defined on the basis of occupation.<sup>6</sup> In Blanchardstown, 29.3% of the population fell into social class 1 and 2. 32.9% of the national population were in these same class. 28.2% of the national population were in social classes 4 and 5. 29.39% of Blanchardstown's population were in social classes 4 and 5.

4. 102 Travellers out of 376 adults in the GBA aged 15 and over were categorised as looking after the home / family.

5. The unemployment percentages presented at a local ED level are calculated using the Principal Economic Status (PES) of individuals and are extracted from the 2006 Census Volume. National official statistics in Ireland now rely upon the International Labour Office (ILO) criteria for measuring unemployment. This method is not applied at a local level.

6. Professional Workers, Managerial and Technical, Non-manual, Skilled manual, Semi-skilled, Unskilled, All others gainfully occupied and unknown. The occupations included in each of these groups have been selected in such a way as to bring together, as far as possible, people with similar levels of occupational skills. In determining social class no account is taken of the differences between individuals on the basis of other characteristics such as education. The social class of family dependents is derived from the social class of the parent having the highest social class.

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

Of greater significance is data relating to that of social class 7. This category is 'unclassified' and includes those who have never been in paid employment, or who live in households where the head of household has never been in paid employment.

84.65% of the Traveller population in the GBA fell into social class 7. In contrast, 21.81% of Blanchardstown's overall population were enumerated in social class 7, considerably higher than 17.6% found nationally.

### HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURE AND NATURE OF OCCUPANCY

The clear trend in Blanchardstown over the past four years among the overall population is towards smaller households; a further decline in the proportion of traditional nuclear families; an increase in female and male single parent households and increasing numbers of single persons sharing a dwelling.

According to the 2006 census, there are 20,408 permanent households in the Blanchardstown Partnership area. Between 2002 and 2006 an additional 5,134 houses were built. This growth in households has been accompanied by declining household occupancy rates from 3.31 per household in 2002 to 3.1 in 2006. Owner-occupied dwellings continue to be the most prevalent occupancy status

In contrast many Travellers continue to live in large numbers at communal establishments especially in the Abbotstown and Ward EDs. 50% of all Travellers in the GBA either live in caravans or mobile / temporary structures.

According to census 2006, a further 26% live in detached houses. It is striking how many Travellers live in isolation from the physical margins of settled society at official permanent sites in the area and at temporary halting sites in Cappagh at St Mary's and St Christopher's.

(Please refer to the ordnance survey map in the appendix)

### LONE PARENTS

Lone parents are not a homogeneous group but include many different types of family in which unmarried, separated or widowed parents (male and female) bringing up children alone.

37.1% of Traveller families with children in the GBA are lone-parent families. Lone parents for all children constitute 28.63% of all households in Blanchardstown. These figures exceed the national average of 25.2%





## PART III

### Field Research Findings

*'I find as well that the commitment for young Traveller mothers, they're willing to go on courses and work but it has to be between a kinda part-time course or part-time work.'*

*'Left out when you were young at school.'*

*'You're just Irish. It's not till I came back here that I experienced discrimination.'*

# Field Research Findings

**To examine if Travellers have any apprehensions about taking up mainstream employment and self-employment.**

## COMMENTARY

Many of the Traveller women on the Community Employment Programme left school before completing their Leaving Certificate, and married at a young age. As one woman pointed out

*“If you were not married at 17 you were left on the shelf.”*

As a result the majority of women, who were on the Community Employment scheme, are only now receiving education and training support after a gap of several years. For a number of Traveller women the time span is far longer.

Many Travellers living in Blanchardstown (as indicated on the Ordnance Survey map) are located on the physical margins of settled society in The Ward and Abbotstown ED. This has been the case for many years.

Very often Travellers live amongst one another in communal establishments with their extended families. This extended ‘Traveller family unit’ can help shape and govern Traveller men and women’s patterns of behaviour, and the societal expectations that govern their everyday lives.

One should not overlook the fact that Travellers on average die ten years earlier than settled people. As in settled society, social care for the young and elderly is primarily the responsibility

of women in Traveller society. This can restrict the opportunities for Traveller women who might otherwise genuinely want to go out and work on at least a part time basis.

Finally several of the findings are time related. Since the completion of the original fieldwork phase, additional training and interview-related skills has taken place. Several of the women on CE have also registered with the Local Employment Service and approached the Mobile Information Service run by the Blanchardstown Centre for the Unemployed.

## Fieldwork Findings

### TRAVELLER FAMILY STRUCTURE, EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Traveller women were very vociferous in repeatedly emphasising that family commitments and the rearing of their children were the number one priorities in their lives. Many of the Traveller women felt uneasy about the prospect of leaving their children behind and going out to work, especially in a full-time job. The lure or attraction of an independent career comes a distant second to raising a family.

This is a critical finding and it should not be discounted lightly. Nor should it be ‘explained away’ as a generational factor that settled women went through in achieving greater gender equality after the emergence of the feminist movement in the 1970s.

*“You can understand that as well but I think to be honest when they are taking out a mortgage they have to look into that as well for responsibilities, with Travellers for me*

*they work full time and their child finishes school and from there goes to a crèche its six o'clock there is no way, I just feel awful as if I were throwing her or neglecting her there."*

*"Do you know what I find as well, do you know your mother now, do you know if you were constantly gone because they worked they were brought up meant to be in the home, if they're constantly gone, mother would say you should be there your children are lost."*

*They don't look down upon someone who goes out to work, they probably think their place is being neglected, their children is being neglected you know that kinda way."*

In addition some of the Traveller women were clearly conscious of how other Travellers would look upon them if they went out to work in either a part-or full-time capacity. The behaviour of Traveller women was kept in check by cultural expectations and duties.

*"If I had a sister that was constantly gone and I seen her children turn around, I would tell her myself as well."*

*"Oh she's working seven days a week until such a time and children is there you know that kinda thing like."*

Several CE participants also made telling remarks that highlight additional expectations that would fall upon a Traveller women were she to go out and work either part or full time.

*"But a lot of settled women would go out to work full time but they would always have their husbands support by cooking the meals, sometimes a Traveller would go off to work full time, say she would, she wouldn't come back and have her meal cooked, she would have to do that as well (laughter) You have that pressure on the woman."*

*"I find as well that the commitment for young Traveller mothers, they're willing to go on courses and work but it has to be between a kinda part-time course or part-time work. It's very seldom like you'll get a Traveller to commit themselves to full time work or a women anyway, that's my opinion."*

*"It's the very very odd fella that would do that" "They don't do housework they don't do dinner."*

*"Even if she did she would still have to come back a do a full days work."*

One Traveller man gave his own viewpoint in relation to why Traveller women are not taking up employment opportunities.

*"Women over 30 don't want to work but that there was some hope with the younger women."*

#### LOSS OF SECONDARY BENEFITS

A couple of women mentioned how their husbands were signing on at the local social welfare on behalf of the couple. This form of co-dependence restricts the options available to Traveller women who otherwise might wish to take up a part-or full-time job.

*"Well say for a lot of them their spouses are signing on for them, or they're on lone parent books or pension books, so in order for them to go into the CS, they see it as a temporary placement, which it is, it['s] only for 6 months, and they have to give up all these benefits in order to do that, so financially they don't see it as of interest to them, so two people in this area were successful in getting 6 month placement in the CS which they were facilitated through this project."*



### LACK OF VALIDATION AND RECOGNITION OF TRAVELLER CULTURE AND IDENTITY

From the conversations that took place with the CE participants, most were willing to work but preferably alongside other Travellers. In a group situation the Traveller women are comfortable alongside their peers, but once outside that circle of family or friends they feel isolated, alienated and vulnerable.

*“I done this before, worked as a private healthcare worker in Pavee Point for near seven year. I’d like to show them the right road to go on that’s what I’m doing.”*

*“I would like a job that I could teach young Travellers, you know, the women who come over for literacy or do something like that.”*

*“They feel confident in a group situation due to the peer support but on their own they definitely have problems adjusting and if the Traveller women were going to take up jobs they would have to have two Travellers in my opinion in the one place, it would have to be a Traveller-friendly environment and they would have to have a mentor for at least six months to give them the support they needed.”*

There are several factors that contribute to this sense of alienation and vulnerability. Some Travellers believe that the settled community do not view them as equals. Many Travellers do not wish to risk a confrontation, which leaves them open to harassment or belittlement by members of the dominant society.

In addition some of the women also had negative experiences within the formal state school system, which should also be factored into discussions of this issue. It is *only from a community education approach* that the Traveller women are engaging with courses on offer from the Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group with the support of FÁS and the VEC.

### LACK OF CONFIDENCE AND SELF-BELIEF

Several of the women appeared to lack self-confidence and unfortunately doubted their own abilities despite being more than capable of holding down an office job. This came across through first hand conversations with the women.

*“You kinda need education and stuff like, my kinda job if I was looking for one would be as sales assistant or something like that, not doing paper work. I don’t think my education would be up to it. Dunnes, till work.”*

*“It’s helping you but I don’t know if it will get you there down the line, I am improving a bit.”*

It was also verified at a one-to-one interview held with a Local Employment Services mediator that several of the women on Community Employment were ideal candidates for office jobs and were to be notified of vacancies through the LES Employment Unit.

*“It’s a mindset, it’s a very comfortable position, if you think for a Traveller female, it’s the first time Traveller women have worked outside the home, they have been very well looked after on the CE project, they have learnt and gained a lot from this whole social network and they thought of just being taken out of this again, they just see it, as going home.”*

It was remarked upon that until very recently Travellers, possibly for reasons of security and ease of mind, tended to stick close to home and their next of kin. This trend is beginning to change, however, with members of the younger Traveller generation mixing more openly with settled persons. As younger Travellers now stay on in school longer than was typical in their parent’s generation, opinions and preconceptions within both communities are being challenged and questioned more openly.

To examine what are the barriers for Travellers availing of employment opportunities.

### LACK OF CLEAR AND ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION

The majority of the CE participants lacked precise and clear information on the repercussions for their individual or household income in the event of taking up 'open employment'. There was a lot of confusion over social welfare entitlements, and retention of secondary benefits.

*“But do you not find though that Social Welfare kinda gives them wrong information.”*

*“Because if a woman is actually on her own and she’s getting a lone payment she can’t get it, they won’t give it to her. I don’t know what the issue is.”*

*“Well say for a lot of them their spouses are signing on for them, or they’re on lone parent books or pension books, so in order for them to go into the CS, they see it as a temporary placement, which it is, its only for 6 months, and they have to give up all these benefits in order to do that, so financially they don’t see it as of interest to them, so two people in this area were successful in getting 6 month placement in the CS which was facilitated through this project.”*

Only one of the women had heard of the Mobile Information Unit run by the Blanchardstown Centre for the Unemployed. For operational reasons the mobile information unit has traditionally operated in the afternoons outside of Parslickstown House. Paradoxically, the CE course is run in the mornings so the Traveller women were not on-site to access the service—had they so wished—because they have returned home to look after their children.

*“Is he kinda more or less like Citizens Advice?”*

### DIFFICULTIES DISCERNING BETWEEN LABOUR MARKET PROGRAMMES AND OPEN EMPLOYMENT

Very few of the women spoken with on a group basis, could identify types of jobs that generally appealed to them. It was also clear that the majority of women had difficulty differentiating between various job roles. This factor may be attributable to the fact that as teenagers growing up they may never have had an opportunity to take up a part-time job. Also they may never have seen both or either of their parents going out in the morning to a 9 to 5 job.

One Traveller speaking to the other:

*“But you see when they found out you were on the same course some of the same girls said that they got jobs which actually wasn’t a job.”*

*“You know with CE... group you get nearly the one forms to go to the dole office and get it signed, you know this type of stuff. You see, what happens with CE you have to be a lone parent, you have to be living alone or you have to be a widow or whatever, anyhow before CE and I think they are probably mixing the two forms because with CE you have to be alone with your husband has actually get to sign it for to get the job or to get the training course.”*

As previously indicated, the labour market participation rate of Travellers is very low. In the absence of exposure to an office job in the services sector or as a computer technician, one has to think abstractly about what a particular job might entail. It should be pointed out that many of the Traveller women actually view CE as a job.

*“Travellers don’t view training programmes as training programmes, they view them as*

*employment. So it's acceptable if it is generating an income for the family and in a lot of cases that's what it is."*

*"Yes I agree that the Travellers view CE as an actual job but it's not just CE It is training or anything that they receive a payment for. Once they receive money they consider it as a job. They do see that they can progress on from it and the options are stated to them but a lot of the women don't." Want to work full time due to childcare they want to be there when the children come home from school or to collect them from school.*

### PREPARATION FOR WORK

More surprisingly though, when openly prompted, no-one could indicate that they had ever attended an interview in their lives. However, a couple of the women had been employed in community crèches and also completed their NCVA training. Neither was working as a childcare worker at present. For one woman who had worked in a crèche for a couple of years, the combination of looking after other people's children and her own, become too much in the end. On the other hand the other participant, who was younger, has decided after working away in a local crèche for a short period that this is not her chosen career path. Somehow she felt she did not quite 'fit in'.

In addition none of women on CE had registered with the Local Employment Services in Parslickstown House. This situation has changed as several of the women have met and spoken with the LES mediator in Parslickstown House. This was only at the behest of the CE Project Supervisor. One female Traveller is still a client of the LES in Parslickstown House.

### LACK OF EXPOSURE TO JOBS IN THE 9 TO 5 WORLD

None of the Traveller women had completed transition year in the secondary school cycle. This means that they missed out on exposure to a work environment as teenagers outside of the family unit. As a consequence some Traveller women had a narrower knowledge of career options. Having raised their own children or baby-sat for their wider family members they instinctively felt comfortable in similar job roles.

*"Travellers need assistance and help and counselling to find the best route for them. They do not come to us with a definitive view of where they want to go because of their lack of experience in jobs. In fact we find this often.*

*"People are not able to differentiate between a Youth Worker and a Canteen Worker and that was only the other day, so their understanding of jobs out in settled society can be confusing."*

*"They would be very low-skilled, common across the board would be literacy problems. It's manual work that they are interested in. The only thing they know about is safe pass or forklift licence skills, they are just two things that you can achieve to get you onto the site or the factory as such. Some of the young Traveller men that I would have tried to engage with, its very hard for them to imagine doing a course or something broader than going onto a site."*

### FEAR AND SUSPICION OF AUTHORITY FIGURES

It was relayed by several people that Travellers are fearful and suspicious of authority figures. Trying to gain their trust takes time. I encountered this as a researcher sitting down with one of the Traveller women.

*"If you were I'd say it to your face and let you know what you're doing to us..."*

### POVERTY TRAPS LINKED TO SOCIAL WELFARE PAYMENTS

Breaking the cycle of undue reliance on social welfare is a barrier that some members of the Traveller community face. The longer the individual is receiving social welfare payments the more difficult it becomes to support that individual into a job in the open labour market. Encouraging some male Travellers to forego social welfare payments is made all the more difficult as some have large families who they receive benefit on behalf of.

*“I do find that the welfare to work issues are the same for all our clients, but their understanding might be slightly different. Everyone faces the same difficulties, ...the only thing with male Travellers is for the people who have a large number of children, that is a difficulty, there are a few people left in our society that tend to have 8 or 9 children, some of the male Travellers, ...each time we look at what he is getting on the social welfare and what type of job he will be going for it is a minimum wage job because he had no work experience, it is very difficult for him to weigh up, how does this work? Even the idea of going on a back to work allowance, it's quite fearful to move away from social welfare dependency, that is quite understandable if you had 8 child dependents.”*

*“The participants and their husbands and families have all been on the social welfare system for years and they trust it. It's guaranteed money and there are secondary benefits such as the medical card, fuel allowance, back to school allowance etc”*

### RISK AVERSE

Closely linked to the social welfare dependency issue is the finding that many Travellers appear to be very risk averse. Trying to change mindsets and take a chance with a job is something that requires patience and imaginative approaches.

*“Also if we do manage to try and convince the women then they go home and say it to their husbands and they won't agree with it and won't take the risk and then that is the end of that conversation. This is an ongoing battle that is going to take a long time to resolve and it will entail working with the men and building up trust and trying to convince them that there are other avenues apart from the social welfare system.”*

*“We constantly try to motivate people and encourage them towards employment and future financial gains and we discuss career options and deliver a course preparation for work.”*

### BAD MEMORIES OF SCHOOL / POOR LITERACY SKILLS

Some Traveller men and women relayed unpleasant memories of school in former years. This appeared to be more of a factor for slightly older Travellers. This negative experience may have led some Travellers to leave school early. At the back of some Travellers minds was the belief that education would not make any difference because at the end it they wouldn't get a job anyhow.

*“Left out when you were young in school.”*

*“Schools of old-Travellers went to Traveller-only schools-didn't work, kids not interested. They played football and the teacher was not interested either.”*

It was recognised that things are changing in the school system at the present moment. However the belief was that this was attributable to other ethnic minorities forcing the system to change and not the school system adapting itself to the needs of Travellers.

*“That's not happening anymore because you've got all these other nationalities coming in.”*

### POOR ACCOMMODATION AND LIVING CONDITIONS

The self-image of Traveller women may be very low and it takes considerable time and effort to build up their confidence levels while on Community Employment. There was a level of embarrassment that could perhaps be attributed to their being illiterate or lower, and thus not having the confidence to take up a job. However, part of it is also attributable to the living conditions of many Traveller women.

*“Every case is different and usually it depends on the site they are coming from and the living conditions and facilities and lack of resources play a major factor in this. Also their personal circumstances and support systems play a major role. For example, if you have a woman from a site with a lack of facilities, outdoor toilets and issues around hygiene and a lack of support in general, her self esteem is going to be lower than a woman who has a good support system and ok living conditions. Also the women take on the responsibility for childcare so if this is not working too well then they are stressed out as well. Later on down the line they get used to the routine and organising themselves and build up a trusting relationship and we offer the women personal support so this all helps to improve their self esteem and for the women who have low literacy throughout the year as their literacy improves so does their self esteem.”*

### LOW CONFIDENCE LEVELS AND SELF-ESTEEM

Several interviewees commented on low self-esteem as being a barrier to employment for Travellers. Poor accommodation and living conditions was reported to be factor interlinked with self esteem.

*“The majority of Travellers that I know of that live in small communities this kinda environment. As a group they have great confidence but as individuals their confidence is totally different and that is a result of living in this close family network, their family can*

*back them up, but when you go out into settled society they are a little bit lost.”*

Several reports make reference to reported instances of low self-esteem within the Traveller community.

Murphy (1998, p28) notes that ‘for some of the survey group, the discouragement of long-term unemployment has led to depression and low self-esteem’.

Weafer (2001, p31) also makes separate reference to ‘instances of low self-esteem were apparent when Traveller parents spoke about their own experiences in school and also in relation to their children’s education’.

### DISCRIMINATION

Professionals working alongside Travellers from several organisations pointed out that some Travellers face discrimination from employers in accessing the labour market.

*“I think it’s the two sides to it, I do know that they face discrimination from employers, I would have had numerous occasions where they would come back from having been out job seeking on the building sites, and they would say as soon as they know I’m a Traveller they wont even let me place a foot on the site. I’ve also spoken to one or two employers and not in a very outright or simple way, they would imply that have difficulty with employing Travellers.”*

### SERVICE PROVIDERS’ INFLEXIBILITY – REFUSING TO ADAPT

There is a great reluctance on the part of the relevant stakeholders to address the issue of working with male Travellers. Women are more open to someone working on areas such as self-esteem, and self-awareness in society as a whole.

*“We have the Higher Level Agency Group, FÁS, HSE, and Social Welfare and they have money to spend and they don’t have the willingness to undertake this role or they*

*will not accept our ideas as being the way forward. There is this gap, they sit there on the one hand with this power and money and on the other hand we have the experience and the ideas. There is an unwillingness for either group to take on this role and that needs to be sorted out.”*

### ESTABLISHED WORK PRACTICES

LES mediators have recognised that existing work practices need re-adjustment when supporting the Traveller community.

*“We’ve nothing to go on, because it’s not working, its just not working, how it is at the moment, its not happening and it will probably take another couple of years to build it back up to that level, that whatever Brian had here and was able to do was so proactive.”*

One non-LES contributor went further and expressed reservations about the voluntary nature of the LES ethos.

### TIME KEEPING ISSUES

For cultural reasons, Traveller men and women appear to have had difficulty engaging with the LES services at set times of the year. Some members of the Traveller community exercise their choice to pursue a nomadic lifestyle, especially over the summer and early autumn. However, this appears to make it all the more frustrating for mediators whose responsibility it is to offer mediation and support services for clients of the Local Employment Services. Even more worrying, perhaps, is the finding that some Traveller men have refused to re-engage with the service after training courses have been organised between FÁS and the LES with their approval. This has resulted in a financial loss for the LES. In addition, it appears that some Traveller men have refused to take up job offers that have been negotiated by the LES mediator despite having originally expressed a desire to take up such positions.

*“I would have had a lot of cases with Traveller men who requested particular training, would have put them through all the process, got the funding and then they did not turn up for the training, despite us ringing 24/7, taking every precaution. So there is a reliability issue there for that situation, so in my practice as mediator, I would go to further lengths.”*

*“I had one person before Christmas that had a job set up, talked to the employer, this site over here and a number of sites across Blanchardstown, talked to the employer, and he told me he had met this individual, interviewed him, told me to get his Scaffolding licence. He’d worked in this area before and your man had the job ready for him next Monday. The lad never did his training. We organised it twice for him, set it up for him, FÁS and ourselves worked closely together in monitoring him, he disappeared. It was a very good opportunity, the employer was taking him up in arms” need this lad, and I’m happy to take him on”*

### PATRIARCHAL FAMILY STRUCTURE

It appears that there are restrictions that Traveller women in particular have to overcome before being able to even think about taking up employment. This can be related back to cultural patterns that exist within the Traveller community at present. The family unit is where Travellers seek solace and re-assurance. Within the traditional Traveller family unit each member has certain duties to fulfil.

*“The reality is either of the parents or both wouldn’t let their daughter mix in mainstream training or employment. So they ended up being referred back to social welfare.”*

*“You have the perception not just among men but also women that the place for women is in the home, they shouldn’t be doing that. Now that is changing slowly but other jobs mixing with settled people are not acceptable in some cases.”*

*“There is a majority of Travellers out there who believe a women’s place is in the home. It’s women who negotiate children’s education so it is them who end up having to go to the school. It is women who go to the local authority accessing accommodation so it is women who are faced with the obstacle of being told move on.”*

*“We’ve a group of women who aren’t allowed to come down to training courses on their own. We’ve another group of people whose parents won’t let them work at all, ever, because of whatever family environment they live in. We’ve another group of people who don’t have the skills, educationally and academically. We’ve another group of people who socially have not had any experience of a working environment, working with mainstream settled society. They’re not presentable for jobs, and we have another group who don’t have basic reading and writing.”*

### SKILLS EROSION

Several reports highlight that skills erosion has occurred within the Traveller community due to phenomena such as migration, modernisation and industrialisation starting in the 1960s.

*“The reality for Travellers is, they lived in a society prior to the 1970s where they had a valuable contribution to both the cultural and economic activity of this country. It’s an almost reverse of that now, where they are alienated and ostracised in communities and even in areas where they no longer had the traditional crafts of tinsmithing or plough making or whatever else they were engaged in, pre 70s.”*

### CULTURAL PREFERENCES

Finally, it may be that in some instances Travellers do not want to mix with settled persons on courses or in employment. As one Traveller woman stated to me:

*“They’ve got their culture and we’ve got ours.”*

To identify and document Travellers views and experiences in connection with long-term unemployment.

### FEMALE PERSPECTIVE

#### DISCRIMINATION / INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

One of the female participants recalled how upon returning to Ireland she had experienced discrimination at her local Social Welfare Office when she registered. This interaction had left a lasting impression on her and thrown into sharp relief the barriers some Travellers face in finding a job. Ironically, she was able to find employment in the UK because in the eyes of British employers she was just perceived as being Irish.

*“You are just Irish.” It’s not till I came back here that I experienced discrimination.”*

*“I worked in England, right, and I worked in factories here and there and everywhere and I got them no problem, right, but when I came back here, right, I tried to get a job but I couldn’t get one and I have to go to the Social Welfare to get me dole. But when I went in to them to get interviewed... they asked me was I an itinerant, is that the word?”*

Several women were also able to point to the fact that their address was used to identify them as Travellers and how this acted as a barrier to employment.

*“I think the main issue there is what it would be because they are a Traveller because of address, as soon as they heard an address, they automatically know a Traveller site, that’s it, you know that kinda way.”*

However, it is important to emphasise that the majority of the Traveller women in their own words, never experienced discrimination in their lives. This finding came through discussions on several separate occasions.

One woman did comment that she only got angry when all Travellers were labelled the same. Through interacting with settled people in particular situations, such as on a training course, a couple of the women discovered how similar obstacles affected both settled people and Travellers alike e.g. poor literacy.

### MALE PERSPECTIVE

One middle-aged male Traveller who had recently re-engaged with the Local Employment Services outlined how he had held down a couple of temporary, part-time jobs in his working life. He suggested that it was a lot harder for Travellers now, as people needed licences for lots of jobs, and spoke of how the dole was inadequate and that some were getting by doing odd jobs.

*“Guys are tree-topping.”*

*“Dole inadequate.”*

There was also recognition that skills Travellers had in the past were no longer in demand today.

*“Make buckets, scrapping cans but then plastics came along and kinda did away with a lot of the skills Travellers had at that time.”*

He was of the belief that:

*“Travellers are all tarnished with the one brush and it was twice as difficult being a Traveller and trying to find work.”*

On the question of education, he outlined how in school his teacher just left the Travellers to play football amongst themselves. According to him, deep down they all knew that

*“We weren’t going to get a job education.”*

His younger brother, who he had brought along to the LES, is beginning the process of entering employment. He indicated that as a Traveller

the attitude of employers he’d experienced thus far was:

*“Not trusted” and “Don’t ring me I’ll ring you.”*

This constant rejection and stigmatisation simply due to the fact that one is a Traveller is reportedly having wider repercussions within the Traveller community. It was also reported that lack of both opportunities and confidence, coupled with the loss of traditional Traveller skills, was also affecting older Travellers in particular.

*“It’s cruel... burning away inside...”*

On a more positive note, he also outlined how his brother had been working as a lorry driver for several years but had been forced to hide his Traveller identity for a long time. His boss, who knew he was a Traveller, stood up for him on one occasion when his colleagues – a group of settled men – began to discuss Travellers in a negative light. Eventually he broke the news to his fellow employees that he was a Traveller. Since then he was accepted. Interestingly, he also shared his thoughts how:

*“Travellers need help. Need someone to give them a help to put them in the right direction.”*

This very rich data demonstrates some of the challenges confronting Travellers in entering employment but also re-enforces the need for agencies to be supportive of Traveller men in particular on an ‘outreach basis’.

We shall now examine the lack of targeted initiatives for male Travellers.



To examine why previous planned initiatives and actions never ‘took off’ or succeeded.

**TO EXAMINE THE LACK OF TARGETED INITIATIVES FOR MALE TRAVELLERS.**

a) In January 2002, Blanchardstown LES contracted the services of Forklift and Safety Training Services Ltd to run a course for male Travellers from Blanchardstown. The course was run in Finglas and seven Travellers received certificates. The course content covered subject matters such as:

- ◉ Reach Truck
- ◉ Counter Balance
- ◉ Power Pallet Track
- ◉ Manual Handling
- ◉ Workplace Health and Safety

An LES mediator co-ordinated the course. In doing so, he:

- ◉ Consulted with Travellers to see whether there was a demand for such a course.
- ◉ Negotiated with training providers regarding course fees.
- ◉ Sourced funding to pay for the course.
- ◉ Made follow-up visits to halting sites.
- ◉ Recruited the course participants.
- ◉ Drove participants to the course.
- ◉ Provided aftercare to course participants.

Comments of the Traveller men who attended the course as part of a follow- up evaluation

*“Found it all very useful.”*

*“People did the best for us.”*

*“Good of Brian to get it done for us” “He does his best.”*

*“People are getting a licence-but it’s another thing getting a job from it.”*

*“Length of the course was just right, if you couldn’t learn in that time you never would.”*

The efforts of the mediator though commendable, could not be sustained in the longer term. Due to existing work practices within the LES, this individual was also providing mediation support to other target groups. Several months later the mediator took up a new post leaving a gap in provision.

b) In 2003, the Partnerships Enterprise Officer established a steering group involving several agencies. This group commissioned an independent piece of research entitled:

*‘A study to examine the appropriate means of supporting the traveller economy in Blanchardstown’ (Russell, C., 2004).*

Unfortunately, the reports recommendations were never implemented, which left the 20 research participants feeling disappointed and dejected. Subsequent engagement with male Travellers was made all the more difficult after this initiative never materialised. Ironically, the proposed enterprise model for Traveller men developed through Russell’s research is now being implemented in Ballymun. This particular project will be explored further on. It is worth reflecting on the valuable lessons that emerged from Russell’s research, which could serve to point to gaps in service provision not presently being met.

Russell notes that ‘during the case study process the importance of outreach and advocacy became patently clear. The employment of an Outreach / Support worker to work with traveller men (funded under the Equal Programme) by the Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group proved an incredible asset to the endeavours of the

steering committee and the five traveller men. Having an Outreach worker firstly to inform them of what is available, secondly to encourage them to take up the supports on offer and thirdly to act as an advocate for them when they do access such service is seen to be a crucial first step'. (2004, p.30)

Russell also indicates how 'not one of the Traveller men interviewed was in a position to identify a support agency that they would approach about setting up a business and how the participants were also reticent about approaching any agency they perceive to be part of the settled establishment out of fear about being investigated by Social Welfare'.

When traditional economic activities were explored the majority of men though unaware of the specifics of the relevant legislation, were aware of the subsequent impact it had on them and their families.

The idea of training was anathema to young Traveller men but fathers were eager to see their sons take up some form of apprenticeship and saw the value of them staying in school.

c) Finally, in December 2006, Blanchardstown Area Partnership allocated funding from the LDSIP to the Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group. This contribution helped the BTDG contribute towards the costs of training 14 Traveller men, who were attending a mini bus and scaffolding course.



## LESSONS LEARNT

The lack of an outreach support worker is preventing [the] long term progression of Travellers into open or self employment.

The stop-start nature of projects can be counterproductive.

Outcomes are enhanced when several agencies are involved in designing courses for Traveller men.

Engaging with Traveller men has proven more difficult than anticipated at the outset.

Gaining the trust of Traveller men requires a greater time commitment than with many other target groups of the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme.

A lot of follow-up activity is required with the client if the momentum and goodwill created is not to dissipate.

Traveller men are reluctant to attend any personal development or job seeking programmes.

The amount of one-on-one LES mediation support required to progress Travellers into mainstream employment or further education and training requires a greater commitment of financial and human resources than with other target groups.

The onus of responsibility for engaging proactively with Traveller men rests with a number of bodies and cannot be the preserve of one agency.



**To examine approaches to supporting Travellers in other areas from an employment, self-employment and training perspective.**

Community organisations, Area Based Partnership companies, local authorities and government departments were contacted to help determine best practice and to gather relevant information that could be shared with the steering group.

The following is a summation of the main initiatives that provide valuable learning in the context of this report.

**a) Supporting Employment and Enterprise Development among Traveller Men- St. Margaret's Traveller Community, Ballymun.**

In 2005, the National College of Ireland was contracted by Ballymun Regeneration to develop employment and enterprise opportunities for men at St. Margaret's Traveller Community.

The Nurture Programme actually follows the model developed from the research conducted by Russell, contracted by the Blanchardstown Area Partnership in 2003/2004.

The Nurture Programme organised a driver theory test training programme. This was in response to the men's stated interests. Men were encouraged to set themselves up at a PC with self-directed driver theory training software.

A support worker was on hand to assist the men with queries. In order to make the training as accessible as possible the local CDP centre on-site was opened on designated evenings.

Some of the keys to success of this programme centre on the presence of a male facilitator / support development worker who engages directly with Traveller men on an outreach basis. Starting where the Traveller men are at and a flexible / informal approach.

**b) Tallaght LES / PARTAS**

*A model of good practice* had been developed jointly by the Traveller Community Development Project and the Tallaght LES. This is informed by an equality paradigm that tries to ensure equality of access, participation and outcome for its clients. In doing so, clear written policies have been developed. The Traveller Community are engaged in the decision making process at all times.

The Tallaght Local Employment Service has employed a mediator / outreach worker to engage with the Traveller community for several years.

A painting and decorating course was run in conjunction with PARTAS for 12 young Travellers as well as an English For Traveller Enterprise programme. This initial pilot programme ran for 26 weeks from Brookfield Enterprise Centre. Modules were specifically devised so that they could be delivered using video and role plays to get across key information. Literacy inputs were run three mornings per week and the sessions on the other two. Each participant's literacy skills was assessed and they were helped to identify their own business ideas.

**c) Pathways to Employment for Travellers in South Dublin County Council.**

This training employment programme consisted of a programme for General Operatives and Clerical Officers. A comprehensive evaluation report was completed and updated in March 2007.

The reports conclusions point to the following as key lessons:

- ◉ Leadership within the Council
- ◉ Good management
- ◉ Existence of a ‘champion’
- ◉ Selection process is important
- ◉ Ability of the Council to offer full-time jobs at the end if the eventual outcome of training was deemed a success

### PROGRAMME FOR GENERAL OPERATIVES

This programme sought to recruit and train general operatives to work in the Parks Department. The project lasted for 6 months. Over this period participants trained 3 days a week with FÁS and for 2 days with the Council’s Parks Department. Diversity training was provided to employees within the Parks Department.

The recruitment of men between 17-19 years of age to the programme was a crucial component.

- ◉ Informal interviews were held to establish interest and capabilities
- ◉ Participants in the first 6 months were offered full pay at the entry level grade for General Operatives
- ◉ Everyone was promised a job if the training that was FETAC accredited was completed.

### PROGRAMME FOR CLERICAL OFFICERS

This programme involved hiring people with good literacy and computer skills, who may have had work experience, to work on temporary contracts or gain work experience.

In a follow up evaluation of the Pathways to Employment programme by Hibernian Consulting<sup>7</sup>, the author recommends that:

- ◉ agencies need to commit to an inter-agency

process and that a work participation protocol should be devised.

- ◉ the importance of outreach as a tool for contacting the wider Traveller community is vital if Travellers are to be recruited.

Specific personnel and resources are allocated to target employers.

### d) EQUAL Initiatives<sup>8</sup>

#### CLARE

The training of Traveller Enterprise Workers with the appropriate skills, attributes and energy was acknowledged as the most critical feature of this pilot initiative in County Clare.

An incentive grant to encourage and support employers to employ Travellers in the first year of employment – €8,000 was made available.

Employers’ were also granted a PRSI exemption for two years.

Travellers were able to avail of grant aid-to assist in the cost of insurance and advertising.

The importance of on-going mentoring and support–upskilling, business plans was key.

Employment of two Traveller Support Workers to work with two second level schools was a unique feature of the pilot peer-led mentoring programme.

#### CORK

The working relationship between the FÁS Development Officer and the Co-ordinator of Special Initiatives for Travellers was central. Between them, they targeted Travellers, made contact with employers, explored business ideas and offered ongoing support.

7. Hibernian Consulting (2007) Opening Pathways to Employment for members of the Travelling Community in South Dublin Council, EQUAL AT WORK, A Dublin Employment Pact Initiative.

8. EQUAL (2000-2007) is a Community Initiative promoted by the European Commission. It is part of a strategy to ensure the European Social Fund reflects the labour market policy objectives of the European Union Employment Strategy. EQUAL funding is allocated across is thematic areas including entrepreneurship, adaptability, employability and equal opportunities.

## FIELD RESEARCH FINDINGS

The Mail shot approach to contacting Travellers did not work. Far more successful was the traditional means of contacting Travellers via outreach and networking.

Travellers needed to be constantly cajoled, encouraged, and motivated to take up opportunities. An individual approach was necessary.

The Traveller Development Worker collected Travellers from their homes and brought them to interviews or courses on occasions.

Funding for training opportunities, child care expenses, and taxis to and from interviews were also covered.

Site visits to a recycling centre in England took place.

Traveller men were helped to sit a Farrier's exam, and a forklift driver course. Several men were given support to prepare a business plan-Vardo.

### **GALWAY**

A Traveller Advocacy Worker is employed by the Galway City Partnership. This person provides mentoring and support to Travellers in order to assist their career path to training, education, work experience and employment.

FÁS established a 6-week long pre-apprenticeship training programme which linked in with the VEC to help identify young Traveller men.

The programme was divided as follows: 4 days training – 1 day with the employer.

A training programme in construction and landscaping skills was developed.

A Supervisor co-ordinated the project, which involved the renovation of premises for the HSE.

### **DUBLIN – TRAVACT**

The Traveller Enterprise and Employment Programme was implemented.

A business consultant was hired who operated out of a local community centre.

A community sensitive business model was pursued.

Mentoring and support were essential. A consultant worked on a step-by-step basis.

There was a huge amount of misinformation around running a business, entitlement and grants, which needed to be addressed.

The Pilot employed a research assistant who happened to be from the Traveller community. He acted as a conduit between the pilot and the Traveller community.

Ideas came from the Traveller themselves.

Travellers were challenged to develop the required skills within the 'real world' and were supported in making them make a 'cultural shift' to ensure their business ideas worked.



To examine if there are any 'attitudinal barriers' among employers to hiring members of the Travelling community.  
(Postal Survey)

**BACKGROUND**

146 employers', who are all members of the Greater Blanchardstown Chamber of Commerce, were surveyed. 22 questionnaires were returned, which corresponds to a 15% response rate. As a result, it cannot be claimed that the overall findings are representative of Chamber members drawn across the Dublin 15 area. However, the response rate was far higher among larger employers, especially those employing more than 200 employees. As such greater weighting can be attributed to the views of larger employers.

**Finding 1:** 62% of employers surveyed indicated that they would hire a Traveller. 15% indicated they would not, and 23% were undecided.

*"If they had the necessary qualifications and experience and came out top of the interview process I would employ [them]."*

*"Depends on position / candidate's suitability."*

*"I would employ what I consider the most suitable candidate for the job based on interview... and CV."*

*"If they had the qualifications and training their status as a Traveller is irrelevant."*

**Finding 2:** 24% of employers suggested that they would have some misgivings about hiring a Traveller, with up to 33% of those surveyed undecided.

*"We may have concerns as to how the people in the community would work with traveller employees if they are not from the same target group themselves. Issues with*

*interaction, reliability, work ethic, etc but these exist with many non-Travellers also."*

**Finding 3:** 68% of employers indicated that employees would have no problem working alongside Travellers.

*"Presently we have settled Travellers working in our crèche."*

*"Equality is strongly stressed and part of an ethos, however one needs to try to know."*

*"Provided they adapt to our working practice, then no problem."*

*"We would not tolerate inappropriate treatment in any case."*

**Finding 4:** 60% of employers thought that Travellers may require additional on-site training. This is an interesting finding because only 19% of employers have actually employed a member of the Travelling community. This could suggest that this is based on personal perceptions and not actual first hand experience of working alongside a Traveller.

*"Depending on how much training they already have."*

*"Depending on experience."*

**Finding 5:** 67% of employers suggested that they never had a Traveller looking for a job or applying for an advertised post.

*"Do not know of any."*

**Finding 6:** 19% of employers have actually employed a member of the Travelling community. 48% were unsure.

*"Firstly through CE schemes and they progressed from CE and are now employed by the centre."*

## FIELD RESEARCH FINDINGS

**Finding 7:** 57% of all employers had previously heard about the Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group.

### CONCLUSIONS

Of the employers who indicated that they had employed members of the Travelling community, 50% were small enterprises (0-10 employees) and 50% multinational companies.

No employers in the 11-50 or 51-200 range could indicate that they had hired Travellers. This finding appears to suggest that work needs to be undertaken to persuade more employers to hire Travellers. A local initiative supported by the Employers Group might facilitate this task.

A short public relations exercise may need to be undertaken to raise the profile of the

Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group as 43% of all employers surveyed had never previously heard about its existence.

62% of employers surveyed indicated that they would hire a Traveller with a 25% undecided. This suggests that there is an opportunity to place or progress more Travellers into local employment as the majority of employers are open to the possibility of employing Travellers. Were a skills audit of Travellers who are clients of the BTDG, BAP and the LES undertaken it might help match individuals with possible vacancies.

60% of employers thought that Travellers may require additional on-site training, which may be a feature that discouraged them from recruiting potential employees from the Traveller community.



## PART IV

### Conclusions

*According to Pearn and Kandola  
(2002, p48)*

*“Travellers cannot adequately and fairly participate within mainstream labour market programmes without reasonable accommodation of their particular needs and culture at each step in the cycle of programme planning provision. Gaps are also evident at the end of programmes in the progression of Travellers to their desired outcomes. It will be difficult to make significant progress regarding the participation of Travellers in the labour market unless it is some designed body’s job to champion this agenda.”*

*“The Blanchardstown Area Partnership / Local Employment Services and the Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group in liaison with agencies affiliated to the new Fingal Inter Agency Traveller Group have an opportunity to pilot new initiatives to tackle the high level of unemployment experienced by the Traveller community in Blanchardstown.”*

# Conclusions

The low progression rate for Traveller women in Blanchardstown who are on active labour market programmes such as Community Employment is generally little different from the overall general population. As Duggan points out ‘it has consistently been the less disadvantaged among participants that are most likely to progress to employment’(1999).

The European Social Fund Evaluation Unit in the context of Community Employment recognises that:

**“The current situation where the programme with the lowest progression and certification levels is the most attractive in terms of remuneration, secondary benefits and flexibility, while the programmes which provide higher progression and certification have lower allowances and less flexibility is perverse” (ESF Evaluation Unit 1998).**

There are human rights and social policy issues that must be addressed jointly by the settled and Traveller community before Travellers can ever realistically hope to achieve equality of access and participation in the labour market or establish their own businesses.

Travellers are not a homogenous ethnic group. Various clusters or categories / social classes exist within Traveller society, which have specific needs that do not necessarily reflect the needs of the wider community. Some examples of the sub-groups within the Traveller community are transient and settled Travellers, young and elderly Travellers, and male and female Travellers.

The Blanchardstown Area Partnership / Local Employment Services and the Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group in liaison with agencies affiliated to the new Fingal Inter Agency Traveller Group have an opportunity to pilot new initiatives to tackle the high level of unemployment experienced by the Traveller community in Blanchardstown.

Short term interventions while well intentioned can often be counter productive. Pilot initiatives must be properly resourced and run over a three-year period.

## SCALE OF THE CHALLENGE

Data from the 2006 census reveals that there are 645 Travellers living in the Greater Blanchardstown Area. A survey by CROSSCARE conducted in 2002 enumerated a higher number of Travellers. It implied that there were approximately 196 Traveller families in Blanchardstown, which translates to about 990 individual Travellers resident in Dublin 15.

82% of the Traveller working age population in the greater Blanchardstown Area are unemployed. In the absence of specific labour market programmes such as Community Employment the figure would be higher.

There are a very high number of young Travellers in the greater Blanchardstown area aged 15 or over who are now looking for their first regular job in the labour market. None are supported through Community Employment Schemes or are registered with the Local Employment Services.

### **EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING & LOWER LEVELS OF EDUCATIONAL AND SKILL QUALIFICATIONS**

Given the high rates of early school leaving that still exist amongst the Traveller population in Blanchardstown, specific educational supports are paramount in encouraging more Travellers to remain in school, especially beyond the group certificate stage. The educational and recreational activities delivered by the Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group Youth and Education support worker and her assistant are vital in this regard.

There are still many Traveller women and men in Blanchardstown who do not engage with mainstream agencies such as the Adult Education Service of the County Dublin VEC. This highlights the on-going importance of Traveller-specific community education classes and labour market schemes in trying to support and encourage Traveller women into supported and open employment.

The traditional skills that older Traveller men in particular practiced have largely disappeared due to mechanisation, the decline of manufacturing and the expansion of the services industry.

### **PARTICULAR ISSUES FOR WOMEN**

Progressive retention work policies have a significant part to play in encouraging not only people with health and medical problems but also Travellers who have additional caring responsibilities to gain a foothold in the labour market. The lack of opportunities for Traveller women to put into practice the skills they have acquired after an interim carry-over period of 6 months following community employment is impeding their progression into open employment.

Compared with women from the wider population a very high percentage of Traveller women in Blanchardstown are engaged mainly in *'home duties'*. This is not unique to Traveller women in Blanchardstown but is a cultural feature amongst the wider Traveller community at present.

Within the Traveller family unit, men and women have traditionally taken on core tasks. This cultural factor can be a deliberate choice and as such should be respected.

Levinson and Sparkes (2006) argue that bonds between females of different generations remain extremely strong, with far more links than breaks in the chain connecting them.

The older generation of Traveller men and women often have a wider influencing role within the Traveller family network. Elderly Travellers, whose life expectancy is generally shorter than settled persons, require 'social care' at some stage in their lives. Responsibility for providing this care generally falls on the shoulders of Traveller women.

The Department of Social and Family Affairs proposed activation debate framework has potentially enormous implications for single parents within both the Traveller and settled communities. The proposals focus on two subgroups of mothers, single parents and qualified adults, and sets forth the idea that their choice to parent full-time be limited to when children are seven years of age.

Sweeney notes that 'in 2004 at least 30% of all children on whose behalf Child Dependent Allowances were paid had parents who could not be expected to take up work on grounds of having three or more children, or because they were on an old age or pre-retirement pension, or carers or blind payment' (2007). This raises two key issues.

## CONCLUSIONS

How will such payments be exempted from work requirements?

How will the income adequacy needs of such families, who cannot use employment as a route out of poverty, be met through the Irish income supports and public services.

Murphy points out that 'overall evaluations demonstrate that activation approaches alone will not suffice, that in-work benefits, flexible employment and wrap-around childcare are essential and that, as the UK and New Zealand experiences demonstrate, voluntary activation policy achieves as much as mandatory activation policy' (2008, p31).

The government's proposals to de-genderise welfare payments could be a positive move in helping more Traveller women take up employment.

Several of the Traveller women on the BTDG training programmes are returning to education / training after an absence of several years from formal schooling.

Many of the research participants never had an opportunity to complete transition year as they left school early. This places them at a distinct disadvantage compared to other teenagers who completed this phase in their education cycle. The lack of exposure to work 'outside the Traveller family network' has hampered the progression rates of Travellers into open employment.

Some of the Traveller women had a stated preference for taking up part time jobs as this would enable them to balance their family commitments with a career. However, at present they appear reluctant to do so without the support of fellow Traveller women, which gives them a level of mutual support.

A couple of the women had a preference for taking on jobs that involved developing the potential of other Travellers within the community itself and 'giving something back'.

For some Traveller women, Community Employment was perceived as a '*real job*' and not an active labour market policy as defined by economists. This is not unusual. Duggan claims that 'there is consistent evidence to show that many unemployed people consider work experience programmes as a form of employment rather than as a labour market programme' (1999, p10).

Many Traveller women on the CE course clearly found the communication and explanation of welfare-to-work issues confusing. For instance, knowledge about the mobile information unit operated by the Blanchardstown Centre for the Unemployed, which advises on welfare-to-work programmes was almost negligible. This matter has now been addressed.

Some of the Traveller women on Community Employment who engaged in the discussion groups had difficulty identifying jobs which appealed to them.

A couple of the Traveller women who were on CE worked in crèches but did not decide to work in these roles as a career. For one participant, the struggle of looking after her own children at home and other people's children during the working day was too much to handle. A second participant who worked in a crèche felt that she did not quite 'fit in'.

The lack of affordable childcare can sometimes limit Traveller women's choices in taking up employment.

Some of the Traveller women approached and registered with the Blanchardstown LES in Parslickstown House for an initial meeting. None had re-visited the Local Employment

## CONCLUSIONS

Services several months later. This highlights the importance of the nature of outreach work once again.

### FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The loss of secondary benefits in the event of taking up employment is an issue for some of the women on CE. This is made all the more difficult as some participants' are linked to the social welfare payments their husbands receive. This can restrict their choice in taking up employment.

Many local Traveller families have relied on social welfare payments for extended periods of time, which in some cases is now intergenerational. The challenge for LES mediators and employment coaches in helping break this psychological mindset is enormous. For Traveller family units with 6-7 children the decision to enter the workforce is even more daunting.

### DISCOURAGEMENT AND LOW CONFIDENCE

Many Travellers are very isolated from mainstream society in Blanchardstown, especially in sites located in The Ward and Abbotstown. (Please see ordnance survey map in appendix)

This can have implications for some of the women on Community Employment whose confidence and self esteem did not appear sufficiently developed to enable them take up employment upon completion of their scheme.

### DISCRIMINATION

Some Travellers in Blanchardstown encounter discrimination when trying to access the labour market.

Some Travellers believe that the settled community do not perceive them as their equals. This can discourage some Travellers

from taking up employment or attending training courses alongside settled people.

Many Travellers who have taken up employment are forced to hide their Traveller identity. This is a source of frustration for these individuals. In the absence of an employer who is willing to openly employ Travellers, many feel they have no choice but to keep silent about their ethnic background.

### EMPLOYERS' REQUIREMENTS AND THEIR VIEWS OF LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED JOB SEEKERS- SURVEY

Additional work needs to be undertaken to persuade more employers to hire Travellers. A local initiative supported by the Employers Group would go some way to supporting this endeavour.

62% of employers surveyed indicated that they would hire a Traveller, 15% indicated they would not whilst 23% were undecided.

A short public relations exercise may need to be undertaken to raise the profile of the Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group (BTDG) with the support of the Employers Group as 43% of all employers surveyed had no previous knowledge about the BTDG.

### AVAILABILITY AND QUALITY OF SUPPORTS SERVICES – PERSONALISATION OF SERVICES

The strategic linkage between the BAP / LES and the BTDG needs to be strengthened to support more Travellers into supported and open employment. Existing structures and resources are not being utilised to their full potential.

Because some Travellers are very suspicious and fearful of authority figures this has repercussions for the *existing LES model* when trying to build up a relationship of trust and respect with the client. This is made all the

## CONCLUSIONS

more difficult when some Traveller men are effectively forced to engage with the LES only because they are NEAP clients.

Gaining access to men on Traveller sites is presently not possible via the existing LES model.

A generic LES model cannot meet the needs of all individuals who are unemployed. The national and local LES model needs to be adjusted when it comes to supporting the Traveller community.

Previous short-term approaches to supporting the Traveller community in Blanchardstown via outreach work by a male LES mediator did manage to draw in men to the service. These men have recently re-engaged with the LES. Such alternative approaches to the standard LES procedure need to be piloted in Blanchardstown and beyond for much longer time periods.

### **PARTICULAR ISSUES FOR MEN**

The needs of Traveller men in particular have generally not been prioritised by the relevant agencies whose responsibility it is to progress into employment.

Government legislation such as the Casual Trading Act and the Horses Act had a negative impact on Traveller employment opportunities.

Lack of a provision for the specifics of Traveller culture is impeding men from starting up their own business.

It is unlikely that the employment levels of Traveller men will reach parity with the wider male population due to a preference for self-employment. For cultural reasons, Traveller men generally decide to choose self-employment over waged labour.

Services need to adapt services and operate on an 'outreach basis' to help support Traveller men in particular in building up trust and confidence. Traveller men are far more isolated from mainstream service providers than women. The responsibility for approaching these agencies often falls upon women in Traveller society.

### **HELPING MEN TOWARDS WORK**

The absence of a worker who can take on mediation, one-to-one enterprise support and advocacy work with male Travellers in the Greater Blanchardstown Area is a significant barrier in establishing better relations with the Traveller community.

The Blanchardstown LES employed a mediator several years back who managed to gain access to male Travellers, register them with the service and sign them up to courses. This outreach work, whilst time consuming, did yield positive results. Aside from Traveller men who are NEAP clients these individuals are the only ones who are engaging with the Local Employment Service.

The potential of the Community Services Programme in Blanchardstown in supporting the Traveller community remains underutilised.

Some sporadic initiatives for Traveller men have been put in place but these have been short term in nature.

Travellers need to be supported with a 'hands-on approach' to help their businesses survive and prosper.

Traveller men need to be provided with the 'soft supports and skills' to help them sustain and in some cases legitimise their businesses.

'Business ideas generation classes' for 'women only' have been provided around the country.

## CONCLUSIONS

These courses were devised in response to gender and equality proofing of internal actions by Area Based Partnership Companies. Similar initiatives for Traveller men need to be rolled out in Blanchardstown.

### WELFARE TO WORK ISSUES FOR MEN

The Back to Work Enterprise Allowance Scheme in Ireland originally piloted back in the early 1990s is the ideal mechanism through which to realise this objective. Many Traveller men, however, are finding this increasingly difficult. This is a greater challenge for some Traveller men due to their reported lower literacy levels.

Despite concerted efforts by the LES Mediators in Blanchardstown over the past few years some Traveller men and women have repeatedly broken appointments with the

service and not attended training courses organised according to their wishes. There may have been extenuating reasons for this such as fear and mistrust. Once again this highlights the importance of outreach work.

### IN WORK ISSUES

Ballymun's Nurture Programme model is following a model developed by the Nurture Programme in 2003/2004 working with Traveller men in the Blanchardstown area.

A pivotal issue was the ability of South Dublin County Council to offer full-time jobs to Travellers at the end of the programme if the course training was deemed successful.





PART V  
Recommendations

*“Help support Travellers towards work.”*

*“Help support Travellers into work.”*

*“Keep Travellers at work.”*

# Recommendations

Factoring in the National Economic and Social Forum report, *Creating a More Inclusive Labour Market*, there are a number of specific recommendations that agencies and government departments should implement in order to:

- ◉ Help support Travellers towards work
- ◉ Help support Travellers into work
- ◉ Keep Travellers at work
- ◉ Ensure personalisation of services

## Local Recommendations

Improved integration and service delivery amongst Blanchardstown Area Partnership / Local Employment Services, Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group and FÁS.

1. There is a clear need for improved strategic linkage between the Partnership/LES, and the BTDG on employment matters relating to the Traveller community in Blanchardstown. At present existing resources and support staff are not being utilised to their full potential.
2. The existing Local Employment Service model for engaging with Travellers needs to be significantly modified. The appointment of a community development worker who can take on mediation, one-to-one enterprise support, and advocacy work with male Travellers needs to be urgently addressed by **all agencies**, which offer local and regional support for Travellers attempting to move into self- or open employment.

3. The BTDG, BAP, LES, and individual organisations sitting on the new Fingal Inter-Agency Group should undertake a joint field visit to other projects in Dublin, which offer supports to Travellers. The models of best practice developed by the Tallaght LES and Ballymun Partnership among others should be taken into account and viewed in the field.
4. The Blanchardstown Area Partnership should continue to run flexible workshops to enable male Travellers to generate income from self-employment in a manner compliant with regulations. In reality, it may not be possible to do this until an 'outreach strategy' has been implemented and trust levels have been adequately established between the Traveller community and an outreach officer.
5. The potential of the Community Services Programme in Blanchardstown in supporting the Traveller community remains underutilised. The Blanchardstown Area Partnership in conjunction with the Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group should submit a funding proposal to the POBAL Community Services Programme targeting Traveller men.

### IDENTIFYING BASIC SKILLS NEEDS

6. A general skills audit of Travellers who are clients of the Local Employment Services and the Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group should be undertaken to help match their skills with potential employers.
7. Career days should be organised jointly by the Employment Unit of the LES and the

Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group for women on Community Employment, and Women’s Training Programme with the involvement of Jobs Club mediators. This should occur several months before women are due to finish their Community Employment scheme.

**EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT - ENABLING EFFECTIVE EMPLOYER INPUT**

- 8. The Blanchardstown Employers Group needs to lobby community and private employers to take on Traveller women from BTDG training programmes for work experience placement.

**Regional Recommendations**

**FINGAL INTER AGENCY GROUP**

- 9. Services need to adapt their services to operate far more on an outreach basis. This will contribute to restoring Travellers’ trust and confidence levels in mainstream agencies. It will also help to break down prejudices and pre-conceived notions and encourage more Travellers to engage with mainstream services in more central venues around Blanchardstown in the medium to longer term.
- 10. Plans for a Traveller resource centre as outlined by Murphy (2002) should be implemented. According to Fingal County Council ‘it is an objective of the County Council to provide such a centre (2005, p10) As an interim measure workshop provision for Traveller units at local enterprise centres should be provided.

**National Recommendations**

**THE DEPARTMENT OF ENTERPRISE, TRADE AND EMPLOYMENT / FÁS**

- 11. Given the very high rate of unemployment among the Traveller community at present, the local Traveller CE scheme should continue.
- 12. The existing LES model for engaging with Travellers needs to be significantly modified. This should be undertaken by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment / FÁS.
- 13. Fostering outreach work through one-to-one mentoring is critical. An ‘outreach worker’ should be appointed to help support and encourage Traveller men and women to engage more with the LES.
- 14. A regional jobs coach is needed to keep in contact with Travellers in the first six months of their job placements. Aspects of the Blanchardstown LES ‘Bridge to Work Programme’ could be incorporated. Central to that programme is the high support offered to both the clients and employed during and after the placement.

**THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND FAMILY AFFAIRS**

- 15. The government’s new ‘activation policy’ for single parents needs to be handled sensitively. As Murphy points out ‘policy needs to differentiate between different groups of lone parents and qualified adults who may have different personal, employment and educational histories’ (2008, pg 31-32).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

16. More local authorities including Fingal County Council, should pursue the possibility of employing Travellers similar to the model developed by South Dublin County Council.
17. Lack of a provision for the specifics of Traveller culture is impeding men from starting up their own businesses. The design of group housing accommodation should be more in line with the wishes of Traveller agencies as outlined by Whyte (2002).
18. Government legislation such as the Horses Act and Casual Trading Act should be reviewed as recommended by McCarthy (1998). These have negatively impacted on Traveller employment opportunities.
19. As a prerequisite, government should give greater consideration to equality proofing legislation around the Traveller community. Both local and central government and local should involve Travellers or persons who represent them in the design of policies and measures as recommended by COSSEE (2005).

### THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

20. Mainstream funding should be provided for the educational and recreational activities delivered by the Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group. The very high youth Traveller population in Blanchardstown merits this if inroads are to be made in preventing early school leaving, which in turn reduce a persons probabilities of finding employment.
21. Additional resources need to be provided to the Visiting Teacher for Travellers in Blanchardstown to include an assistant recruited from the Travelling Community as recommended by Forkan (2007).
22. Intercultural training for qualified and trainee teachers in colleges around Traveller culture should be a prerequisite as recommended by Forkan (2007).

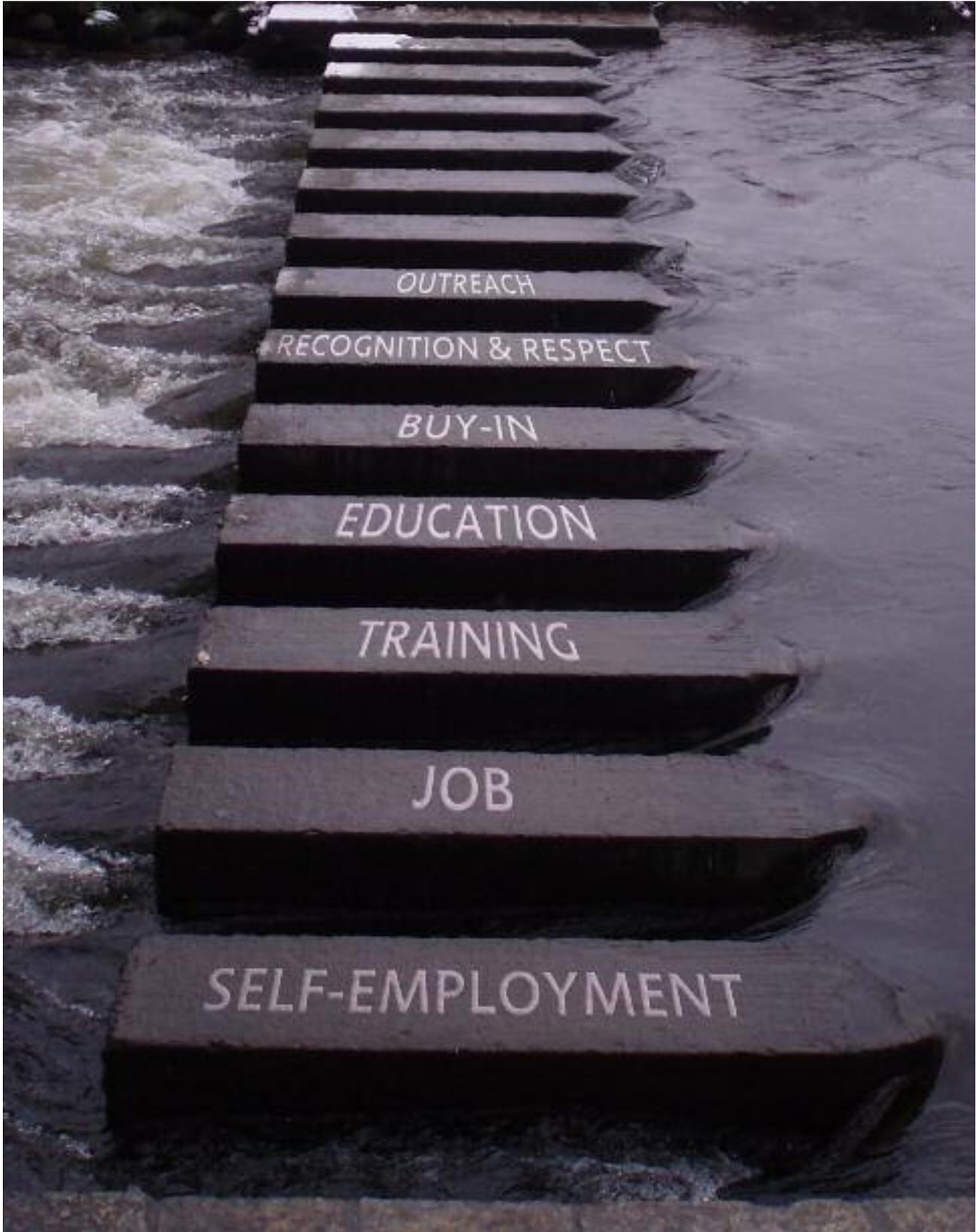
### THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE EQUALITY AND LAW REFORM / POBAL AND COUNTY CHILDCARE COMMITTEES

23. More community crèches need to operate on a full-time sessional basis especially in Blanchardstown considering the extraordinary high level of the youth-at-risk population.

### DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND CHILDREN

24. The recommendations pertaining to 'Traveller Health – A National Strategy 2002-2005' should be implemented in their entirety, as outlined by Brack and Monaghan (2007).





OUTREACH

RECOGNITION & RESPECT

BUY-IN

EDUCATION

TRAINING

JOB

SELF-EMPLOYMENT



## PART VI

### Appendices

Community Employment

Research Methodology

Map of Greater Blanchardstown

# Community Employment

## **SOURCE FÁS AND INOU WEBSITES**

Community Employment is an employment and training programme which helps long-term unemployed people to re-enter the active workforce by breaking their experience of unemployment through a return to work routine. CE is divided into two options both of which have different rules and conditions.

## **CE PART-TIME INTEGRATION OPTION**

CE schemes provide work for an average of 19.5 hours per week (or 39 hours per fortnight) for one year. Under this type of scheme extensions of a second year may be possible, subject to the approval of FÁS.

## **CE PART-TIME JOB OPTION**

On the part-time job option you can work up to three years compared to the standard one year available to other participants. The programme assists them to enhance and develop both their technical and personal skills which can then be used in the workplace.

The CE programme is sponsored by groups wishing to benefit the local community, namely voluntary organisations and public bodies involved in not-for-profit activities.

To participate in the FÁS Community Employment programme, one must: register at your local FÁS Office; meet certain eligibility criteria. FÁS gives financial support in the form of Allowances and Funding to assist with the Community Employment programme, for example, participant wages, supervisor grants, materials grants, and specific skills training grants.

The training provided through Community Employment is delivered within a Quality Assurance framework. See details of recognised FETAC Awards and qualifications which can be achieved and which lead to major awards on the National Framework of Qualifications.

## **SPONSORING COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT**

Voluntary organisations and public bodies may sponsor projects which are for community and public benefit. To facilitate the provision of development and training for participants, FÁS encourages projects employ 15 or more participants and have a full-time supervisor.

The sponsor is provided with resources to employ jobless people as participants. Through their period spent at work on a project, participants improve their chances of being integrated into subsequent employment elsewhere in the local economy. The eligibility criteria for each of the options are outlined in Participant Eligibility. FÁS pays a wages grant to participants for the full period of employment. A contribution towards full-time supervision and material costs will be made, while grants towards participant development – a specific skills training grant – are also provided. Details can be found at Allowances and Funding. As a sponsor of the participants, the PRSI liability owing is for the occupational injuries benefit rate of 0.5%. FÁS contributes towards the sponsor's PRSI costs of employing a supervisor (Class A rate). Income will be assessed for PAYE in the normal way.

### LOCAL TRAINING INITIATIVE

The Local Training Initiative programme is a project-based training and work experience programme carried out in the local community run by local community groups. The programme allows local communities to carry out valuable and necessary projects of benefit to their communities, while at the same time training participants in areas related to the project work so that they can go on to gain employment or progress to further training. Anyone who is unemployed and over the age of 16, at any level of literacy, is Eligible to Participate.

Currently, the Local Training Initiative is supporting many organisations engaged in a

wide range of initiatives including genealogy, environmental, heritage, tourism, theatre, sports, and coaching. Some projects are targeted at specific groups in society, such as women, early school leavers, men, homeless people, recovering addicts, prisoners, Travellers, etc. See further information on Eligibility to Sponsor a Local Training Initiative.

FÁS provides support in the form of Allowances and Funding to assist with the Local Training Initiative, for example, training allowances for participants and grants for supervisors, materials and administration. Training on Local Training Initiatives is certified and leads to recognised awards on the National Framework of Qualifications.

# Research Methodology

A research steering group was established to help guide and shape the parameters of the research. This structure was engaged with at all stages of the research process.

The Blanchardstown Traveller Community Development Group had a key role in identifying female Travellers to participate in discussion groups and interviews. The Co-Ordinator of the Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group, and a CE Supervisor acted as 'gatekeepers' throughout. In terms of gaining access with male Travellers an LES Mediator organised an initial face-to-face meeting.

## ETHICAL ISSUES

Any primary research in the form of one-to-one interviews or focus groups with members of the Traveller Community proceeded on the basis of their informed consent. All Travellers from the outset were made aware of their entitlement to refuse to participate at any stage in the actual research process. To ensure the research process was culturally sensitive no postal questionnaires were distributed to Travellers to guard against possible literacy difficulties.

## Phase 1 Desk Research

### A COMPREHENSIVE LITERATURE REVIEW WAS UNDERTAKEN. ITS PURPOSE WAS MULTIPLE.

To inform the chosen research methodology and help clarify the research problem.

To discover how others had researched the topic area previously and to identify where the available literature was inadequate.

To devise a theoretical / analytical framework as a basis for the analysis and interpretation of data.

## PHASE POSTAL SURVEY

146 employers, who are all members of the Greater Blanchardstown Chamber of Commerce were surveyed via postal questionnaire. The employers were drawn from across the private, community and voluntary sectors. These businesses ranged in size from micro enterprises to large multi-national corporations. The purpose was to examine if there are any 'attitudinal barriers' among employers to hiring members of the Travelling community.

## Phase 2 Field Work

The extensive fieldwork involved a combination of one-to-one interviewing and focus groups.

## INTERVIEWS

The former Chairperson of the Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group, who is a Community Links Worker with the Blanchardstown Area Partnership, was interviewed twice.

A former Local Employment Services Mediator was interviewed face-to-face.

The existing LES Mediator based in Parslickstown House was interviewed face-to-face.

The Co-ordinator of the Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group and a Community Employment Traveller Supervisor were jointly interviewed face-to-face.

A FÁS Worker in Parslickstown House was interviewed as a was a FÁS Traveller worker from Coolock.

A former Enterprise Officer of the Blanchardstown Area Partnership, was interviewed over the telephone.

A telephone interview was also conducted with a Tallaght Local Employment Service Mediator.

Several more telephone conversations were held to gather any additional information that could be shared with the Blanchardstown Area Partnership.

### FOCUS GROUPS

Three focus groups were arranged with Traveller women in Parslickstown House. On the first occasion, twenty seven women participated in an open discussion around some broad but also very specific topics. This initial discussion informed the subsequent focus groups. The literature review phase informed many of the questions that were asked on the day. Hand written notes were taken by the Partnership's Community Development Officer.

The second focus group was different in that it consisted of eight women, almost all of whom were on the CE scheme. In contrast this session was audio recorded. At the beginning the data from the first focus group was relayed to those present.

This exercise was carried out as a way of reminding people what had been discussed several weeks earlier. More importantly however, it was also used to obtain respondent validation of the data relayed to ensure that this was an accurate and valid account of participants' views and opinions.

The final focus group was very tightly defined, and once again built upon data collated at the previous discussion. This was a very fruitful exercise and the women really opened up and shared their views and opinions on a range of issues.

Two face-to-face interviews were held with Traveller men, both of whom were looking to source 9 to 5 work. There was an age gap of almost twenty years between both individuals, and this yielded some very insightful information. Unfortunately it was only possible to speak face-to-face with two Traveller men. Several attempts to reach Traveller men were made via word of mouth, phone calls and letters.

There were extenuating circumstances for this low engagement by Traveller men on this occasion. In 2003/2004, the Blanchardstown Area Partnership consulted with 20 male Travellers around the most suitable means of supporting the Traveller Economy in Blanchardstown.<sup>9</sup>

Unfortunately, the report's recommendations were never implemented, and this left a sense of resentment as yet more broken promises from agencies with responsibilities for supporting the Traveller community.

### Phase 4 Data Analysis

A 'theoretical sampling' approach was used to speak with select members of the Traveller Community and to get to the nub of the 'research problem'.

The majority of the face-to-face interviews / discussion groups were audio recorded, and the data was subsequently transcribed and analysed using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to establish coding categories and sub-categories. The transcripts were manually coded using a grounded theory approach.

9. Parslickstown Gardens Mulhuddart, St. Philomena's Court Ballycoolin, St. Philomena's Park. Ballycoolin St. Brigid's Park Porterstown.



Travellers in Greater Blanchardstown Area, Census 2006

OSI/Government of Ireland  
 License no. NE00002907

The background of the page is a solid gold color. Overlaid on this are several large, thick red curved shapes. On the left side, there is a large red semi-circle. In the center, a large red arc curves from the top left towards the bottom right. On the right side, there is a smaller red semi-circle, and within it, a smaller red circle, creating a nested circular effect.

PART VII  
Bibliography

# Bibliography

- Barry, J., Herity, B., Solan, J. (1989), The Travellers' Health Status Study: Vital Statistics of Travelling People 1987, The Health Research Board, Dublin.
- Brack, J. and Monaghan, S. (2007) Travellers' Last Rights, Parish of the Travelling People.
- Brennan, J. (2000) Education and Training Needs of Travellers in Killarney Town. Kerry: Human Resources Development Department, South Kerry Development Partnership Limited.
- Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group Plan 2001-2003. Dublin: BTDG.
- Campbell, H. (2004) Horsemen Project Consultation with Traveller, Gypsy and Roma Communities.
- CORI (1999) Social Transformation and Lifelong Learning. Dublin, Education Commission.
- Cossee, C (2005) Travellers' Economy in Europe: What recognition? EQUAL European Programme.
- Department of Education and Science (2000) White Paper on Adult Education: Learning for Life. Dublin: Stationary Office.
- Deloitte and Touche (1998) Review of Community Employment, Final Report. Dublin.
- Duggan, D. (1999) Work Experience Programmes Impact and Potential, Work Research Co-operative.
- Equality Authority (2006) Traveller Ethnicity, Dublin: Equality Authority.
- Equality Commission for Northern Ireland (2004) Commission For Racial Equality Special Study Raxen 5 Travellers and Public Education in Northern Ireland.
- ESF Evaluation Unit (1998) ESF and the Long Term Unemployed. Dublin, European Social Fund, Programme Evaluation Unit.
- Fingal County Council (2005) Traveller Accommodation Programme 2005-2008 Dublin: Fingal County Council.
- Forkan, C. (2007) Where is the Final Dividend? The Education of Traveller Children in Blanchardstown, Dublin, Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group.
- Gastil, R. (1961) The Determinants of Human Behaviour, 'American Anthropologist', New Series, vol 63, No. 6. pp. 1281-1291.
- Government of Ireland, 1963 Report of the Commission on Itinerary. Dublin: Stationery Office, 1963.
- Government of Ireland, 1983 Report of the Travelling People Review Body. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Government of Ireland, 1995 Report of the Task Office on the Travelling Community. Dublin: Stationery Office.
- Hibernian Consulting (2007) Opening Pathways to Employment for members of the Travelling Community in South Dublin Council, EQUAL AT WORK, A Dublin Employment Pact Initiative.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- McCann, M., O Siochain, S., and Ruane, J (1994) Irish Travellers: Culture and ethnicity, Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, Queens University of Belfast.
- McCarthy, D. and McCarthy P. (1998) Market Economies Trading in the Traveller Economy, Pavee Point Publications.
- McVeigh, F. (2006) Special Initiatives to Expand Employment Prospects For Travellers, National Steering Group.
- Mooney, B. (2004) Male Participation in Training and Education Initiative, University College of Dublin, National University of Ireland, Dublin.
- Murphy, P. (1998) Barriers to Employment For Long Term Unemployed People in Blanchardstown: A Report for Blanchardstown Local Employment Service.
- Murphy, P (2001) Job Vacancies. Vacant Jobs. Travellers Inclusion in the Mainstream Labour Market. Dublin: Pavee Point.
- Murphy, P. (2000) Annual Report 1999-2000 Dublin Traveller Health Unit in the Eastern Region.
- Murphy, P. (2002) A Plan For Blanchardstown Traveller Resource Centre A Report commissioned by the Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group.
- Murphy, M. (2008) Reframing the Irish Activation Debate: Accommodating Care and Safeguarding Social Rights and Choices, The Policy Institute at Trinity College.
- National Economic and Social Council (No 113 May 2005) The Developmental Welfare State.
- National Economic and Social Council (No 33 January 2006) Creating a More Inclusive Labour Market.
- National Economic and Social Forum (No 34 December 2006) Improving the Delivery of Quality Public Services.
- O'Connell P. and F. McGinnity (1997) What Works? Who Works? The employment and earnings effects of active labour market programmes among young people in Ireland. In Work, Employment and Society. Vol. 11, No.4, pp.639-661.
- Okely, J. (1983) The Traveller-Gypsies, Cambridge University Press.
- Organisational Management Group (2008) Bridge to Workplace.
- Pavee Point Publications (1993) Recycling and the Traveller Economy Income, Jobs & Wealth Creation.
- Pearn-Kandola (2002) Report on the Barriers Travellers Experience Accessing and Participating in Labour Market Programmes. Dublin: Prepared for the Equality Authority.
- Quinlan, C. (1998) Travellers in Blanchardstown – A Second Look. Dublin: A Report commissioned by the Blanchardstown Traveller Development Group.
- Report of The Task Force on The Travelling Community (1995).
- Rottman, D B, Tussing, A D, Wiley, Miriam M. (1986) Population Structure and Living Circumstances of Irish Traveller: Results from the 1981 Census of Traveller Families: Economic Social Research Institute General Research Series 131.
- Russell, C. (2004) A Study to examine the appropriate means of supporting the traveller economy in Blanchardstown. Dublin: The Nurture Programme.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Russell, Helen and Corcoran, Mary (2001), 'Report of the ESRI Lone Parent Focus Groups'.

Ryan, L (1995) Traveller Inclusion in the Mainstream Labour Force, New Strategies for New Choices, Pavee Point Publications.

Third Systems Approach (2003) Dismantling the Traveller Economy Pavee Point Publication.

Traveller Education Strategy 2006-2010.

Weafer, J (2001) The Education and Accommodation Needs of Travellers in the Archdiocese of Dublin. CROSSCARE – The Catholic Social Service Agency.

Whyte, S (2002) The Case for Economic Workspace on Sites, A DACT Position Paper.