



TRAVELLER CULTURE AND IDENTITY PROGRAMME



Bio

Irish Travellers have been recognised as an indigenous ethnic minority group in Ireland since 2017, yet their way of life and cultural contributions to Ireland have been excluded from Irish history, culture and society until very recently. Much of the time, Irish Travellers are not represented in a positive way in the mainstream media. Due to the difficulties which arise from living in a society which views them negatively, many Irish Travellers feel the need to conceal their identity. This means that it is difficult for Travellers to openly challenge the way that they are represented. Through the TCIP, we hope to educate non-Travellers about some of the positive aspects of Irish Traveller life, and also help Irish Travellers to feel proud of their identity.

Aims of the Programme

The Traveller Culture and Identity Programme (TCIP) is designed to inform and educate participants about aspects of Irish Traveller History, Irish Traveller Culture and the issues which affect Irish Travellers Today. It is designed to be a useful and creative resource for Travellers and non-Travellers alike. It is an attempt to represent Irish Travellers and their lives in a balanced and non-stereotypical way, using material which has been developed and approved by a steering group consisting of a majority of Irish Travellers, from a range of different backgrounds, genders, ages and LGBTQI+ status. Therefore, it is our belief that Irish Travellers should deliver the TCIP. Furthermore, it would be impossible to represent every detail and variety of Irish Traveller history, culture and life today within the scope of this programme.

Objectives

By the end of the programme, participating individuals and organisations will be able to:

- Recognise and describe the most important aspects of Traveller culture, identity and history
- Recognise and challenge common Irish Traveller stereotypes or misinformed ideas about the community
- Increase participation of Irish Travellers in their services
- Adapt services and resources to make them more culturally appropriate for Irish Travellers
- Accept that Irish Travellers, and their culture and history, need to be recognised as valuable on their own terms. 'Our Traveller community is an integral part of our society for over a millennium, with their own distinct identity - a people within our people.' Taoiseach Enda Kenny stated this in 2017 following the formal recognition for Travellers as a distinct ethnic group within the Irish State.

Outcomes

Having access to a training programme that can be delivered creatively will address some of the above identified challenges. This programme will also give members of the Traveller community and service providers an opportunity to gain an in-depth knowledge and understanding of what sometimes can be a complex subject, with varied opinions and experiences on issues surrounding Traveller ethnicity and culture. In the words of one steering group member: “We can tell the story of our people. We can bring our culture to life.” However, at the same time, we must also embrace the diversity which is contained within Irish Traveller communities, and not limit the representation of Travellers to only the materials contained within the TCIP.

On completion of this programme PARTICIPANTS will:

1. Have a broader and more comprehensive understanding of the Traveller community in general and specifically from a service provider perspective.
2. Develop a level of knowledge that will enhance and inform workers interactions with individuals and groups from the Traveller community in their local areas.
3. Introduce knowledge regarding the important differences between Irish Traveller, Scottish Traveller, Gypsy, Romany, and Roma communities and their cultures, languages and origins that will support the learning of participants with the aim of inspiring best practice and improving service delivery. (See the FAQ section for a guide to the different groups.)
4. Introduce to participants examples of community members who are role models and can challenge the prevailing negative stereotypes of members of the Traveller community, which are consistently presented in media and popular press.
5. Establish a baseline of knowledge and support that can be accessed by those who need this information to carry out their work.