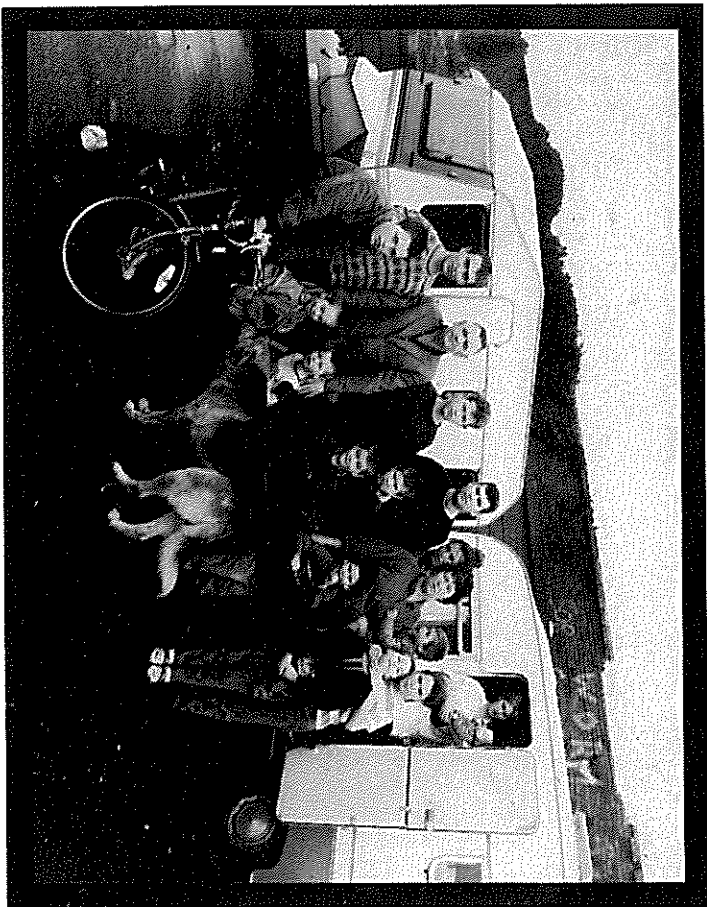


MAKING TRAVELLERS VISIBLE

**THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF TRAVELLERS:
AN EXAMINATION OF SERVICES AND UNMET NEEDS IN CORK**



Traveller Visibility Group

NOVEMBER 1993

Preface

Thomas Kishin
August 94

The Traveller Visibility Group was formed in 1992 by a group of Travellers concerned that Travellers be included in a useful and relevant manner in the work of North Lee Development Ltd. and other emerging area-based structures created to promote local socio-economic development in Cork. Members of the group have been involved in Traveller issues in the area for a number of years. The group is presently expanding to meet the challenges it has set itself, which can be described in terms of three principal tasks :-

1. To develop and implement projects which are supported by the new structures for area based development to resource the Traveller community.
2. To resource Traveller projects in the Cork area that seek to access resources from these new structures for their work.
3. To resource these new structures in ensuring that there is a Traveller dimension in their various areas of work. This would include a Traveller focus in written and research material developed by the organisation, as well as Traveller access to the full range of activities developed by them.

This publication is an area based profile of Travellers in Cork which is an essential resource document for the group to achieve its goals. The Social Policy Research Unit in University College Cork was commissioned by the Traveller Visibility Group to gather, analyse and present the information contained herein, working alongside a Traveller consultant and having regular consultation with the group. The profile examines the potential for local socio-economic development from a Traveller perspective, identifies needs and resources and sets out concrete action strategies for the Traveller Visibility Group and other relevant bodies.

The Traveller Visibility Group wishes to acknowledge in particular the work of Helen Ryan, Dr. Mary Mulcahy of the SPRU who researched and compiled this document and Christis O Sullivan who acted as consultant to this team

We also wish to thank the Dublin Traveller Education and Development Group (DTEDG) for resourcing us throughout with their expertise and experience and for providing practical, financial and moral support.

Finally we are grateful also to North Lee Development Ltd. who provided financial assistance for this publication and hope this will mark the beginning of a fruitful relationship.

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Acknowledgements

The Social Policy Research Unit and Traveller Visibility Group wish to express their appreciation to the following:

- To all the Travellers who participated in this study and who generously gave their time and shared their experiences and opinions;
- To all the Service Providers who agreed to be interviewed for this study;
- To the Youth Federation and volunteers who helped arrange the activity day for the young people in Mahon;
- To Loretta O'Connor for her assistance with compiling the graphical data;
- To Mary O'Sullivan who typed the text and to the Administrative and Other Staff at U.C.C., Social Administration and Social Work Department for their support and assistance.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

In the Spring of 1991 Cork's Northside City area was chosen as one of the twelve areas in Ireland to pilot an area based response to long-term unemployment under the Programme for Economic and Social Progress (PESP). Cork's Northside is an area in which unemployment, and other indicators of social disadvantage, are extremely high. The North Lee Development (NLD) is the partnership company which was set up to design and develop this area based response to long-term unemployment in the Northside.

The main impetus of NLD is the creation of employment, but NLD, in keeping with the PESP brief, acknowledges and endorses the vital importance of community involvement in the search for solutions to the unemployment problem. The Traveller Visibility Group (TVG) has recently been formed by a number of Travellers who believe that Travellers must be adequately represented in the work of NLD.

The TVG was established by three Traveller women. It is a Traveller led group, but includes representatives from the settled community. The core objectives of TVG are:

- (1) To develop and implement projects supported by NLD which resource the Traveller Community;
- (2) To support other Traveller Projects in the North Lee area that seek to access resources from NLD; and
- (3) To ensure that there is a Traveller presence in the work of NLD.

As a means of meeting these objectives TVG is preparing a strategy document for NLD. This pilot study, which evaluates the services available to meet the needs of Travellers in the North Lee area, was commissioned by TVG to ensure that the strategy document is relevant to the needs of a wide cross-section of Travellers.

This pilot study was designed by the Social Policy Research Unit (SPRU), University College, Cork in partnership with TVG and the Dublin Travellers'

Education and Development Group (DTEDG). This partnership, which involved on-going consultation, was important in designing a research project that would be of direct relevance and benefit to the Traveller Community. It is an action-oriented research initiative in which those researched were viewed as participants in the research process, and as owners of the research product/s. It is envisaged that the study will bring about improvements in service provision that will benefit the lives of Travellers generally, but in the North Lee area in particular.

1.2 Aims of this Study

The aims of this study are to:

- (1) Provide a profile of the Traveller Community in Cork with reference to the national demography of the wider Traveller Community;
- (2) Provide an overview of the services available to Travellers in Cork City, for example, health, accommodation, education, training and employment and social welfare;
- (3) Analyse the extent and efficacy of these services in meeting the needs of the Traveller Community;
- (4) Examine the specific needs of distinct sub-groupings such as young people, women and men; and
- (5) Make recommendations to Service Providers to improve the services available to the Traveller Community in Cork.

1.3 Methods of Research

This is a pilot study which was conducted over a three-month period from July 1993. As such, it is limited in scope, but the study was designed with the intention that it would form the basis of a fully comprehensive evaluation of services and living conditions for Travellers throughout Cork City and County.

The main sources of data for this research report were:

- (1) Individual and group interviews with Traveller women, men and young people;
- (2) Individual interviews with Service Providers, both statutory and voluntary, in the Cork area; and
- (3) Recent reports and publications relevant to Traveller Communities in Ireland.

The interviews with Travellers form the basis of this research report. They provide a vital understanding of the lived experience of Travellers in Cork. In all, 50 Travellers participated in the study. Fourteen adults (10 women and 4 men) were interviewed individually, and 8 women participated in a series of small group interviews. The focus of all of these interviews was on the ways in which Travellers experience their living conditions in Cork (see Appendix I).

Adult Travellers were selected for interview on the basis of their being key activists/spokespeople for their communities. The 28 young people represented different sites and houses in the Cork area.

The sample selected for the study was not intended to be a statistically representative one, but rather, as is fitting for a pilot study, it was intended as a sample that could draw attention to the main issues/problems that living in Cork poses for the Traveller Community.

The interviews with Service Providers were important as a means of assessing and evaluating existing service provision. It was anticipated that there would be some differences between Travellers and Service Providers in identifying the needs of the Traveller Community.

In all, 10 Service Providers were interviewed. They represent the main officials that Travellers come into contact with on a regular basis. Included were 3 Social Workers, a Visiting Teacher, a Community Welfare Officer, a Public Health Nurse, a VEC representative, a FAS representative, a member of the Cork Committee and a member of the St. Vincent de Paul.

Interviews with Service Providers consisted of largely open-ended questions designed to elicit the extent and nature of services provided for Travellers (See Appendix II). All of the Service Providers contacted agreed to be interviewed.

A summary of the research results will be made available to all participants in the study, and it is hoped that the research report will form the basis for dialogues between Travellers, Service Providers and Funding Agencies to bring about some of the needed changes that are highlighted in the report.

1.4 Definition of Terms

It will be argued throughout this report that Travellers are an **ethnic minority group**. The core of ethnic identity lies in the fact that an ethnic group sees itself, and is seen by others, as a distinct group in so far as the group has a shared history and shared cultural traditions. Travellers in Ireland regard themselves, and are regarded by

others, as a group which is distinct from the dominant group of "settled" people. Ethnicity is also based on ascription. One is born into the Traveller Community; one cannot choose to become a Traveller.

The Traveller Community in Ireland consists of some 3,828 families with a total estimated population in the region of 23,000 (Annual Statistics, Department of the Environment, 1992). Outside of the Republic there is an estimated further 1,500 Irish Traveller families in Northern Ireland, 15,000 in Great Britain and 7,000 residing in the U.S.A. (Statistics, M. Collins, Irish Times, 29.8.1993). Within the European Community (EC) Travellers currently form a population of over one million persons.

The Irish Traveller community comprises a group of individuals who share a distinct and separate identity, culture and history from the rest of the population. Traveller history, though not well researched, can be traced back for several centuries. Travellers have their own distinctive lifestyle which is essentially nomadic. The Traveller language of Cant (also known as Gammon or Shelta), as well as an oral tradition rich in folklore, form a core part of the culture of the Community.

Minority group status refers to the fact that a group lacks power relative to the dominant or ruling group. Ethnic minority groups typically experience racism, both at the institutional and the individual levels. **Institutional racism** refers to the organisation of political structures which typically favour the dominant group.

Irish Government responses to the needs of Travellers have typically been based on the perception of Travellers as inferior. In 1960 the Government established the *Commission on Itinerancy* to report on what was described as "The Problem of Itinerancy". The introduction to the Commission's Report noted the preference of Travellers to be called Travellers. However, throughout the report they were referred to as Itinerants. Travellers were inaccurately described as having an ancestry dating back to the Famine which had caused them to have to drop-out of "normal" society. Consequently, the thrust of the Commission's solution to Travellers' problems was to enable Travellers to "resume" a "normal" (sedentary) way of life.

The Commission basically supported a policy of assimilation for Travellers, and assumed that if some Travellers could be successfully settled it would encourage all to eventually leave the road. The Commission believed that there was no alternative to the assimilationist policy of housing "Itinerants".

The 1983 Government Travelling People's Review Body marked a departure from the Commission on Itinerancy's ethnocentric outlook. The Review Body stated that "the concept of absorption is unacceptable, as it implies the swallowing up of the

minority group by the dominant settled community". The Review Body accepted that the provision of accommodation did not automatically mean integration and absorption, but asserted that the Traveller who so desired must be permitted to follow his/her traditional lifestyle. Additionally, consultation with Travellers was seen as a necessary part of the process of providing housing and other services for Travellers. Finally, while it did not fully recognise Traveller ethnicity, the Review Body did highlight the disadvantaged position of Travellers in Irish society. Similarly, in 1986 an ESRI Report drew attention to the sub-standard living conditions Travellers were forced to endure in Ireland. This Report stated that, "no humane and decent society once made aware of such circumstances could permit them to persist".

However, ten years after the Review Body reported its findings, what it described as intolerable living conditions still exist for Travellers.

Racism at the personal or individual level refers to the hostility of individuals from the dominant group towards members of the ethnic minority. In the case of Travellers, their experience in Ireland has been one of ostracism from, and discrimination by, the settled community. As Tom Cooney (Anti-racist Law and Travellers, ITM, 1993, p. 25) pointed out, "to be a Traveller in our society can be a distressing and disabling experience... because the settled community has imposed unfair depictions upon Travellers who pursue their nomadic way of life".

Reproduction of negative stereotypes about Travellers is based on "race thinking" which underpins racism at the individual or personal level. McGreil in his study of prejudice and tolerance in Ireland (1977) compared the situation of Irish Travellers to that of a low caste group. He highlighted the alarming statistic that 71% of the sample interviewed would not accept a Traveller into the family, while 62% of the sample saw Travellers as not socially acceptable. Also, an ESRI Paper (Number 177, 1984) highlighted the extreme degree of personal racism and discrimination against Travellers. The Paper indicated that the following beliefs about Travellers were held by a randomly selected sample of people from a cross section of social classes in Ireland:

Belief	% Agree
Careless	75%
Noisy	68%
Excitable	63%
Untrustworthy	62%
Dislikeable	38%
Bad	30%

This report will address the issue of institutional racism against Travellers in the areas of accommodation, health, education and training, social welfare and employment. Additionally the report will highlight the extent to which racism at the individual level is experienced by Travellers.



Chapter 2

Accommodation

2.1 Introduction

Traveller ethnicity and ancestry is based on the nomadic way of life, travelling from place to place. The distribution of Traveller Families geographically in the last 30 years has been marked by a transition of Traveller families from rural to predominantly urban areas. The demise of the more traditional trades of tinsmithing and horse dealing has marked the evolution of newer economic activities within the Traveller community such as scrap dealing and market trading which has necessitated the transition to more urban based centres.

Today relatively few Travellers pursue a continually nomadic or transient lifestyle. Statistics from the Department of the Environment estimate 263 transient Traveller families out of a total national population of 3,828 Traveller families. What these statistics do not illustrate, however, is that many Travellers retain the nomadic lifestyle seasonally, and over different periods of their lives. Examination of accommodation for Travellers must be seen within this context.

Currently the distribution of Traveller families is such that the large urban centres of Dublin, Galway, Cork and Limerick have the greatest concentration of families.

There are basically 4 modes of domicile within which Travellers are accommodated. These are:

- (1) Official halting sites;
- (2) Group Housing Schemes;
- (3) Local Authority Housing;
- (4) Unofficial side of the road sites.

Table 1 illustrates the national distribution of Traveller families by type of accommodation:

TABLE 1

TRAVELLER FAMILY ACCOMMODATION

Type of Accommodation	YEAR			
	1960	1980	1990	1992
Standard Housing	*56	957	1,471	1,535
Roadside	1,142	1,149	1,146	1,180
Group Housing	—	—	223	249
Chalets	—	253	71	30
Caravans on Authorised Sites	—	131	631	834
TOTAL	1,198	2,490	3,547	3,828

* Numbers Indicate Number of Traveller Families.

2.2 Service Provision

Provision of accommodation for Travellers is determined by Government policy. The Department of the Environment has general responsibility for national housing policy. In effect, the role of the Department of the Environment is supervisory. The 1966 Housing Act delegated the responsibility for provision of accommodation to Local Authorities. Under this Act the Housing Authority is responsible for the provision of dwellings, both permanent and temporary, and is responsible for maintaining such dwellings in good order and repair.¹ In 1988 a new Housing Act was introduced which contained special provisions for "persons belonging to the class of persons who traditionally pursue or have pursued a nomadic way of life" (Act, 1988, Section 13). The Act states that the Housing Authority may provide, improve, manage and control sites for caravans. Section 9 of the Act of 1988 also includes within the remit of the Local Authority's duties, submission of an annual assessment of the needs of Travellers within the Authorities functional area. This task has been designated to the role of Social Worker whose appointment to the Local Authority Housing Section is conceived within the scope of the Act.

In Cork the Local Authorities' responsibility for accommodation of Travellers is divided between the Cork County Council and Cork City Corporation.

The Cork County Council's Local Authority Housing Department operates a hierarchical structure in its decision to allocate housing or bays on sites to Travellers. It is initially the role of the Social Worker to assess the needs of its indigenous and transient population and within this brief to make recommendations on the basis of prioritising needs. The report is then submitted to the Housing Administration Officer.

Once the Administrative Officer has made his/her input, the recommendation is passed to the County Manager. The County Manager (or one of three Assistant County Managers in the case of Cork County Council) has the final say in relation to all matters of accommodation. The County Manager under the 1988 Housing Act has been vested with the power to agree approval of urgent work on health and safety grounds without consultation with the wider Council. In practice, given the controversial nature of halting site provision, in particular, it seems unlikely that a Manager would exercise his/her executive power without consultations with the local elected representatives.

The structure of Cork Corporation in the provision of accommodation to Travellers is similar to that of the Cork Council. It is the Cork Corporation which is responsible for the provision of accommodation for Travellers in the North Lee area. Unlike the Council, there is no specific Social Worker allocated to deal with Travellers' accommodation needs. In practice, however, one of the two Housing Welfare Officers employed by the Housing Department is responsible for working with Travellers (as well as dealing with cases from the wider community). 90% of this Housing Welfare Officer's caseload is comprised an estimated 200 Traveller families (an increase in 9 families since 1992). The Housing Welfare Officer is responsible for assessing needs of Travellers, referring recommendations to the City Manager, who has ultimate responsibility for allocating tenancies of houses, bays on halting sites, etc.

Accommodation in Cork

Department of Environment statistics for 1992 indicated that the 317 Traveller families estimated to be resident in Cork City and County were accommodated as follows:

TABLE 2

TRAVELLER FAMILY ACCOMMODATION - CORK

	Local Authority Housing	Group Housing	Trailers on Sites	On Roadside Indigenous Transient (a)* (b)*
Cork City	111	0	45	12 2
Cork County	50	7	12	67 11

(a) * Indigenous corresponds to those families who may remain in an area for 2 to 3 years intermittently.

(b) * Transient is used as a term for the purposes of these statistics to indicate those families who seldom spend more than 2 or 3 months in any one area.

It is possible to further examine this provision of accommodation.

Cork County Council Provide:

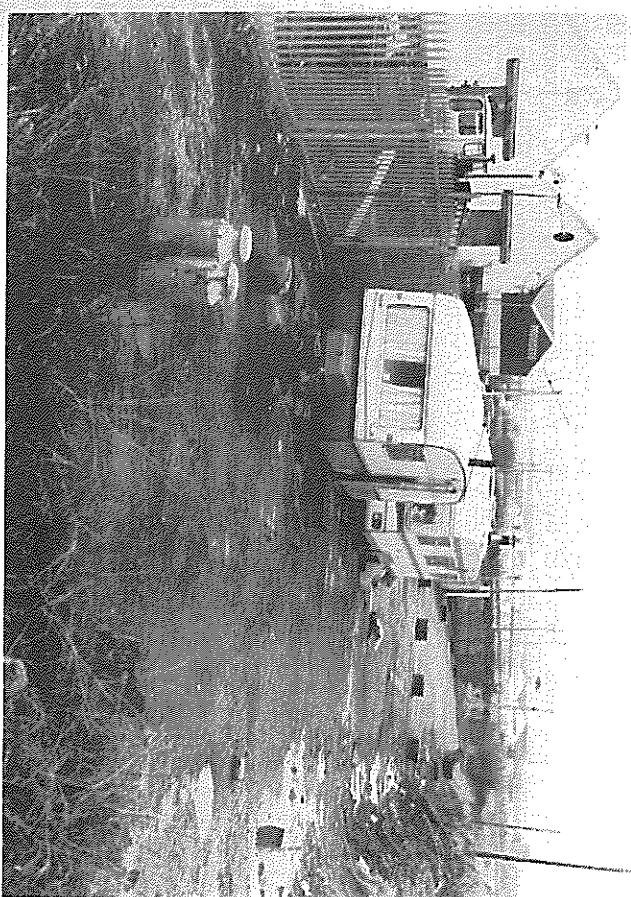
- One 12 bay halting site at Forge Hill;
- One group housing scheme designed for 7 families at Hazelwood Grove;
- Accommodation for Travellers in 50 Local Authority houses.

Cork Corporation Provide:

Site provision in the following areas which includes the North Lee area:

Location of Site	Number of Bays on Site
Mahon	12
Knocknaheeny	12
Ballyvolane	10
Hollyhill	12
Carrigrohane Straight Road	11

- Accommodation is also provided in 111 Local Authority Houses;
- There is no group housing scheme for Travellers in the City area.



There are currently no sites designed specifically to facilitate transient Travellers in either Corporation or Council areas. The recent completion of the new halting site at Carrigrohane marks the completion of the Corporation's commitment to provide accommodation for Travellers. There are no imminent plans to develop such provision.

2.3 Critique of Service Provision Policy

Government policy has historically sought to achieve a full transition of Travellers from a nomadic to a sedentary lifestyle. The 1966 Housing Act was conceived in the wake of the Commission on Itinerancy and in many senses was used as a vehicle to house Travellers, although it did initiate the construction of the first halting sites. The more liberal approach to meeting Travellers' needs as defined within the findings of the Review Body was embodied in the 1988 Housing Act. Whilst the Act does not explicitly impose a statutory duty on the Housing Authority to provide sites, it does invest the Authority with the statutory power to do so. The McCarthy Case (1990) witnessed the court's finding Limerick County Council to be in breach of

their statutory duty in failing to provide a Traveller family with a halting site. They were subsequently ordered to make such provision.²

The 1988 Act, if liberally interpreted, could facilitate a thorough assessment of the accommodation needs of Travellers and could enable the provision of much needed serviced halting sites. However, overshadowing the Housing Act and its potential for meeting accommodation needs of Travellers are two proposed Bills from the Department of the Environment. Section (10) of the Housing Bill and S.66 of the Roads Bill.³ These Bills give increased powers of eviction to Local Authorities.

These two bills illustrate clearly the discrimination Travellers face in being prevented from pursuing their nomadic way of life. The Housing Bill and Roads Bill are clear examples of where institutional power is exercised against Travellers in an attempt to force them to comply with the dominant culture of sedentarism. Alongside these two Bills, a "Boulder Policy" was initiated in Cork in the last 6 - 8 years. Travellers are forcibly evicted from laybys and other places typically used for temporary halting; these places are then blocked with boulders. This has caused severe hardship for transient Travellers and is largely responsible for overcrowding and deterioration of official halting sites as Travellers search for somewhere to halt. This policy whereby laybys and back roads have been blocked off has forced Travellers to resort to camping in high profile areas that they previously would have avoided. It has resulted in them camping on private property within industrial estates and brought them into conflict with the owners. This has had the effect of escalating the conflict between settled people and Travellers and often the negative role played by the Local Authorities gets lost in the midst of the hostilities.

Attempts by Local Authorities to "move on" Traveller families can be seen to some extent to be counterbalanced by their responsibility to provide accommodation. The powers vested in the Roads Authority allows negative action to be taken against Travelling families without any obligation to provide an alternative location, despite the fact that in most cases it will be the same Local Authority who will exercise the powers available under the Roads Act.

It is possible to further analyse the role of the Local Authority with reference to the role of the Social Worker/Housing Welfare Officer. In assessing the accommodation needs of Travellers, the Social Worker visits families on sites and in houses and, where relevant, will liaise with other professionals, for example, Public Health Nurses and Community Care Social Workers to make an informed and full recommendation to the Administrative Officer. The Social Worker also has a duty to submit statistics to the Department of the Environment on the numbers of Travellers in the area and on the type of accommodation in which they live.

The Social Worker is also responsible for the monitoring of accommodation within his/her designated area. Where necessary s/he acts as advocate in recommending and arranging for repairs to be made on sites/houses.

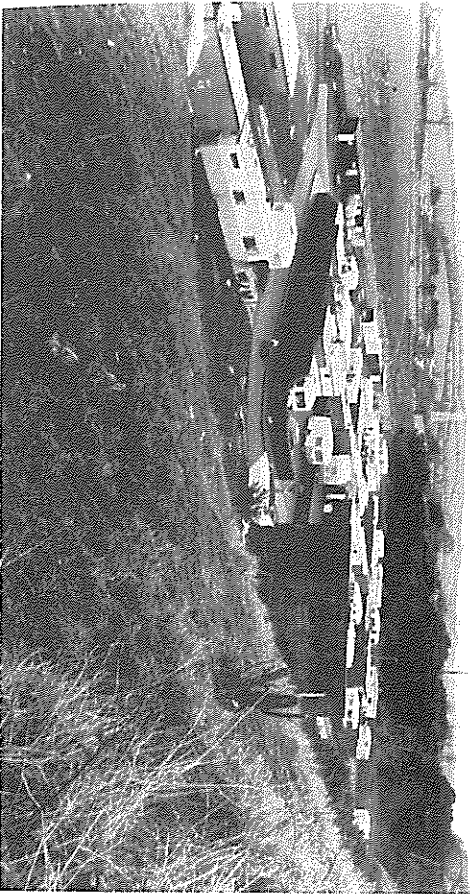
Alongside the assessment of needs the County Council and Corporation Social Workers and Welfare Officers offer practical assistance. In the daily contact on sites and by office appointment the Social Worker deals with enquiries and queries of a practical nature such as dealing with benefit entitlement, tracing of birth certificates, contacting priests, etc. A certain amount of time is assigned to helping individuals with problems of an interpersonal nature. At one level this contact and understanding of family dynamics helps in making a full assessment of families needs. However, it is questionable in a situation where a service provider of accommodation also assumes a semi-counselling/helping role.

Though there are many positive aspects to the role of the Social Worker within the Local Authority, there are also negative possibilities. If the Social Worker is seen as being the only interface between the Authority and the Traveller Community, then staff in other Departments and at different levels could feel that they have been relieved of responsibility by virtue of the Social Worker being in place. This distinct possibility could seriously restrict Traveller access to broader services and other professionals and should be guarded against.

The Social Worker is in a position to brief Travellers on their accommodation rights within a system where entitlement is highly discretionary. As well as providing an educative role to Travellers, the Social Worker is in a position to make the Council/Corporation aware of Travellers' needs. Both Cork Council and Corporation have Sub-Committees which discuss issues pertinent to Travellers in relation to accommodation policy. The representatives on the Sub-Committee are drawn from the Council, the Chaplain to the Travellers and Traveller representation via the Cork Committee for Travellers.

Site Provision

Lack of appropriate accommodation in the Council and Corporation areas has led to severe hardship for Traveller families. In Cork, both in the North Lee area as well as on a wider basis where sites or houses are not provided, Travellers are forced to live on the side of the road. This is the case for 79 Travelling families in Cork on a long-term basis and currently for 13 transient families. Discrimination against this "roadside" group is evident in pressure from local residents groups, industry and the courts forcing Travellers to constantly move, often between City and County boundaries. The result is numerous Traveller families being shunted from one side of the City to another, neither Local Authority accepting responsibility. Evictions become an endemic feature to these Travellers' lives. The status these Travellers face in the community is one of a despised minority.



Official sites have been provided in Cork, yet such provision is inadequate both in terms of numbers and type of accommodation. A survey was carried out in June 1991 to establish the number and disposition of Traveller families in the greater Cork City Area taking in the City Centre Area for which the Corporation have responsibility and also the relatively large area on the outskirts for which the County Council have responsibility. The findings were that in the given area there were only 45 halting site bays available to 124 families on 4 legal halting sites. There were at that time a total of 13 unofficial camps at different locations around the city. In addition, it could be seen that in some of the official sites overcrowding had been allowed to the extent nearly doubling the official capacity of the sites. The case of Forge Hill, the only official halting site provided by the County Council in Cork, illustrates clearly the effects of this overcrowding. The 11 bay site at Forge Hill was opened in April 1986. Shortly after it was vandalised by a particular family to the extent of the site having no electricity, toilet or cooking facilities. Further deterioration occurred which has not been repaired. Despite the absence of basic kitchen or toilet facilities, the site has been extensively used in the past 2 years by different groups of Travellers who identified themselves during this research as "desperate for somewhere to halt". At one point there were 18 families consisting of 37 adults and 79 children on site. Such overcrowding was intolerable for these families.

The case of the Forge Hill site highlights several important issues: firstly the necessity to provide sites for Travellers; secondly, the need for the Local Authorities to take responsibility for control and maintenance of their sites. The vandalism of Forge Hill has been used as an argument for not providing more sites in the Council area. This argument reinforces the stereotyping of Travellers as deviants and as inferior. But as one Service Provider argued "there is a need for the Local Authority to curb such vandalism early on ... The control element is missing which has a ripple effect (i.e. further deterioration of conditions) which does not help Travellers. The Council must find a suitable medium between social policing and being accountable for the management of their sites".

There is one group housing scheme at Hazelwood Grove which provides houses for 7 Traveller families. There is no such provision for Travellers in the North Lee area in spite of many Travellers voicing a preference for this type of accommodation.

Similarly acute shortages of available Local Authority housing in Cork and in particular North Cork means that Travellers do not have ready access to Local Authority housing. Travellers who do avail of Local Authority housing often face hostility from the settled community. One Service Provider identified this as being one of the biggest problems in making a transition from a halting site or side of the road and saw this as a primary factor in Travellers leaving housing and "returning to the road".

2.4 Travellers' Views/Analysis

Cork Travellers interviewed in the course of this research were aware of the policies which discriminate against them and their pursuit of a nomadic lifestyle. The need for appropriate accommodation was expressed as one of the greatest needs of their community. Those Travellers who lived on official halting sites were in agreement that their current living conditions were better than living on unofficial sites on the side of the road without access to any facilities. However, the sense of dissatisfaction with current site provision was ubiquitous.

In the day to day living on sites lack of sufficient facilities cause hardship. This is exacerbated where sites are overcrowded. Travellers spoke of being without toilets and electricity due to poor maintenance on sites. The chalets provided in each bay accommodating a sink, bath and cooker were seen as being too small. These chalets were referred to as "sheds" which is illustrative of their sparseness. Lack of tiling and heating made their use for bathing during the winter harsh and for children prohibitive. Some of the women believed separate cooking chalets should be provided on site.

On sites, there are no telephone facilities and this was seen by many Travellers as a denial of a basic right. A phone had been installed at one site. It was broken, and it was immediately removed and has never been replaced. One woman highlighted the discrimination inherent in this, and said that "public phones in the settled community are replaced when they are broken". There is no postal service on sites, and this causes difficulties. Lack of phone and postal facilities reinforces the sense of isolation many Travellers experience.

Failure to consult Travellers on the design of sites was cited by many as resulting in the current poor provision. Sites are usually constructed with between 10 - 12 bays. Many Travellers saw a more viable alternative in building smaller sites with 4 - 5 bays which could be inhabited by extended family units. Travellers explained that forcing families to live in such close proximity may cause friction, especially where two families may be in conflict. It is not enough to "allocate" families to bays. Allowing Travellers the choice to refuse a bay on a site where they would have to live with persons with whom they may be in conflict was seen as a reasonable demand. One Traveller spoke of such limited options, saying "it is either face court injunctions and evictions or live where you are told".

Site Design

The design of the sites caused problems for some Travellers. In Springlane where bays back onto each other Travellers spoke of feeling closed off and isolated. Many favoured a more circular arrangement where children playing could be watched from all the bays. Lack of a safe play area means that on many sites children play where cars and vans park. Some Travellers highlighted the obvious hazards in this. One woman was aware of an open sewerage pipe adjacent to her site and said she was constantly anxious when her children were out playing. Flooding on the site caused problems for Travellers.

The policy of providing Travellers in the new site on the Straight Road with maximum privacy resulted in each bay being surrounded by an 8 feet wall. Travellers who are often used to living in close visible proximity to each other felt this boxed them in and isolated them from their neighbours in other bays. One man said high walls and fences was more indicative of maximum security and had connotations of imprisonment.

Many Travellers deal in scrap or horses. Sites, in general, make no provision for the accumulation of scrap, although in Traveller culture work space and living space are seen as being one and the same. One Traveller agreed that the site should be a safe environment and not cluttered with scrap but felt a separate bay (on or off site) for scrap collection would be a step towards resourcing the Traveller way of life and

would dispel conflict which arises when Travellers gather scrap in their halting bays. Discrimination was highlighted by one Traveller who saw settled people as being able to avail of gardens/yards and sheds, yet Travellers are penalised for accumulating scrap or belongings.

Caretakers and Barriers

On some sites resident caretakers appointed by the Local Authorities are responsible for monitoring and maintenance of the sites. On those sites with barriers the caretaker holds the key and will at the request of site residents open it allowing for entrance or exit of vehicles. Whilst many Travellers welcomed the barriers as a form of protection against overcrowding which results if sites are open for all to use, others saw them as restrictive and prohibitive and felt they were indicative of measures aimed at "controlling" Travellers. Those who are involved in trade resent the constraint on freedom to enter and leave the site without access to the barrier. One mother said children often have to walk to the top of the site for collection for school as the school bus cannot enter under the barrier.



One new initiative has been to place security guards at the entrance to sites, for example, at the Straight Road site. Whilst this may act as a deterrent to any person seeking to vandalise a site or to illegally enter and park on it, it was felt that the presence of the guard stigmatised the Travellers and reinforced an image of a deviant minority.

For those Travellers who live without any of these facilities on the side of the road, conditions were described as being dire and primitive. One family spoke of wanting a place to live where they would not be constantly moved and threatened with eviction. They were willing to accept housing though for personal reasons refused to consider halting site accommodation. Subsequently the threat of a jail sentence hangs over this family.

Similar issues arose for those Travellers living in group housing schemes as did for those on sites. Lack of consultation in the housing schemes design was seen as resulting in a provision which does not resource the Traveller culture. Conventional straight-line housing as opposed to circular construction was opposed, as was lack of space for vans, caravans and for the accumulation of scrap.

Some Travellers believed that it was regarded by Authorities that living in the housing scheme was synonymous with relinquishment of a Traveller identity. Signing forms to agree not to accumulate scrap or park a caravan on site reinforced this belief, as does the Social Welfare's distinction between Travellers in houses who avail of regular signing procedures compared to Travellers on sites (even if long-term residents) who are classified as no fixed abode.

2.5 Unmet Needs

A commitment is required from both Cork Corporation and County Council to develop accommodation provision in the form of:

- Official long-stay halting sites;
- Official transient (short-stay) halting sites;
- Group Housing Schemes.

Such provision must be based on consultation with Travellers and take full account of features such as number of bays, provision for scrap allocation, adequate and separate play and parking areas. Dissemination of information to Travellers remains poor. Many Travellers in this research project were unaware of their rights re allocation of accommodation or in the event of an eviction. This lack of awareness further discriminates against Travellers. For transient Travellers conditions remain

appalling. Their needs must be considered by the Council and Corporation as a priority.

Provision of accommodation in Cork is an area in which many Travellers experience the impact of discriminatory policies. These policies have continually denied Traveller ethnicity and are not committed to endorsing the nomadic lifestyle of many Travellers. In all areas of housing provision, there is little, if any, consultation with Travellers who in reality are seen as a residual group within society. Lack of consultation has meant an ill-match between needs and service provision. Until Travellers are included fully in the decisions that affect them, not on a tokenistic level, needs will continue to be unmet.

Accommodation Section Footnotes

- (1) Under the 1966 Housing Act the recommendations of the Commission on itinerancy were implemented. The Act in many senses was used as a vehicle to house Travellers and was also responsible for the construction of the first official halting sites in the country. The need for serviced sites was reinforced by the findings of the Review Body which argued that serviced sites must be found as an alternative to housing, where needed.
- (2) The ITM publication **Traveller Accommodation and The Law** provides a useful, in-depth discussion of the McCarthy Case as well as an analysis of other Traveller action through the courts to secure accommodation.
- (3) Section (10) **Housing Bill** invests the Local Authority with the power to move a Traveller family camped within five miles of an official halting site onto that site. Failure to comply with the move could mean incurring a fine of up to £1,000 and a prison sentence and confiscation of a trailer/caravan.

The Roads Bill (S.66): This Bill stipulates that if Travellers stop on a national roadway, they are immediately guilty of an offence and invests in the Local Authority the power to remove a trailer off the side of the road. These Bills penalise Travellers for circumstances beyond their control.

Chapter 3

Health

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter documented the appalling conditions some Travellers in Cork are forced to live in. This chapter will highlight the link between poor living conditions and the poor health Travellers experience as a result.

In 1987 the Health Research Board produced a report on the vital health statistics of Travellers. Whilst it has been difficult to collate health statistics for Travellers in the North Lee area specifically, the local Public Health Nurse reported that the Research Board's findings were generally applicable. These findings clearly indicate the impact of poor accommodation on Traveller's health.

The fertility rate¹ for the Traveller Community for 1987 was considerably higher than that of the settled population. For Travellers the fertility rate was 164.2 per 1,000 population compared to a settled fertility rate of 70.1 per 1,000 population. A feature of health specific to the Traveller Community was the experience of excess mortality even before birth.

The stillbirth rate² of 1987 was indicated as being 19.5 per 1,000 Traveller births in contrast to 6.9 per 1,000 settled births. Chances of survival for an infant born to a Traveller family are considerably reduced in comparison to that of a child of a settled background. The inequity in health status is highlighted in the infant mortality rate³ calculated at 18.1 infant deaths per 1,000 Travellers to 7.4 infant deaths per 1,000 in the general population.

For those Travellers who live to adulthood, longevity is negatively skewed in comparison to the settled community. The life expectancy rates⁴ for Travellers are as follows:

TABLE 3
LIFE EXPECTANCY

MALES		FEMALES	
Traveller Community	Settled Community	Traveller Community	Settled Community
62 Years	72 Years	65 Years	77 Years

In examining causes of mortality, the Health Research Board study highlighted metabolic, cardio-vascular, respiratory and genito-urinary disorders as primary causes of death among Travellers. Where Travellers live without access to water, toilet facilities and refuse collection their health status is diminished considerably. As a minority group then, Travellers have specific health needs - and we will examine here the extent to which Government policy has acknowledged and responded to these needs in recent years.

The Travelling People's Review Body, 1983, made many recommendations to the Government in light of the alarming contrasts in health status between Travellers and the settled community. It recommended that measures aimed at reducing stillbirth and infant mortality rates as well as post-natal mortality and illness among Traveller women should be initiated. The Review Body urged that Health Boards should provide special care and advice to Travellers in relation to care for mothers and children. Immunisation of children and dissemination of family planning advice were highlighted as key target areas. The Seventh Report of the Committee to Monitor the Implementation of Government Policy on Travelling People further acknowledged the importance of factors such as transient lifestyle, large families, high unemployment and general poor health awareness being taken into account in the planning and delivery of health services to Travellers. These recommendations to redress health status inequalities for Travellers can be seen as positive drives to challenge the discrimination Travellers face. However, services provided throughout the country are still largely inadequate.

3.2 Health Care Provision for Travellers in Cork

Abbeycourt House is the centre for health services in Cork. The Southern Health Board (SHB), like all Health Boards, operates on a multi-disciplinary model. This co-ordinated approach includes professionals such as Public Health Nurses, Area

Medical Officers, Social Workers, Community Welfare and Development Officers and General Practitioners in the General Medical Scheme. The Cork area is divided geographically between the North and South Lee teams for service provision. In spite of Government commitment in policy to "deliver services and to ensure that they are tailored to meet the specific needs of the Travelling Community" (Committee to Implement Traveller Services, p. 10), services for Travellers in both North and South Lee areas are assumed within the general remit of health care for the community. "The Information Guide to our Health Services" issued by the Library and Information Unit, Department of Health, which documents services available to Cork residents, makes no reference to particular services to meet the specific needs of the Traveller community.

The following briefly details the health services available to Travellers in Cork:

Medical Card

The medical card confers entitlement to free health care either via the General Practitioner Service and prescribed medicine or in hospitalisation is determined on the level of income. A tiered system of eligibility exists whereby a customer may be deemed responsible for certain charges depending on income.

Mother and Infant Care Services

The Health Board also provides a Mother and Infant Care Service. This scheme obliges the Health Boards to provide free to all low income mothers, medical, surgical and midwifery services in respect of ante-natal and maternity care. The Act of 1970 (Health Act S62) also provides for free medical, surgical and nursing services for children born to mothers entitled to this service, up to the age of 6 weeks.

Pre-School and National School Children

S66 (1) of the Health Act 1970 requires the Health Boards to provide a health examination and treatment service to children under 6 years. "The service is intended to monitor the developmental progress of children by scheduled checks at 6 - 10 months, 12 - 18 months and at 24 months. Included within the remit of this service is the Immunisation Programme for Infectious Diseases such as diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio and MMR. For Traveller children in the Cork area these services are delivered at the various health and welfare clinics throughout the City which in the North Lee area are situated at:

- Mayfield;
- Blackpool;
- Knocknaheeny;
- Dillon's Cross.

Child Care Workers

Since 1986 the Southern Health Board has been responsible for the provision of funding for child care assistants in special classes and pre-schools for Travellers. Their role is to provide nutritious meals and offer shower facilities to Traveller children.

Well Woman Services

A range of general Well Woman Health Services is available including family planning, cervical cancer testing, breast cancer testing, as well as general gynaecological/fertility services.

Child Care and Family Support Services

The Southern Health Board is involved in co-operation with voluntary organisations in the provision of an extensive range of child care and family support services. These include child guidance, counseling and advice services for a range of problems such as drug and alcohol addiction. Social Work support is also offered for those experiencing family problems such as domestic violence. The **Shared Rearing Project** recently initiated is a project designed to involve the Traveller community in the provision of substitute care of Traveller Children. Residential and foster care is also offered to families in crisis.

3.3 Analysis of Cork Health Service: Provision for Travellers

The health services in Cork make no particular commitment to respond to the acute health needs of the Traveller population. Difficulties in accessing health services is accentuated for transient Travellers in Cork who are often unable to obtain medical cards due to not having a permanent address. Similarly attendance at clinics often means health personnel are unaware of medical records which have not been transferred from the Travellers' previous area clinic. One Service Provider in the North Lee area identified this as a major difficulty in offering an informed health service to their Traveller population. Low uptake of essential services such as immunisation and post and antenatal services was perceived as most prevalent amongst the more transient Travellers in Cork.

Mobile Clinic — Service Provision

A mobile immunisation clinic at one time operated in Cork, the aim being to reach those Traveller families on sites/side of the road who were unable to attend clinics. This project stopped when it was considered inappropriate to give sterile immunisa-

tions in what often amounted to very poor site conditions. The Traveller women interviewed expressed mixed feelings about the benefit of the mobile clinic. Some believed it could offer a useful service to Travellers who have difficulty getting to clinics. Others felt the mobile clinic did not offer sufficient privacy and confidentiality to those availing of its service. As one woman stated "everyone would see you and know what your business was".

Travellers are very much aware of their unequal health status. Lack of information was reported by Traveller women as a major obstacle in the way of taking up those services which are provided. For example, many women were aware that the Public Health Nurse offers post-natal check ups for babies - but they were unsure of their own post-natal needs. Similarly, there was confusion about immunisation and what its significance is. One woman stated that "I'd get letters telling me the child was due a needle (immunisation) but nothing to tell me why it was important or what might happen if he didn't get it".

Difficulties in actually getting to clinics accounts for the low utilisation of services, while literacy difficulties were cited as the main reason for the lack of information about services. These problems must be acknowledged and addressed by Service Providers if adequate and effective health education is to be developed. For example, one way of overcoming the literacy difficulties is to show videos on things such as the harmful effects of smoking and drinking and so on. Some women who had had this kind of information found it worthwhile and believed that health education generally should be provided in a more comprehensive manner.

In discussion of health services many Traveller women highlighted their difficulties in accessing health services. For example, they are typically treated differently than settled people when in hospitals. Several women spoke of being placed in private rooms away from general labour wards. This was for purposes of segregation rather than specialised treatment. Women also expressed the view that if their children were hospitalised, they were sent home earlier than other children with similar complaints.

The Shared Rearing Project aims to keep Traveller children in need of substitute parenting within their own cultural environment. This may be seen as a positive form of Child Support Service and a vast improvement on the previous practice of placing Traveller children with settled foster carers, or in residential placement, so that it was difficult for the children to settle back into Traveller culture at the end of the placement.

3.4 Services Needed

The Travellers interviewed in this project expressed a clear need for improvement in health services and health service delivery to improve their health status. They highlighted a clear need for more information; such information must be disseminated effectively by for example, the use of audio-visual material and so on. Health Information Programmes need to be offered in mainstream health clinics, and GP centres, so as not to further marginalise the Traveller Community. The employment of a Social Worker and a Community/ Health Worker to develop this Outreach Service would be important. The role of the Community/Health Worker should encompass development of other services such as youth services, women's groups, and services for elderly Travellers. The Health Service needs to examine its current provision for transient Travellers and develop more effective methods of health record transfer between clinics, as well as making medical cards available to those who are currently entitled to them but are unable to claim due to no permanent address.

3.5 Summary

The health status of Travellers from before birth to death is considerably lower than within the settled community. Poor accommodation provision accentuates health problems and for those Travellers without access to basic amenities conditions are often dire. The health services in Cork do not offer any special services to redress the imbalance Travellers experience in health status. In reality the health service can be more inaccessible for Travellers than the settled community. Innovative measures must be devised to target high infant mortality as well as the considerably reduced life expectancy of Travellers.

Health Section Footnotes

1. **Fertility Rate** was calculated by the Health Research Board as the number of babies born per annum divided by the total number of women aged 15 - 49 inclusive in the population;
2. **Stillbirth Rate:**
The number of stillbirths (i.e. babies weighing 500 grams or over who are born dead) per annum divided by the total number of live births and stillbirths;
3. **Infant Mortality Rate:**
Number of deaths of infants in the first year of life per annum per 1,000 live births;
4. **Life Expectancy Rate:**
A figure which gives the average number of years a person of a certain age can expect to live if current mortality rates were to hold for the future.

Chapter 4

Education

4.1 Introduction

The education system is another area in Irish society in which Travellers face discrimination. Traveller children receive differential treatment due to their ethnic identity. Article 29 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child acknowledges that "the education of the child be directed to the development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity" (and that this right is achieved) "progressively on the basis of equal opportunity" (Article 28). Ireland has not ratified this convention, nor does the Irish Constitution *Bunreacht na hÉireann* acknowledge the right of ethnic minorities to have their culture respected within the education system.

This section of the Report profiles the situation of education provision for the Traveller children in the North Lee area and wider area of Cork. It is necessary to place this provision within the national context with the following brief overview. In 1960 the Commission on Itinerancy reported that almost all Travellers were completely illiterate. Only 160 out of a total of 1,640 Traveller children between the ages of six and fourteen were attending school. Following this Report the Government initiated a major policy drive in the provision of pre-school facilities for Traveller children.

Pre-Schools

In 1988 a survey on the education provision for the children of Travelling families was carried out by the Primary School Inspectorate (Committee to Monitor Implementation of Government Policy on Travelling people, 1989). This study highlighted an increase in the pre-school provision from:

- 18 pre-schools in 1984; to
- 47 pre-schools in 1988; to
- 47 pre-schools in 1991.

Pre-schools specifically for Travellers were originally set up and run by local voluntary bodies such as the St. Vincent de Paul Society and Traveller Committees. Figures for 1991 showed that pre-school facilities catered for approximately 600 Irish Traveller children. 1988 figures indicated that 44 teachers and 37 County

Council Workers under the aegis of the Local Health Authorities were employed in pre-schools. The Department of Education grant aids 98% of the tuition and transport costs incurred by the pre-schools.

National School Provision

Not all Traveller children avail of pre-school facilities. (Figures on the number of Traveller children who commence education at primary level in national schools were not available). 1989 figures for Travellers enrolled in national schools indicated that the estimated 3,953 children were provided for in the following way:

- (1) In special classes (29.8%);
- (2) In integrated classes (34.5%);
- (3) Partly integrated but with extra separate tuition (35.7%).

(There is also a combination of (2) and (3) above where some Traveller children remain in special classes full-time while others rotate between ordinary and special classes).

Staffing

A special class teacher is assigned where special classes exist. The Department of Education advocate that their policy is "to have children integrated into mainstream education. Where possible, approval for the establishment of special classes is given on condition that the children should progress into the mainstream classes as soon as they are ready" (Seventh Report of Committee to Monitor Implementation of Government Policy). A special capitation grant of £64.65 per child per annum is payable in respect of Traveller children enrolled in special schools/classes (ordinary rate is £28 per pupil).

In 1989 the National Co-ordinator of Traveller Education proposed guidelines for the administration of special classes. These direct against exclusion of Traveller children by way of special entrances, play areas and times for Traveller children. In 1991 the National Co-ordinator was replaced with the National Education Officer whose role is to "promote and facilitate the education of Traveller children in areas not covered by the visiting teacher service" (Committee to Monitor the Implementation of Government Policy on Travelling People, Seventh Report). The duties of the National Co-ordinator include meeting and consulting with Travellers, Traveller Organisations, Health Authorities, Social Workers and, where appropriate, voluntary organisations and committees. This Co-ordinator will also examine ways in which Traveller parents can become more involved in their children's education, and will seek to find ways in which teacher training can be broadened to include effective information on Traveller culture.

Special Schools

There are four special schools catering specifically for Traveller children located in Dublin (2), Bray and Galway. They cater for approximately 220 children. Transport is arranged where necessary and the Government grant aids 98% of the costs.

Post-Primary

Participation rates at post-primary level from the Traveller Community is very low. There are now 11 Junior Training Centres for young Travellers catering for approximately 200 young Travellers. They are designed for Travellers between the ages of 12 and 15 years.

4.2 Education Provision for Traveller Children in Cork

Figure 3 indicates the levels at which Cork Traveller children access the school system.

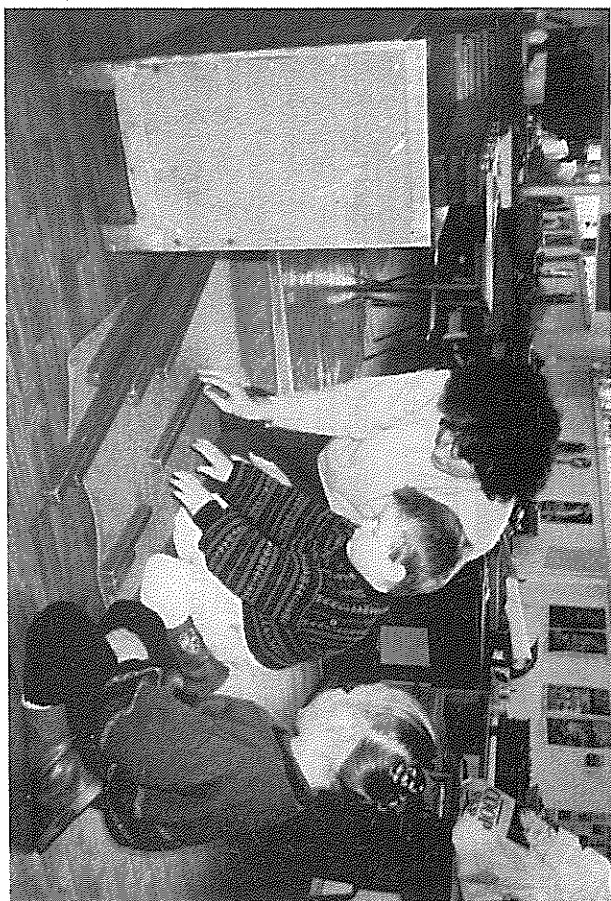
FIGURE 4.1

Type/Level of Schooling	Number of Schools	Total Attending	In Mainstream	In Special Classes
Pre-School	2	30	Traveller	Traveller Only
National School	16	185	72	114
Second Level: Mainstream Schools	1.	1	1	—
Junior Training Centre (for Travellers)	1	12	Traveller Only	Traveller Only
Special School (Youth Encounter Project)	1	1	Special School	Special School

TABLE 4.2

SCHOOL STATISTICS, CORK, MAY 1993

Name of School	Address	Total Number of Children on Roll	In Mainstream	In Special Class
North Presentation Pre-School	Gerald Griffin Street	14	—	(Travellers Only)
Turner's Cross Pre-School	Turner's Corss	16	—	(Travellers Only)
St. Mary's On the Hill N.S.	Knocknaheeny	24	1	24 Children in 2 Special Classes
St. Catherine's N.S.	Bishopstown Avenue	49	9	40 Children in 3 Special Classes
Ursuline N.S.	Blackrock	27	14	13 in Special Classes
Scoil na Croise Naofa N.S.	Mahon	11	1	10 in Special Classes
Our Lady Queen N.S.	Mayfield	33	6	27 in 2 Special Classes
Turner's Cross G.N.S.	Turner's Cross	5	5	—
Turner's Cross B.N.S.	Turner's Cross	6	6	—
Douglas Boys N.S.	Douglas	2	2	—
Douglas Girls N.S.	Douglas	1	1	—
Churchfield N.S.	Churchfield	9	9	—



Pre-School Provision in Cork

In Cork there are two pre-schools for Traveller children. North Presentation School is in the North Lee area of the City and caters for 14 boys and girls between the ages of 2 - 5 years. Turner's Cross on the South side of the City has a total of 16 children on its roll. A new pre-school at St. Mary of the Isle is due to open soon and will have places for 14/15 children. The aims of the pre-schools in Cork are to enable Traveller children to move to integrated classes at national school level.

In Cork's pre-schools both in the North Lee area and on the South side of the City the pre-school teachers are fully trained Montessori teachers.

Primary School Provision in Cork

There are a total of 16 national schools in Cork catering for 185 Traveller children. 72 of the children are fully integrated within the mainstream, while 114 attend special classes for Travellers. The structure, curriculum and ethos in the special classes varies throughout the different schools in Cork. In contrast to "mainstream" classes, special classes for Travellers are smaller with a maximum of approximately 15 pupils. In several special classes in Cork different age groups are assumed within

TABLE 4.2 (contd.)
SCHOOL STATISTICS, CORK, MAY 1993

Name of School	Address	Total Number of Children on Roll	In Mainstream	In Special Class
North Monastery N.S.	Blackpool	1	1	—
Patrick's Hill G.N.S.	Near Mayfield	1	1	—
St. Brendan's G.N.S.	The Glen	7	7	—
St. Mark's B.N.S.	The Glen	5	5	—
St. John's N.S.	Mayfield	2	2	—
Scoil an Spioraid Naomh B.N.S.	Bishopstown	2	2	—

30

Name of School	Address	Total Number of Children on Roll	In Mainstream	In Special Class
South Presentation Convent	Douglas Street	1	1	—
St. Enda's Junior Training Centre	Blackpool	12	—	Travellers Only
Youth Encounter Project	Lamford Row	1	—	Special School

Second Level

the one class thus age groups of the class can include pupils from age five to twelve years.

The curriculum of special classes was described by one Service Provider as following an amended national curriculum. This curriculum is more flexible and places a greater emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Traveller children in special classes are exempt from studying the Irish language.

The Visiting Teacher for the Cork area described the home base of the Traveller children attending special classes as "mixed". Children from Local Authority housing, group housing, official and unofficial sites were equally represented among the pupils (although less transient Cork families attended more regularly). Southern Health Board Child Care Workers are employed in some of the special classes. Their role is actually to ensure that Traveller children receive a meal and have access to washing/shower facilities.

Urslines provide a Homework Scheme for both their children and children in Mahon Primary School. Mahon Primary School also withdraws the Traveller children in need of special help from within mainstream provision. This scheme includes the provision of extracurricular trips to reinforce the image that availing of remedial tuition does not connote failure or punishment.

Post-Primary

Only one Traveller child attends mainstream schooling at second level in the South side of the City. There is no evidence of any Traveller children in the North Lee area at mainstream second level.

Junior Training Centres

Travellers in Blackpool enrols 12 young Travellers. (This service is discussed in the next section on training).

Special School

There is no special school for Traveller children in the Cork area. An interview with the Visiting Teacher for Traveller highlighted one Traveller child attending the Youth Encounter Project in Cork.

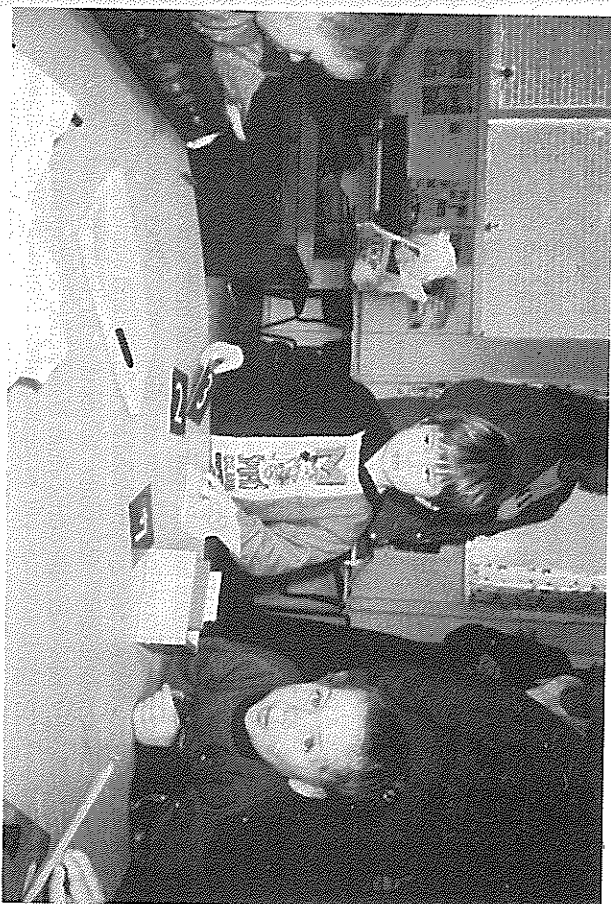
Visiting Teacher

The Cork area has one Visiting (peripatetic) Teacher. (There is a total of nine Visiting Teachers nationally). The Visiting Teacher in the Cork area described her

role as forming links between Traveller families and schools and making transient families in Cork aware of school services and encouraging children to attend. The Visiting Teacher also has contact with the School Attendance Officer and is made aware of families where school attendance is intermittent or problematic.

4.3 Educational Needs of Traveller Children in Cork

The overall trends for Traveller children participating in the school system in Cork is in line with national trends. An increasing number of children were described by the Visiting Teacher to be attending at pre-school level. Participation rates among 5 - 12 year olds was also highlighted as having increased significantly. For post-primary age groups participation appears to be negligible. The educational needs of Traveller children in Cork are as follows.



Pre-School Provision

There is a need for more Traveller pre-schools. The opening of the new school at St. Mary's of the Isle marks one attempt to meet this need. One Service Provider from the education sector attributed the increase in demand to parents who are seeking access to formal education for their children. Also policies which have made

nomadism a more prohibitive way of life have marked a pattern where Travellers in the Cork area are mainly in one place for the school year, travelling seasonally during school vacations. The existing pre-schools in Cork were seen by one Service Provider as advantageous in that they are both staffed by qualified Monessori teachers. That Traveller children receive special recognition in pre-school provision may be regarded positively in a climate of national child care policy which places a low priority and very little resources into the pre-school sector in general.

In spite of these apparent advantages, one Service Provider identified that 'the fact remains that Cork Traveller children are singled out from a very early age for different treatment because of their Traveller identity'. Another identified this separation as setting a trend whereby Traveller children start and finish their education through a system which caters for them at the margins of "mainstream" provision.

National (Primary) School Level

Approximately two thirds of Traveller children who access the national school system in Cork do so in special classes. These classes were originally designed to facilitate Traveller children whose families were constantly moving, and for whom participation in mainstream school on an ongoing basis was difficult. In some special classes in Cork schools Traveller children are not integrated at any level with mainstream pupils other than in the playground. In these classes an ethos prevails which is concerned with making washing facilities and meals available to the children. This charity approach was described by one Service Provider as doing little to reinforce a positive self-identity among young Travellers. Such an approach is also seen by parents as offensive because it implies that they do not care adequately for the physical needs of their children.

At a certain special class in North Cork Traveller children arrive at school half an hour later and conclude school half an hour earlier than their settled peers, a practice which again segregates Traveller children as "different". Other special classes in Cork are more progressive and are provided for literacy and numeracy, the Traveller pupil being in "mainstream" for other subjects. In both special classes and mainstream classes, however, the curriculum is designed to respond to the needs of the sedentary children.

Teaching materials in special classes are not related in any "special" way to the Traveller culture. The Traveller language of Cant is not incorporated at any level in the curriculum. The national curriculum is mono-cultural in that it makes little reference to ethnic minority representation in the classroom. One teacher interviewed highlighted how the Teacher Training College she attended provided a one hour optional seminar involving a video on the Travellers. This she described as being the sum of the intercultural input during the training course.

Transfer for children from special classes to mainstream schooling was described by parents, pupils and teachers as being a difficult process. This was described as placing huge pressure on children. Similarly Travellers in special classes are exempt from learning Irish and may find on joining integrated classrooms that they have much to catch up on.

The special classes concentrate on basic literacy and often have mixed age groups with children from 5 to 12 years in a single class. Traveller children often are behind their settled peers in integrated classrooms.

Secondary Level

As stated earlier the number of Traveller children who access second level education is negligible. Obviously, at third level it is also limited. However, a small number of the first Travellers to complete third level have come from the Cork area having successfully overcome an education system which takes little account of their needs.

4.4 What Cork Traveller Children Said about School

Many of the Traveller children interviewed in the course of this research had attended special classes. Some are currently participating in mainstream classes. All of them clearly identified incidents in which they had experienced discrimination because of their Traveller identity. Many recalled being bullied. One young girl spoke of "concealing" her Traveller identity from the settled children until her cousin joined the school. Some of the children knew her cousin to be a Traveller and followed her home from school to "find out if she was one too". When they discovered she too lived on a halting site they beat her up. Name calling and bullying were described as prevalent. Several children felt they would often be blamed by teachers when they had done nothing wrong.

Traveller children sensed keenly the segregation in special classes and those who had moved to integrated schools were able to make comparisons between the two systems. In spite of a high play context in the daily organisation of the special class, the children clearly favoured participation in the integrated class. The following extracts reinforce this point:

Female - Age 7: "In the Traveller classes you hardly wouldn't learn anything, we were always only chatting".

Male - Age 9: "We'd be fighting and messing together, they'd leave us play all day. We were just told to get up and play when we were supposed to be writing".

Female - Age 8: "In buffers' classes there's better learning".

The Traveller children also face hostility from their settled peers.

Female - Age 10: "When we'd come out of the Traveller classes the other children keep staring at you. Some call you smelly".

Male: spoke of the school bus which collected him from his site each morning. It arrived at school half an hour after the mainstream school pupils had commenced school. "The buffers watched us out the windows going into our classroom".

Parents' View

Many parents echoed the sentiments expressed by their children, especially in relation to the special class provision. Among their concerns were that the age mix in classes was inappropriate. One woman described her children's behaviour after being in the special class as being unruly. Since moving to the mainstream she perceived a vast improvement in their level of concentration and behaviour in general. This she attributed to the children experiencing a more structured schooling system which "didn't allow them to run wild".

Lack of consultation with parents from staff was also highlighted as a problem with special class provision. One mother of a child in a special class in the North Lee area approached her daughter's school to enquire why no homework was being set. She was told that homework had not been issued as the teachers had thought there was no electric light on the halting site. This mother was angered by the lack of insight into and apparent dismissal of her way of life.

Whilst several special classes (notably the more progressive ones which are developing a more integrated system) invited Traveller parents to parent-teacher meetings, a large criticism of special classes was failure to include Traveller parents in these discussions. In several cases it was believed that there was a lack of understanding about Traveller Culture in special classes. Some Travellers believed certain teaching staff members to be hostile towards Travellers and totally dismissive of their culture. Other adults recalled their own experiences from childhood at school and perceived little to have changed. The practice of washing and feeding Traveller children in special classes was not viewed positively. One woman said she had insisted that the special class teacher stop changing her daughter's clothes when she attended school. She felt this to be degrading and insulting.

Discussion of school curriculum was also indicated as an area of concern for Traveller parents. One woman said she wanted to "see school books with Travellers

and trailers and big families, not just two parents, two children and a house". The complete lack of intercultural teaching material was seen as partly responsible for perpetrating a negative view of Travellers. The desire for an intercultural school ethos was succinctly embodied in the comment of a mother who said "I would love my daughter to be able to stand up in class and be proud to say she is a Traveller". The same woman was saddened that her daughter, due to start at an integrated class, had said she would not tell anyone she was a Traveller.

On a more positive note Traveller parents identified the importance of their children receiving education and were anxious that they be enabled to do so alongside settled children. Some adults described the difficulties they experienced having only limited literacy skills and were determined that their children would not face similar difficulties. Advances in the education system to include Travellers in mainstream school were seen generally as being positive. The Homework Scheme was described as helping Traveller children without "taking them out of class and treating them differently". The Visiting Teacher for the Cork area was also described as being a vital link to the school for some parents.

4.5 Services Needed

This discussion of the educational provision for Traveller children in Cork describes a system which segregates Travellers in some schools by means of "special" Traveller classes. The need to develop an intercultural education system in Cork (and nationally) is generally recognised by parents and pupils as essential. The Irish Traveller Movement (ITM) describe such a system as an "education that promotes interaction and understanding among and between different cultures and ethnic groups on the assumption that ethnic diversity can enrich society".

The starting point to achieving this must be to acknowledge that each child "arrives at school with their own experiential background which they must be able to refer back to, to build upon and validate" (Education & Travellers, ITM, p. 19). Travellers in special classes receive education in isolation from the rest of the school population. A useful analysis of a more ideal situation is one where instead of school becoming a "melting pot" where the Traveller child's culture and identity is mixed and absorbed into the settled population, that the school becomes a "meeting pot" with different cultures existing side by side. An egalitarian education framework must be construed whereby different cultures co-exist. This would not only foster settled children with an understanding of Traveller Culture but would also enable the Traveller child to understand and make sense of the settled way of life. The Traveller child may then be able to "adapt" to being in a settled world without having to "adopt to it" at the cost of his/her own cultural identity.

In designing an education system which approximates that of an intercultural one, consultation with Traveller Organisations has an important role. As such, Travellers need access to the skills and knowledge that would enable them to participate more fully in the education process.

In examining second and third level education, it has been shown that participation from Travellers in Cork is very low. Measures must be implemented to enable Travellers to access education at these levels. A starting point is to develop a primary education system which includes and recognises Travellers and their culture.

Chapter 5

Training & Employment

5.1 Introduction

The previous section described some of the obstacles which limits the participation of Traveller children in mainstream schooling at primary level. This has serious implications for second and third level education participation rates. This section examines the provision of training for Travellers in Cork and seeks to critique this in the context of the importance and uniqueness of the Traveller economy and employment.

5.2 Junior Training

There are now 11 Junior Training Centres nationally which cater for approximately 200 young Travellers. These centres were established to provide a form of second level education and are designed to encourage Travellers between the ages of twelve and fifteen to attend school.

St. Enda's Junior Training Centre

St. Enda's is the Junior Training Centre established for young Travellers in the North Lee area of the City. St. Enda's Training Centre is funded by the City of Cork VEC who provide the teaching hours and cover 98% of transport costs. A child care assistant is also employed through a VEC Social Employment Scheme and provides lunch for the trainees. There is also a religion teacher who is employed on a voluntary basis whose concern is to prepare the young trainees for Confirmation. The Junior Training Centre avails of national lottery funding for extra curricular activities such as trips and outings. The Centre is also visited by the visiting teacher who will recommend which pupils may be likely to avail of the service after primary school and who examines options of the young trainees continuing training/ education after attendance at St. Enda's.

The Junior Training Centre reports to follow an amended national curriculum and has a large emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Other subjects include geography, wood work and craft. Social skills education is also an important element within the curriculum and involves young people visiting restaurants, swimming and sailing courses. The emphasis of the social skills programme is on personal development. The Centre no longer provides shower facilities, as previously, and one staff member

spoke of the importance of such facilities being offered in a sensitive way. The 12-15 year age group she saw as being very sensitive, and said "it would be very insensitive and hurtful to insist a young person of that age should come to school and have to shower".

Attendance at the Centre is described as constant. The School Attendance Officer monitors the Junior Training Centre.

The Junior Training Centre provides a service for Travellers from a variety of homes, houses, flats and haling sites. The course runs for a year in duration and it was seen as more difficult to enrol transient Traveller children. The Centre also aims to provide an ethos which is social in atmosphere and to provide skills which will enable the young Traveller to move on to further training.

Upon leaving the Junior Training Centre at 15 years there are few other training options available to young Travellers in Cork. Those available come under the general remit of Adult Education.

5.3 Adult Education

The co-ordination of provision for adult education in Cork City is the role of the Adult Education Officer who is employed by the Vocational Education Committee (VEC). Adult Education is available to any individual who has left full-time education. Eligibility is not based on an age requirement. Current provision of adult education in Cork City includes:

- (1) **Formal Evening Classes:**
These are run at colleges throughout the City and provide a variety of options including typing, painting, craft, car maintenance, wood work, metal work, dancing, photography, etc. These courses are usually time limited and fee paying.
- (2) **Second Chance Adult Education Schemes**
 - (a) **Foundation Programmes**
These involve development of literacy skills along side programmes geared to enhance self-confidence and assertiveness. The aim is personal goal-setting and the staffs' role is to help in achieving these goals. The progression in these foundation programmes is described as feeder, the individual moving on when he/she is ready.
 - (b) **Second Chance**
The second chance sector is more formal vocational training opportunity schemes for those who are long-term unemployed. It enables people to

combine receipt of Social Welfare entitlement with full-time school attendance (see training allowance). Travellers in Cork do not generally access these second chance schemes.

- (3) **Early School Leavers at Risk**
It is in this category that training for Travellers is mainly provided for.

(a) Youth Development

This is a service which aims to provide a drop-in centre for young people including Travellers throughout the City's community centres. There is no element of compulsion to attend. The ethos is one which seeks to provide a social atmosphere for those youths who have left school and have no employment or social outlets. It is not certain that many young Travellers actually attend this centre.

(b) Youth Reach

Youth Reach operates more formally than Youth Development. It operates a two year programme which incorporates communication skills, literacy, practical and manual skills. Youth Reach operates through community training workshops and are run via a combination of FAS, VEC and the community. Youth Reach along with Vocational Training Opportunities Schemes are initiatives which have recently been receiving support within the community development dimension of NLD. The Youth Reach programmes in 1992 catered for 263 trainees in North Side Cork. Together, Mayfield, Knocknaheeny, Blackpool and Farranree are all locations which are developing the Youth Reach service. One of the initiatives of the Youth Reach programme has enabled a young Traveller to train as a child care worker in a Traveller special class in North Side Cork.

5.4 Senior Training Centres

There is a network of Senior Training Centres nationally for young Travellers. The Centres are run jointly by FAS and the VECs and cater for the educational needs of Travellers in the fifteen to twenty five age group.

The Senior Training Centre for Cork Travellers is located in the North Lee area of Blackpool at St. Finbar's Training Centre, Watercourse Estate. Established in 1979, the Training Centre operates through a combination of:

- (a) **Cork City VEC** - provide the teaching hours;
- (b) **FAS** - responsible for the day-to-day running of the Centre and provision of training allowances to trainees;
- (c) **Cork Corporation** - provide the leasehold for the premises.

The Centre has specified its aims as follows:

- (1) The overall aim is to compensate for Travellers deprived of social status and to develop their full potential;
- (2) To give them (Travellers) the learning tools of literacy and numeracy and develop communication skills;
- (3) To explore their own identity as Travellers and to help them make more informed choices about life on the road or life in the settled community;
- (4) To learn work related skills and attitudes through specific training in such areas as metal work, wood work, cooking, crafts, etc.;
- (5) Basic to all the programmes is the underlying aim of building up the confidence and self-esteem of the individual trainee;
- (6) To create a positive attitude to educate and to make trainees aware of their responsibilities and rights in the community.

The Centre is open to enrolment of 24 trainees which is divided 12/12 male and female. The age group is from 15 years upwards. Recent trends in the Centre have seen an increase in the number of married women enrolling which it is felt produced a balance between married and single women attending at the Centre. Trainees are comprised of about 50% of Travellers from halting sites and 50% from housing. In the period 1 September 1991 to 31 August 1992, there were six male trainees were from halting sites (mainly Springlane and Forge Hill), with others from houses in the immediate catchment areas of the Glen, Mayfield and Churchfield. When the full quota of trainees places are not utilised by Travellers, the places are allocated to boys from the settled community, usually at the recommendation of the Probation Service.

Female Travellers living on sites and houses also attend the Training Centre. The number of female trainees is greater, as females seem to be easier to recruit. The Centre was described as typically not used by members of more transient Traveller families in the Cork area.

As well as personal development input, participation in core subjects is also expected of trainees. Core subjects include metal work, wood work, cooking, arts, crafts, dressmaking and sewing. The subjects are divided in a way which means male trainees are typically involved in metal work and wood work, while the females receive more "domestic" based training in cooking and sewing. Household budgeting along with literacy and numeracy are integrated into the training programme.

The waiting list for enrolment to the Training Centre is short, averaging between a month to six weeks for women, and somewhat less for males. If numbers of trainees are low the Centre's Manager will visit the various sites/houses recruiting, making Travellers aware of the situation. The ethos of the Training Centre was described by educators as relaxed, with a strong emphasis on personal development and the discussion of issues like relationships, drug and alcohol abuse and Traveller culture. However, some Travellers disputed this and regarded the centre as being less than supportive of Traveller culture and identity.

5.5 Traveller Women's Groups

Two Traveller women's groups have been in operation during the last year in Cork City, one in Mayfield and the other in Mahon. Cork City VEC have provided the teaching hours and premises. Both groups ran for 12 weeks at the end of which time a £50 bonus was paid to those who had completed the sessions.

The Mayfield course operated a fairly open agenda whereby the women decided on the choice of activity for each evening.

Knitting, sewing and literacy were important elements in the course. The Mahon group on the South side of the City based its course content on a more personal development approach.

5.6 Analysis of Training

In analysing the training opportunities and experiences for Travellers in Cork, it is useful to refer to the goals of vocational training, namely the acquisition of skills, and education and qualifications to increase the possibility of acquiring employment within the labour force. Since much Traveller economic activity is not located in the mainstream labour market, there is some conflict here for Travellers.

The Traveller economy (i.e. economic activity which promotes a livelihood) was described by Travellers and Service Providers as unique to Travellers' culture. Its pivotal features are (1) adaptability to environment, (2) that it is income based rather than job-based, and (3) that it is home based rather than factory based. Travellers (especially male Travellers) have traditionally found employment within the framework of the family unit. Tinsmithing and wagon making two trades which were once prominent within the Traveller economy, have now become obsolete. In their place other trades now predominate. One Cork Traveller described dealing in scrap, horse dealing and the "blocks and logs" trade as now being important sources of Travellers' income. The Traveller economy is currently based on recycling and trading. Large traders within the Traveller Community deal in antiques, carpets or

market trading. For all Travellers who trade the nomadic lifestyle is the basis of economic success.

As the earlier section on accommodation indicated, Government policy introducing measures to curtail nomadism has made an economy based on transience and trading increasingly difficult. Measures which prohibit accumulation of scrap on sites was similarly highlighted in interviews with Cork Travellers as presenting problems in pursuing a livelihood based on scrap dealing (see comments in Accommodation Section). In spite of this, national statistics compiled by the Department of the Environment suggest an increase in the total number of Traveller families who trade from 163 in 1990 to 181 in 1992. Again, there is official discrimination against Traveller families who successfully trade, in so far as the designation "Trader" is considered incompatible with the designation "Traveller".

In analysing the outcomes of attendance at training schemes/courses, the uniqueness of the Traveller economy must be acknowledged. The figures below detail the outcome in terms of employment for Travellers leaving St. Finbar's for the period September 1991 to August 1992.

- Of the 19 females who enrolled in this period, only 1 found regular employment. A further 3 were accepted for training courses with Cert.
- For the same period, 13 males were enrolled, 2 found "regular employment", 1 was accepted for further FAS training, 1 is now self-employed in the scrap business and 2 found short-term employment in England. (Statistics from Annual Report, 1992, St. Finbar's).

These figures reinforce a picture of some Travellers assuming employment within their families upon leaving the Training Centres. Dependence on Social Welfare payments remains the primary source of income maintenance. Just how irrelevant formal training provision is is highlighted by young peoples' own experiences.

St. Enda's Training Centre

Several young Travellers interviewed expressed positive sentiments with regard to their attendance at St. Enda's Training Centre. In a classroom which comprised wholly of young Travellers discrimination was not experienced as acutely as by those who attended mainstream or special class provisions. One young Traveller was clear about this stating "you don't get bullied here like at school". The personal development input which includes trips and outings was also favoured by trainees.

On a less positive note, several parents of trainees strongly believed that there should be more input from Travellers into the teaching curriculum and that there should be

more emphasis on Traveller culture given that this is a specifically Traveller institution. Lack of Traveller participation in the teaching process was seen as a major disadvantage in teaching Traveller youths about their culture. As with the comments on special class provision for Traveller children at school, some Travellers believed that the Junior Training Centre segregated children, removing them from "mainstream" education provision. One mother believed that sending her child to the Training Centre would limit her son's chance of going on to mainstream secondary and would mean finishing his education at fifteen. Another critic identified the Junior Training Centre as a link in the chain from pre-school - special class - special training centre - senior training centre, perpetuating a system which discriminates against and excludes Travellers.

Sentiments expressed by trainees (both past and current) from St. Finbar's were again mixed in evaluating the service the Centre provides. On a positive note several trainees made the following comments:

- "It's a good place to meet other people and to learn to make things".
- "I prefer this place, it's not as strict as school".
- "I was delighted to come back after the summer, it's something to do when you come back from travelling".
- "I feel comfortable here, we're not separated like at school".

In view of these and similar comments, the Senior Training Centre clearly provides an opportunity for Travellers to meet and for many gave a sense of purpose and structure in their daily lives.

Aside from this important social perspective evident in attending the Centre, the actual vocational training acquired through attending the Centre was questioned. Several trainees spoke clearly of wanting more focused training. Some women trainees identified the type of vocational skills they would like to develop. For one woman a chance to learn valuable typing skills on the new computers installed at the Centre was seen as preferential to using them for playing computer games. Others pinpointed hairdressing and make-up classes as popular choices of skills they would have liked to learn. The emphasis in the women's training on subjects such as cookery and dressmaking was challenged by some trainees who felt they acquired adequate experience of these skills at home.

Earlier figures detailing outcome in terms of employment for young Travellers leaving the Centre showed few pursued trades involving skills such as metal work and wood work. Interviews with several male Travellers as to their views on train-

ing courses (in general, as well as in specific relation to St. Finbar's) highlighted important views in analysing the utility of current training schemes in Cork.

Several Traveller men interviewed identified Training Centres as alien institutions. For one man the concept of "being inside from 9 - 5 was not a job for a Traveller". He added that "Traveller men like to keep busy and active, we like to be outdoors, we are outdoor people". Another identified certain skills taught on training courses not relevant to the Traveller economy. He said "plastering and bricklaying belongs to buffers (settled people), it's not part of the Traveller Culture". Where specific skills such as brick building or plastering had been acquired, it seemed to be predominantly from working with family members not as part of any FAS or VEC structured scheme. Again the importance of the Traveller family as an educative and training unit was highlighted.

Another concern expressed by some Travellers who had attended St. Finbar's or who had children attending was that St. Finbar's is not being used uniquely as a Training Centre for Travellers as intended. The fact that certain youngsters from the settled community, most of whom were juvenile offenders, attended the Training Centre was seen as stigmatising the Travellers at the Centre and there prevailed among many parents a concern that their youngsters may be introduced to crime or anti-social behaviour in their association with these young offenders at the Centre.

Women's Groups

The women interviewed felt that the two women's groups were worthwhile and enjoyable. For many the chance to have "something to do for herself" was seen as a unique opportunity. In discussion of course content, however, it emerged that the women would have favoured a more focused, goal-oriented approach. One woman spoke of a Traveller women's course in Dublin and said that she would have liked if the Mayfield course had been similarly geared towards an open day where they were able to display pieces of work they had made during the course. Other women (from the Mayfield group) felt the course content should be broader and encompass personal development aspects. One woman said she did enough cooking when she was at home and wanted to do something different when she was out. Another woman identified that she would like help in developing her self-confidence and not to feel ashamed of being a Traveller. Several women indicated that they would like to attend women's courses on which they were paid. To facilitate this child care was highlighted as an important need. Partners and families were not always available for child care and this had created some problems for several women in their attending the women's groups.

5.7 Mainstream Training Schemes

Travellers in Cork do not readily access general training schemes and courses. Certain entry requirements and FAS courses which demand basic secondary level qualifications do not enable many Travellers (especially those who have attended special classes and Junior Training Centres) to avail of this training.

Secondly, as described above many training initiatives do not respond to elements within the Traveller economy. Training allowances are payable to trainees at only a slightly higher level than Social Welfare payments. This offers little financial incentive to encourage trainees to enrol on training programmes. It also produces a situation where young trainees are remunerated at a very low rate in comparison to other "employed workers".

5.8 Services Needed

In view of these findings, several vital changes are required to improve the training services available to the Traveller population of Cork. At the junior level, efforts must be made to include Traveller children within mainstream education provision. Where possible, the young Traveller should participate in education alongside settled peers. Where this is not deemed appropriate, for example, where a young Traveller has missed a lot of schooling and would not benefit from mainstream provision, the Junior Training Centre should continue to provide a service. This service, however, should include more Traveller consultation and participation on the staff body, and the promotion of Traveller ethnicity and culture.

At the senior level, fuller consideration must be given to the structure of the Traveller economy. Training courses must be designed in consultation and partnership with Traveller groups and aim to provide skills which Travellers have identified as useful for the economic activities they engage in. Similarly, initiatives to introduce programmes enabling Travellers to develop skills in leadership, working with groups (as a trainer), child care and working within their own community will enhance the potential of Travellers to be fully involved in training young Travellers as well as developing resources from within the Traveller community.

Provision of a women's group in the North Lee area is seen as a vital prerequisite to enabling women to develop confidence to access other more formal training programmes. Training allowances must be increased to remunerate trainees fully for their commitment to participating in training. There is also an urgent need for creche facilities if women are to be enabled to participate fully.

It is also seen as important that St. Finbar's in continuing to operate as a Travellers' training workshop does not continue to enrol settled youngsters who are young offenders as this is seen to be an abuse of a service for Travellers. Travellers should be encouraged through FAS and VEC initiatives to help Travellers promote their economy and in conjunction with the Local Authorities devise sites which are conducive to the pursuit of an economy based to a large degree on nomadism and income generation.

Chapter 6

Income Maintenance & Social Welfare

6.1 Introduction

1992 Department of Environment statistics indicated a national total of 181 Traveller families who are constantly nomadic within the Traveller Community and who are self-employed in profitable trading. However, for many other Travellers financial poverty is a debilitating and endemic feature of their existence. For many Travellers, their dependence on Social Welfare payments forms the main source of income maintenance. Dependence on Welfare invariably means a lifestyle which is based on subsistence and poverty. However, it was not possible to find exact figures for the Cork area.

6.2 Income Maintenance Provision in Cork

All Travellers receiving Social Welfare payments in the Cork City area are expected to present as available for work between 11.00 a.m. and 12.00 noon on a Thursday morning at the Social Welfare Office.

Figures from the Social Welfare Office estimated an approximate number of 150 persons "signing on" each week under the category of no fixed abode. This figure was estimated to include mainly Travellers from halting sites and more transient "side of the road" families. (It does not include Travellers in houses who are in receipt of Social Welfare payments).

For those Travellers who are awaiting a claim for benefit to be processed or transferred from another area, the Community Welfare Officer will visit the site (official or unofficial) and will pay benefits where due.

Cork's Southern Health Board employs Community Welfare Officers whose role is to advise on entitlement and, where relevant, to pay benefits. There is one CWO who has responsibility for Cork Traveller families, as well as having a general case load. As well as advising on basic benefits, the CWO has a role in disseminating information on ancillary benefits. These are not specifically targeted at Travellers. They include:

Back to School Clothing Allowance

This is payment at a rate of £35 for a child of primary school age. (This is usually paid to families with children aged 2 years upwards). £50 is payable for secondary school attendance for a child aged 13 years or over.

Dietary Supplements Schedule

Where it has been identified by a nutritionist that an individual has a special dietary requirement, a percentage of the estimated cost of this special diet will be paid.

2.1:2 Payments

The Community Welfare Officer has discretion to make emergency and exceptional needs payments based on an assessment of need which will involve the CWO interviewing a Traveller either in the office or on site/house (or both). Such an assessment may include liaison with Public Health Nurses or GPs. There is no criteria of eligibility for entitlement to a 2:1:2 payment. The following are examples of where conditions may permit a payment:

- In the provision of a pram, cot for a child where health and safety needs of a child are at risk;
- Occasionally for the provision of a caravan where a family trailer has been destroyed.

In such cases it is likely that a Traveller will be asked to contribute partly to the purchase of the caravan. Occasionally, the Council or Corporation will assist in the funding of a caravan. Helping with funding to provide a new caravan is usually under the condition that the individual or family agree to moving to an official site.

Ancillary Services

The CWO who deals mainly with requests from Travellers in the City also saw his role as dealing with ancillary requests such as birth certificate tracing and enquiries about schools.

6.3 Analysis of Service

The official rationale for all Travellers in the Cork City and County area having to "sign on" in the Social Welfare Office at a specified time is to curb the perceived potential for Travellers to receive benefit from a variety of offices in different parts of the country, thus drawing several benefits in one day. A Cork CWO interviewed during this research believed that a certain amount of fraudulent claims had been

made by members of the Traveller Community prior to this single signing method. He did not believe that the level of fraud was any higher than from within the settled population. This practice of differentiated signing times for Travellers is discriminatory and again seeks to reinforce a stereotype of Travellers as frauds. It is a practice which is exacerbated by a requirement that demands Travellers "sign" at a separate hatch, a physical segregation of Travellers from the rest of the unemployed Cork population. It must be noted that only Travellers on slices (unofficial and transient) are subjected to this. Housed Travellers claim as the rest of the population. Thus "settled" Travellers are seen as being part of the settled community, no longer part of their ethnic group. The transient way of life is further penalised within the Social Welfare System. Where the CWO issues payment, it is at the lower rate of unemployment assistance for Travellers who are constantly transient. This cumulatively results in lower benefits overall.

In examining ancillary benefits the uptake of back to school clothing allowances was considered by the CWO who deals primarily with Travellers' claims to be close to reaching the full numbers of those entitled. Many Traveller families in Cork, however, would have availed of the lower rate of £35 per child due to the very low rate of transfer of Traveller children to second level education.

On the Dietary Supplement Schedule the CWO interviewed believed uptake was below the number of Travellers who could have availed of it. This Service Provider identified the prevalence of the coeliac condition for many Cork Travellers which could mean qualification for this supplement. This lack of uptake highlights clearly a huge need for information on benefits to be made available to Travellers.

The emergency 2:1:2 payments are at the discretion of the CWO. An eligibility system based on discretion does little to inform Travellers of their right to benefit.

6.4 Travellers' Analysis/Views

The objection felt by Cork Travellers to the methods by which they are required to claim benefit was clearly evident in interviews with Travellers from the North Lee area as well as from other parts of Cork. One man spoke of how he avoided going to the special Travellers' hatch in the dole office. The reason he had not been challenged on this was probably because he has a house address. It angered him to see Travellers being labelled and singled out. For those Travellers who were more transient, the method of claiming for and receiving benefit was seen to be cumbersome and difficult. Many said they had little information made available to them on their entitlements and felt that much of their knowledge on eligibility was gained from family and friends. Another saw a need for ancillary services such as general

benefit information, how to trace birth certificates and enrol children in school to be provided for by an alternative source to the CWO, a body who would have time and relevant information to deal with requests. One woman portrayed confusion around such entitlements saying "Travellers used to be able to get blankets from the Welfare. I think they still can but Travellers don't know about it". One man whose caravan was in a very poor state of repair said that he didn't know where to go for help. He was unaware that the CWO may on the basis of an assessment be able to help.

6.5 Services Needed

There is a need for an equitable non-discriminatory system of Social Welfare entitlement for Travellers in Cork. The abolition of separate signing times and hatches is seen as a prerequisite to achieving such a system. Similarly, there is a need to make available to Cork Travellers clear information on entitlement to benefits and services. This should be disseminated by an independent body to avoid the conflict inherent in the same individual assessing needs and providing impartial advice based on criteria of eligibility. Special measures should also be introduced to enable transient Travellers (either on a full-time or seasonal basis) to transfer benefit without delays caused in current processing procedures.

Chapter 7

Voluntary Sector

7.1 The Cork Committee

The Cork Committee for Travellers was founded in 1963 as part of the national response to the Commission on Itinerancy. These Committees were initially concerned with helping Travellers to assume and adjust to a settled lifestyle. Victor Bewely, instrumental in the formation of the Irish Council for Itinerant Settlement (later the National Council for Travelling People), saw the Committees as having a role in tackling the settled community's prejudice against Travellers and in a sense paving the way for settlement.

Originally the Cork Committee was amalgamated with the St. Vincent de Paul Society (or Our Lady of the Wayside Conference as it was then known). Since 1989, however, the two groups have parted ways, the intention being that the Cork Committee concentrate on pursuing a more developmental action approach to working with Travellers, whilst the St. Vincent de Paul Society continue with its more pastoral role.

The membership of the Cork Committee includes representatives from the Traveller Community, from statutory agencies such as the County Council Housing Department, the Health Board, Teaching Staff involved with Traveller children and members of the religious, both nuns working with Travellers and the priest for the Travellers.

The Cork Committee has been instrumental in the establishment of pre-schools for Traveller children (described earlier). In recent years, however, these schools have become independently established as "limited companies" in their own right, no longer requiring input from the Committee.

Other tasks of the Committee have involved making representation on statutory boards such as the Sub-Committees in the Corporation and County Council Housing Departments. The representation for the Committee has a role to enlighten those agencies dealing with issues pertinent to Travellers on Travellers' views on such matters.

The Cork Committee has been described as undergoing a period of transition. Since its split from the St. Vincent de Paul, the group has continued to deal with requests

for financial assistance, which has resulted in the Committee spending much time with individual requests from Travellers. There is also a feeling from several Committee members that there needs to be greater participation from Travellers, that more Travellers should hold more key positions on the Committee. The Cork Committee has committed itself to pursuing a more developmental approach to working with Travellers.

7.2 St. Vincent de Paul Society

The St. Vincent de Paul Society is a charitable organisation open to all denominations. The main role of the group is seen as the relief of poverty and suffering and the religious emphasis is not to the fore. The Cork Society has a special team which works exclusively with the Traveller Community. Its membership consists of four persons. These members saw need for more workers but explained it was difficult to find people interested in working with Travellers.

The Society members visit different sites where they attempt to respond to the perceived needs of the Traveller Community. Vouchers for food and clothes are distributed at the different sites. There is also a liaison role involved where the Society member may write to the Council/Corporation to advocate on a Traveller's behalf. The St. Vincent de Paul also see themselves as having a social role which may constitute having a cup of tea and chat or, discussing more serious problems an individual may be experiencing. However, many Travellers disputed this suggesting that this is not a central role of the St. Vincent de Paul. Often the St. Vincent de Paul worker will refer to other agencies where professional assistance may be sought for a range of problems, from difficulty dealing with adolescents, dependency on drugs, alcohol or issues of domestic violence and abuse. Much of the work tends to be crisis in response to emergency situations which arise. Due to an acute shortage of person power what is intended to be weekly visits to all sites is in reality every 2 weeks. Some members of the group also visit Travellers who have moved to houses. One worker compared her work to that of a voluntary Social Worker helping local Travellers in her community to settle in. Where families adjust to life in a house without difficulty, it was felt intrusive to visit unless at the request of the family. Alongside site and house visitations, the St. Vincent de Paul financially assists certain projects, for example:

- The women's courses are part-funded by a home management grant provided by the St. Vincent de Paul. A Personal Development Course at Hazelwood Drive was similarly aided by St. Vincent de Paul funding;
- The St. Vincent de Paul also have put input into the Homework Project in Mahon (See Education Section) and the Youth Club at Blackpool (See Youth Section).

The St. Vincent de Paul Society in Cork are currently looking to establish a drop-in centre in the City for Travellers. This was seen as enabling Travellers to have a place in which they could meet and have Women's Groups, etc. It was not seen as a viable option to have the St. Vincent de Paul's current premises used to facilitate this drop-in centre. The group also identified a huge need for more volunteers to work with Travellers. Discrimination against Travellers was again highlighted by one Society member who explained that low numbers of volunteers to work with Travellers was not so much due to a lack of interest in volunteers joining St. Vincent de Paul, but in their preparedness to work with the Travelling Community. It was for this reason that the special Traveller Team established, as prior to this the needs of Travellers in the larger community had been evaded.

7.3 Youth Services: In the Voluntary Sector

Robbie Gilligan in his discussion of social prejudice and children of minorities states that "the children most likely to experience social prejudice are those who belong to the Travelling people" (p. 67). Earlier health statistics indicated that the infant mortality rates for Travellers is more than twice the rate in the settled community. It has also been suggested that there are unusually high rates of illness and hospitalisation among the children of Travellers (Ennis, 1984, citing Dr. J. Kiely). In addition, there is evidence that the rate of physical growth among Traveller children falls behind norms for the population of children generally (Creedon, Corboy and Kevany, 1973). Again it was shown that where Travellers on sites official/unofficial do not have access to adequate conditions health suffered. Safe water and basic sanitation are two of the eight essential elements of primary health care as set down by the WHO which are not available to many Travellers.

Traveller children face disadvantage in health, accommodation and also in education. A system which does not fully respond to Travellers' nomadic lifestyle and its distinct culture limits the accessibility and relevance of the school curriculum for Traveller children. The low rate of transfer of Cork Traveller children to mainstream/second level education has been shown as indicative of the discrimination young Travellers experience.

Youth Services

In Cork chances for young Travellers to avail of Youth Services are sparse and for many non-existent. Many Travellers, young and adult, have spoken in the course of this research about social exclusion for the younger members of the Traveller community. This means exclusion from youth clubs, boxing clubs, sports complexes, amusement arcades, bowling alleys and swimming pools - places where young

people typically spend their leisure time with peers.

In Blackpool several Traveller women from the Springlane halting site concerned with this continuing discrimination against their children contacted Ogra Chorcaí for advice as to how to start a youth club for their children. Ogra Chorcaí is an organisation involved in community work and aims to "provide a service to enable local communities identify and respond to youth development needs in their area". Their philosophy is one of "empowering local leadership through training and providing a backup service of support, resources, programme ideas and activities". Ogra were able to offer the North Lee Traveller women initial training in management and leadership skills which enabled them in a short time to assume full leadership and management of the youth club. By Christmas 1992 the "Children's World" Youth Club was up and running. Funding was provided by a combination of sources including some lottery funding, the Cork Committee and Ogra Chorcaí. The group ran from the Blackpool Community Centre up to breaking for the summer holidays. Whilst the women who run the youth club hope to continue in September, the future re-funding and premises (the Blackpool Community Centre is undergoing repairs) means the youth club's future remains precarious.

Other services for young Travellers in Cork City are few. The Youth Federation has an input into the Homework Scheme in Mahon which includes some social activities such as day trips.

Initiatives for the Future

In the North Lee area as well as other areas of Cork there remains a huge need for youth services which include Traveller youths in a positive way. The age profile illustrated in the health section paints a picture of a Traveller Community with large numbers of young people. This feature of Traveller demography is true for Cork where as shown few youth services exist for Travellers.

In order to endorse a commitment to providing youth services to young Travellers, the need to employ a Youth Worker concerned with addressing the disadvantaged status of Traveller youths was identified by Service Providers and those Travellers actively involved in Youth Work. As well as developing new initiatives for North side Traveller youths, an ongoing commitment to fund the "Children's World Youth Club" should be made by the two youth organisations in Cork, i.e. Ogra Chorcaí and the Youth Federation. Measures similarly need to be employed to ensure that young Travellers have access to facilities which are available to the rest of the community.

7.4 Summary

Much of the work of the Voluntary Sector involved with the Traveller Community in Cork is concerned with the alleviation of poverty. The services described above provide vital support for Travellers in emergencies and times of crisis. However, an ongoing developmental service for Travellers needs to be supported by resourcing such groups as the Traveller Visibility Group, Youth Groups and Groups for Women. This support could come from both voluntary and statutory sources.

Chapter 8

Conclusions & Recommendations

Conclusions and Recommendations

This report documents the services available to Irish Travellers in the following areas: accommodation, health, education and training, employment, social welfare and the voluntary sector. The report confirms what other studies have found: that the general living conditions of Travellers in Ireland are deplorable. Travellers in the Cork area and the North Lee Area specifically are no exception to this general rule.

Travellers are possibly the most excluded of any social group in Irish society. The cost of this exclusion is extreme poverty which results in: high infant mortality rates, low life expectancy, poor health, low literacy levels and high unemployment. In addition to suffering the low living standards experienced by all poor groups, Travellers are also subject to discriminatory practices in terms of access to public places. Additionally Travellers are subject to physical attack by members of the settled community.

Travellers interviewed during this research recalled many instances in which they had experienced discrimination as individuals within society. Being followed in shops was cited as a frequent occurrence, as was refusal of entry to a wide variety of public places including pubs, discos, youth clubs, cafes and shops. Trying to hire out a hotel room or hall was seen as almost impossible in Cork establishments. Where some had managed, they told of their booking being cancelled when their Traveller identity became known. One young woman spoke of her dismay to arrive at her wedding reception to discover the band packing to leave, refusing to play now they were aware it was a Traveller wedding.

Personal insults like derogatory name-calling at schools, in pubs and shops is widespread. One woman remembered going to collect a dress she had reserved in a shop to discover a tag attached which stated "for the Tinker girl". Another at a mission in a Cork church with several members of her family overheard the priest to say "all the Knackers in Cork have the candles bought". Many of the Travellers interviewed had suffered physical violence in the playground, from doormen or from attacks from members of the settled community.

The debilitating effects on Travellers of such treatment manifests itself in low self-esteem and poor self-confidence. Several women spoke of attempting to "conceal"

their Traveller identity in order to be admitted to places and feeling guilty once let in as if they had no right to be there. Others were angry and resentful of such treatment. One man believed Ireland to be a more racist country than England or America. He had lived in both places and said "nobody minds who you are there. In Cork though you can't buy a drink any place if you're a Traveller". The sense of social exclusion felt by Travellers is indeed acute.

Ireland's continuing failure to ratify the United Nation's convention on the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination, and the absence of anti-discrimination law in Ireland, removes from Travellers (and other discriminated ethnic minority groups) any legal remit through which to challenge racist treatment. The emergence of Travellers' Rights Groups has recently politicised the plight of Travellers. The Dublin Travellers' Education and Development Group (DTEDG) has successfully endorsed the importance of Travellers' rights to self-determination and equality in Irish society. Both the DTEDG and the Irish Traveller Movement (ITM) have been instrumental in promoting an understanding of Traveller ethnicity and cultural awareness.

The single most important need that this report identifies is the need for Travellers to be consulted by policy making bodies about decisions that affect their lives.

DTEDG and ITM have already called for greater consultation between Government and Travellers and have representatives on the recently appointed Government Task Force established by the Minister for Equality and Law Reform. The Task Force represents a shift in outlook from the time of the Commission of Inequality as regards Government response to the needs of Travellers. The Task Force acknowledges that Travellers need to be fully included in dialogue at policy level. As Martin Collins from the DTEDG succinctly states: "it is no longer (nor was it ever) acceptable for settled people from one culture to make policy for Travellers from another. A starting point for full Traveller ethnic identity and of the Travellers' right to have their culture and way of life resourced" (Collins, DTEDG, Fact File, 1993, p. 86). However, it remains to be clarified if the Task Force will in fact base its work on an acknowledgement of Traveller ethnicity. Unless groups like DTEDG, ITM and the recently formed TVG are resourced, then this consultation process is unlikely to have any meaningful impact on the lives of Travellers.

The following recommendations point to what needs to be done by different statutory and voluntary bodies to redress the inequalities documented throughout this report.

Action Strategies for the Coming Three Years

The following proposals form the basis for an action plan for the coming three years in order to involve Travellers in the overall local socio-economic developments in Cork. They constitute part of the recommendations of the area profile prepared of Travellers in the Cork area of particular relevance to North Lee Development Ltd., and to further area based structures for local development put in place in Cork over the coming years. As such while the immediate focus is the North Lee area this could broaden out with time.

- (1) **Employment of a Community Worker**
It is recommended that the TVG be resourced to employ a Community Worker whose role would be to:
 - Elaborate a community development function within the Traveller community in North Cork;
 - Concretise the link between NLD Ltd., and both the Traveller community and the organisational infrastructure of relevance to this community;
 - Resource the TVG in the implementation of the proposed action plan.
 - Develop a similar function for TVG in relation to other structures for area-based local development.
- (2) **Setting up a Traveller Women's Training Programme**
This programme be should be sub-contracted to and be managed by the TVG. NLD Ltd. should negotiate with FAS to access the necessary funding, which would include training allowances and provision of creche facilities. NLD should provide funding for pre-start-up activities to put staff in place and to prepare the Traveller women involved. The programme would include courses in areas such as personal development, leadership training, traveller identity and culture, organisational skills, communication skills, and a follow-up strategy to these courses.
- (3) **Youthreach Programme**
NLD Ltd. should assist in ensuring that a Youthreach programme would be sub-contracted to the TVG. NLD should provide funding for pre-start-up activities and a four week taster period. The programme would include leadership skills, personal development and youth work skills.
- (4) **Traveller Community Resource Centre**
A resource centre is seen as an essential support structure for the local socio-

economic development of the Traveller community in Cork. This should evolve to match and resource the outcomes from the above training work. It would also accommodate further ongoing training work.

- (5) **Administrator**
To deal with administration the TVG is also requesting financial resources to employ a suitable candidate for this position, which would be put in place along with the proposed resource centre.

There is an immediate urgent need for a Community Worker to begin carrying out the roles outlined above. The DTEDG are committed to resourcing the TVG in developing and carrying out their employer role.

Recommendations - Education

The following recommendations are designed for the consideration of the Department of Education, as well as for all schools in the Cork area:

- (1) Special classes for Traveller children in Cork should be phased out and children provided for within the "mainstream" education service;
- (2) Where it is identified that a Traveller child has a particular learning need then it is recommended that the child is given additional/remedial attention on a withdrawal basis alongside settled children with similar needs;
- (3) Extra capitation fees payable currently to special classes for Traveller children should be channelled into provision of additional remedial teachers;
- (4) Attention must be given to measures required for Travellers to be resourced to access a range of staff posts within the education system;
- (5) To develop an intercultural schooling system in Cork — consultation with Traveller groups should be employed to develop school materials which accounts for and resources cultural diversity; a number of pilot initiatives in this area should be developed with some urgency;
- (6) Traveller groups must have an input into teacher training programmes and the development of intercultural teaching methods. Trainee Traveller teachers should be resourced and properly remunerated;
- (7) The Department of Education must develop links with FAS and VEC in devising ways to improve access of Travellers in the school system at a professional level. Formal third level qualifications should not be the sole

entry requirement determinant;

- (8) The Department of Education must tackle the question of isolation some Traveller children experience in mainstream classes. This should involve guidelines for schools to include class teachers, principals, Boards of Management, Parents' Association and children;
- (9) A big drive is needed to educate the general population about Travellers and methods should be devised where Travellers and settled people can mix socially.

Recommendations to FAS & Cork City VEC

This Report has highlighted some issues in the provision of training for Travellers in Cork. In view of this the following recommendations are made to Cork City VEC and FAS agencies:

- (1) New initiatives should be introduced to enable Travellers to more successfully access the labour market, for example;
- (2) A training programme for Traveller women should be developed with some urgency. This should be sub-contracted to the TVG on a pilot basis. Such a programme should play a pre-training function in opening up new opportunities for Traveller women. A commitment should be made to resource these new opportunities as they are identified and researched;
- (3) The Outreach Programme should be expanded both at its foundation and progression stages to provide flexible training programmes designed in consultation with Traveller groups such as the TVG for post-training centre needs; a pilot programme should be sub-contracted out to be run by the TVG.
- (4) A particular training course should be devised to facilitate Travellers to access the skills to take up a teaching role in the school system. Consultation with school principals should enable the trainees to realise a basic trainee teacher wage in recognition of their position as a staff member with the school;
- (5) A training programme designed to lead to a qualification in child care should be introduced for Travellers wishing to pursue this. Consultation with Traveller groups would be seen as a valuable input at this level;
- (6) Training allowances should be increased beyond the rate of Social Welfare to act as a positive incentive to training programme participation and to reflect the full cost of such participation;
- (7) Training programmes should be geared to include personal development,

leadership skills and group work skills. Lack of formal education should not act as a barrier to participation on such programmes;

- (8) St. Finbar's as a Travellers Training Centre should not allow for the enrolment of settled trainees;
- (9) The curriculum of St. Finbar's should be expanded to include more vocational skills as identified by trainees such as hairdressing, market trading and dealing in scrap;
- (10) The Junior Training Centre, St. Edna's, should aim to prepare young Travellers to re-enter the mainstream school system.
- (11) The provision of child care facilities and transport for trainees should be a priority of Cork FAS and VEC;

Recommendations to Department of Social Welfare, Cork

The following recommendations are necessary to improve the income maintenance service for Travellers in Cork:

- (1) The Douglas Social Welfare Office in Cork should cease to be the "central" claiming office for all Cork Travellers. The separate signing times and "hatches" for Travellers should be abolished. Travellers should not be distinguished by their ethnic identity in claiming Social Welfare benefits;
- (2) The Social Welfare Department (in Cork) must devise more flexible methods of claiming benefits allowing transient and seasonally nomadic Travellers to transfer their benefit without having to process a new claim each time they move to a new area;
- (3) The service should be provided on a confidential basis and information must be disseminated in a way which is useful to Travellers, for example, video, tape and seminar, as well as in written form;
- (4) The Social Welfare Department must liaise with training professionals to devise a benefit system which allows for individuals to access training without complete withdrawal of income maintenance and ancillary benefits thus seeking to avoid the poverty trap.
- (5) Training should be provided for Social Welfare personnel servicing Travellers. This training should resource a better understanding of cultural difference, discrimination and the needs of the Travellers. Traveller groups should be involved in the provision of this training.

Recommendations for the Southern Health Board (SHB)

In view of the hugely disadvantaged health status many Travellers in Cork experience the following recommendations are made to the Southern Health Board:

- (1) That the Public Health Nurses of the SHB make a particular commitment to visit Traveller families in the Cork area who are unable to attend clinics and that pregnant women are seen as a priority group;
- (2) General "Well Woman" information should be made available to Traveller women at Local Community Health Clinics throughout Cork;
- (3) Comprehensive health education programmes which examine the following issues should be provided at the various Cork clinics in a manner that is appropriate to Travellers:
 - Ante/Post Natal Care Information;
 - Immunisation and Child Development;
 - Child Safety in the Home;
 - Nutritional Advice;
 - Dangers to health in smoking, drinking and alcohol;
 - Aids Awareness.
- (4) Efforts must be made to engage Traveller men in health education programmes;
- (5) Such health education programmes must be designed in consultation with Traveller groups such as the TVG;
- (6) The SHB should produce a health impact statement which examines Traveller sites and sets out recommendations from a health perspective. This should be submitted to the Housing Department of the Local Authorities;
- (7) The SHB should provide ongoing training to all its staff on the needs and culture of Travellers and on the issue of discrimination. Such training should be devised and delivered with consultation and participation of Traveller groups such as the TVG. Such participation and consultation should be fully resourced;
- (8) The SHB should develop more outreach preventative Social Work with the Traveller Community. To this end it should resource the employment of:
 - (a) A Community Worker recruited from the Traveller Community in Cork;
 - (b) A Community Care Social Worker with responsibility of offering outreach family support services to Travellers in Cork;

- (c) An independent post (resourced by the SHB) aimed at providing information to Travellers on eligibility to health services, benefits and child/family support services. To facilitate benefit uptake and awareness of entitlement, it is recommended that an independent advisor is appointed to advise on the following:
 - Eligibility for benefit;
 - Criteria of entitlement for certain benefits;
 - Rights in event of court action re benefit entitlement/receipt;
- (9) This independent advisor should be fully resourced by the Department of Social Work and have close links with the Community Worker for Travellers.

Recommendations for North Lee Development (NLD)

The North Lee Development (NLD), one of the twelve partnership companies formed under Chapter 7 of the Programme for Economic and Social Partnership (PESP) in the North Lee area in Cork, has a specific commitment to combat the social exclusion of minority groups.

The NLD have not yet fully recognised the TVG as a useful resource in providing the company with measures of how the Traveller population of the North Lee area experience discrimination and social exclusion. This research has clearly identified a need for Traveller Groups to be included in useful consultation on issues which impact on their lives. To this end, it is vital that the NLD begin to resource the TVG. In identifying specific projects which NLD should pursue to improve conditions for the Traveller Community in the North Lee area several key areas have been highlighted in this research as a priority.

The NLD is currently considering initiatives for its projected action plan for the next 3 years. The following recommendations are proposed for the NLD's consideration:

- (1) That NLD's commitment to combat social exclusion of minority groups fully includes recognition of the disadvantaged position of Travellers in the North Lee area;
- (2) That the TVG be recognised and resourced enabling them to develop capacities to be an instrument for change for Travellers;
- (3) That NLD include the TVG in a useful partnership in initiatives which impact on Travellers' lives;
- (4) That NLD negotiate with FAS and the VEC, as necessary, to resource a training provision for Traveller women. This is considered a vital prerequisite to Traveller women accessing the Labour Force. The provision should be

founded on the following criteria:

- (a) Personal development enabling Traveller women to develop skills and confidence in a manner which reinforces their Traveller culture and identity;
 - (b) Development of literacy skills;
 - (c) A skills focus that would include organisational skills and skills to facilitate Traveller women to work with their own community.
- (5) That NLD be involved in promoting a Youthreach initiative which may be developed to identify with Travellers skills with reference to the uniqueness of the Traveller economy and to target the specific needs of young Travellers leaving the training centre; this initiative should be sub-contracted out to the TVG.
- (6) That the Traveller Visibility Group be resourced to employ a Community Worker to work with the Traveller Community to the following ends:
- To work to mobilise resources from within the group and Traveller Community to enable the group/community to attain its set goals;
 - To have input into developing initiatives for:
 - Traveller women - such as the Women's programme;
 - Traveller youths - such as Blackpool Traveller's Youth Club and possible Youthreach initiative;
 - Traveller men — such as developing participation in environmental enhancement programmes.
 - To act as a link with NLD, the Traveller Community and the TVG;
 - It is recommended that the Community Worker is employed from within the Traveller Community;
- (7) The intended "Green Plan" of NLD should include initiatives for the Traveller Community in North Cork:
- (a) NLD should finance programmes to landscape areas such as the Knocknaheeny and Springlane halting sites and environs;
 - (b) That Travellers are consulted in such programmes and that Traveller groups are resourced to assist in this environmental enhancement of the North Lee areas;
- (8) NLD should develop pilot projects to test out new initiatives to support Traveller access to education;
- (9) NLD should link with other emerging area-based initiatives to ensure a support for Travellers that is relevant to group based on movement across what can be artificial boundaries.

Recommendations to Cork Local Housing Authorities: Cork Corporation and Cork County Council

The acute need for all types of accommodation for Travellers in Cork has been highlighted throughout this Report. To meet the accommodation needs of Travellers in Cork the following recommendations are seen as essential:

- (1) That Cork Corporation and County Council develop an ongoing plan of action to build more halting sites throughout the City and County regions;
- (2) The forced and continuing evictions of many roadside Travellers in Cork in view of inadequate and insufficient accommodation available must be stopped;
- (3) The provision of halting sites or group housing for the 225 indigenous roadside families in Cork County and City area must be seen as a vital priority;
- (4) Provision of accommodation must be fully financed by the Department of the Environment;
- (5) In providing halting sites the specific needs of the intended users must be taken into account. Site provision must consider the following:
 - (a) Number of bays per site - the preference is for small numbers of bays per "family sites";
 - (b) Location of sites;
 - (c) Design to take account of height of walls, play areas, parking for cars, vans and tractors;
 - (d) Provision of space for scrap accumulation and other economic activities.
- (6) In group housing provision location, design and sizemust also be fully considered with Traveller consultation. Larger drives, back gardens, layout and provision of work space are important features;
- (7) With only one Group Housing Scheme in the Cork County region, Cork City and County must urgently provide more group housing as an option to Cork Travellers seeking accommodation;
- (8) The establishment of an independent information service should provide Travellers with information on:
 - Entitlement and access to accommodation;
 - Rights re eviction orders and court proceedings;
 - Advise on (free) legal aid.

- (9) The provision of an Independent Information Service should be a financial responsibility of Cork County Council and City Corporation;
- (10) The Information Service should be staffed with Traveller participation.

Ogra Chorcaí and Cork Youth Federation

It is recommended to these two youth organisations in Cork that:

- (1) Special initiatives are developed to ensure that the youth service is accessible to young Travellers;
- (2) The Blackpool Youth Club, established by a group of Travellers, should be given ongoing support financially and in terms of consultation and training;
- (3) Traveller groups such as the TVG are assisted in the reaching their objectives, for example, to continue to support activity days for children being run by TVG;
- (4) That special initiatives within the youth sector be developed, focused on settled people, to improve Traveller access.

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Appendix I

Group Interviews with Traveller Women

Date: 18th August, 1993

Venue: Annexe, U.C.C.

(Information to be gained from interviews).

Purpose of interviews is to gain an understanding from the women as to how they use services available to Travellers:

- (1) To discover how adequate the services are;
- (2) To draw from the women where they feel they need different services/where existing services can be changed/improved.

Focus

Was to let the people discuss services.

Objective

Was to gain an analysis from the womens' perspective into services in the following sectors: Accommodation, Health, Income Maintenance, Voluntary Organisations, Discriminations, Culture, Family Support, Education, Youth Service, and Employment.

Individual interviews with Travellers followed this same format.

Appendix II

Questionnaire:

Service Providers for The Travelling Community in the North Lee Area, Cork

- (1) What is your job description?
- (2) How does it fit into the wider agency structure?
- (3) How long have you worked in this position?
- (4) Could you describe the level of contact you have with members of the Travelling Community?
- (5) What are the basic needs that this agency tries to meet for the Travelling Community?
- (6) How well do you think the above needs are being met?
- (7) Do you feel that there are needs specific to the Travelling population, not experienced by settled people?
- (8) Does the service you provide to Travellers differ in any way to that which you provide to individuals/families from the settled population?
- (9) Generally do you see the Travelling People's way of life as being very different to that of the settled community?
- (10) Do you feel Travellers experience discrimination in Ireland today?
- (11) In your experience, do Travellers you are working with appear to have particular needs that are not being catered for?
- (12) If so do you see any way in which these needs could more effectively be met?
- (13) Why do you feel these needs are not currently being addressed?
- (14) What do you see as the main problems experienced by members of the Travelling Community in Ireland today?
- (5) What are the main causes of this/these problem(s)?
- (16) Do you feel that the service you provide improves the quality of life for members of the Travelling Community? If so, what way(s)?
- (17) Do Travellers have any input into the design/delivery of the service you provide?
 - (a) If yes - how;
 - (b) If no - why?
- (18) Do you see the need for any changes in the future in the service(s) you provide?

ISBN 0 9522903 0 8