

## What does the future hold for Traveller Employment and Enterprise?

*A public employment eco-system which meets the needs of Travellers Post Covid 19*

On July 21<sup>st</sup> 2020 the SSGT Traveller Employment and Enterprise Policy Programme (TEEPP) held an online seminar to discuss Traveller employment issues post Covid. There were 28 attendees, a mix of local and national Traveller organisations, regional DEASP officers, INOU, BITC, ICTU and PAS. Presentations were given by Brid O' Brien, policy officer in the INOU on Post Covid National Employment Strategy and by Sinead Burke SSGT policy officer on the progress of NTRIS Employment and Enterprise Actions. The event was chaired by SSGT Trustee, Anna Lee. Copies of presentations can be requested by contacting [sinead@ssgt.ie](mailto:sinead@ssgt.ie)

This table gives a snap shot of current Traveller Enterprise and Employment-specific initiatives around the country:

### Traveller Specific Enterprise & Employment Initiatives and Research Oct 2020

| Organisation  | Activity  |
|---|---|
| <a href="#">Cavan Traveller Interagency Group</a>     | Cavan County Local Development on behalf of the Cavan Traveller Interagency Group completed a needs assessment for young Travellers in 2019, " <a href="#">An Inclusive Cavan</a> ". It covers issues around employment and unemployment.   |
| <a href="#">Crossbar Bikes</a>                        | Crossbar Bikes is a social enterprise initiative, managed by Clondalkin Travellers Development group. It offers an affordable bike repair service to the general public and has an agreement with Gardaí in the area that bikes that have not been reclaimed by their owners after three years are offered to Crossbar to repair, clean and sell at a reasonable price. They also repair and make electric bikes/scooters and sulkies. The project is part funded by the Department of Justice and Equality under the Special Initiatives for Travellers (SIT). |
| <a href="#">Dept. of Justice and Equality (DJE)</a>   | The DJE plan to host 4 Traveller internships starting in January 2021. Positions will be 2 x executive officers and 2x clerical officers and will last for one year.  |
| <a href="#">Galway Traveller Movement</a>             | GTM runs two social enterprises, <a href="#">Bounce Back Recycling</a> (3 employees) and <a href="#">First Class Insulation</a> (8 employees).  |
| <a href="#">Involve</a>                               | Involve is a provider of youth work services throughout the country and has recently completed two pre-employment programmes for young Travellers in Ballina and Roscommon.   |
| <a href="#">ITM</a>                                   | ITM are the only national membership based Traveller organisation on the island of Ireland. They have an employment subgroup of ITM members who convene to discuss and address Traveller employment by identifying opportunities and areas they can work on and build on positive practice already in place.  |
| <a href="#">Co Kildare Leader Partnership</a>         | CKLP published its <a href="#">County Kildare Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2019-2023</a> and was the first county to do so. It has employed a worker for its <a href="#">Kildare Roma Employment Support Programme</a> and a Traveller development worker who is seconded to Kildare Traveller Action.   |
| <a href="#">Kilkenny Traveller Community Movement</a> | A report " <a href="#">An Examination into the Barriers to Employment for Travellers in Kilkenny</a> " was completed in February 2020. KTCM 2020.   |
| <a href="#">Longford Community Resources</a>          | LCRL employs a Community Development Worker with Travellers who encourages Travellers to participate in employment activities and services and to work collectively together in challenging existing inequalities which can have a negative impact on Traveller health and wellbeing.   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <a href="#">Louth Leader Partnership</a>           | Louth Leader Partnership are in the pre-development stages of looking at the establishment of a Traveller and Roma Interagency Group and a Traveller Enterprise Program.  |
| <a href="#">Meath Travellers Workshops</a>         | MTW has long-term plans to open a National Traveller Heritage Park on land bequeathed to the group. They are working with the Probation Service to access Kick Start funding to start an agri-social enterprise and are currently running a garden project on land.   |
| <a href="#">Roscommon Traveller Health Project</a> | The Traveller Health project runs a small social enterprise “Fidget Blankets” making sensory blankets for children and people with autism. It employs 3 women for 6 hours per week.<br>A Roscommon Leader Partnership report on local barriers to employment for Travellers is due to be published soon.  |
| <a href="#">Shuttleknit</a> , Wicklow              | Shuttleknit is a knitting and sewing social enterprise employing 11 staff, 8 of whom are from the Travelling community.   |
| <a href="#">Revamp Kingdom Furniture</a>           | Kingdom Furniture Revamp is Kerry’s leading furniture upcycling project as well as retailer, specialising in the sales and renewing of home furnishings including sofas, units, TV Stands, sideboards and wardrobes. It employs 14 people on TUS and CE scheme of which 8 are from the Travelling community. The project is managed by North, East and West Kerry Leader Partnership. |

### Other Traveller Labour Market Activation Supports

1. There are 14 specific **Traveller and Roma Community Employment** schemes in operation and Travellers also engage in 60 other mainstream CE projects. In response to a Dáil Question in 2019 it was reported there were 200 Travellers employed CE. CE schemes capture ethnicity due to Travellers having different eligibility criteria. Fears have been expressed that post-Covid 19 arrangements in organisations may mean a loss of CE places due to the need for social distancing and needing more space in offices.
2. **Special Initiatives for Travellers (SIT)** focuses on job-ready Travellers and supports their access into employment and enterprise development. The SITs transferred from the Department of Social Protection to the Department of Justice and Equality in 2015 and funding allocated to the initiatives in 2019 was €410,000.

There are seven SIT locations around the country:

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Meath        | 2 officers job-sharing, based in EmployAbility Service, Navan.                                    |
| Cork (South) | 1 part-time officer, based in EmployAbility Service, Cork City.                                   |
| Cork (North) | 1 part-time officer, based in EmployAbility Service, Cork City.                                   |
| Clare        | 1 officer, reporting to Clare Local Development Company, Ennis.                                   |
| Donegal      | 1 officer, reporting to Donegal Local Development Company, based in Letterkenny and Ballyshannon. |
| Kerry        | 1 officer, based in EmployAbility Service, Tralee.  |
| Dublin       | Crossbar Bikes operating as a Social Enterprise, Clondalkin                                       |

## **SSGT TEEPP Report Recommendations**

In May 2019 SSGT published [‘Mincéir Gruber Malaid Streed, What next for Traveller Employment’](#). This report explores why low numbers of Travellers access and progress through education, training and labour market settings. It also examines the lack of visibility of Travellers within much of our education, employment and inclusion policies. The objective was to contribute to knowledge on how and why high numbers of Travellers are unemployed, to reflect the current policy context and to make some recommendations.

The recommendations from the SSGT report are published below.

### **Recommendations for Action in Employment and the Traveller Economy**

1. Where there are higher numbers of unemployed Travellers (both urban and rural) Intreo offices should set up a mechanism to analyse current Traveller engagement and progression in their service and explore how this could be enhanced with collaboration and appropriate referral. Actions areas could include:
  - Mapping the numbers and pathways of unemployed Travellers.
  - Reviewing the service’s current approach to engaging with this group.
  - Interrogating how and if their business processes are conducive to engaging with this group.
  - Setting specific local targets to improve the quality of Traveller engagement and progression.
  - Setting appropriate indicators at local level to measure successful outcomes (referrals, progression and completion).
2. LES offices which have successfully engaged with Travellers on an individual basis should share their specific learning on what works to encourage Travellers into their service and create a ‘how to’ manual / guideline which would encourage other LES to replicate their methods.
3. LEOs should develop specific initiatives which support the development of the Traveller economy and enable social enterprise.

### **Recommendations for Action in Training**

4. All relevant agencies should collaborate to create specific Traveller apprenticeship projects for example in transport/haulage, tourism/hospitality and construction. The initiatives should encourage the participation of Traveller women and be mindful of the local employment context and individual interests and skills.
5. Course provision offered to Travellers must be expanded to raise expectations, to capture the interest of Traveller students and to meet the needs of employers.
6. ETBs should liaise more intensively with local employers to meet their needs by developing targeted initiatives for Travellers which could be designed and delivered collaboratively.
7. The design of actions and initiatives in training and employment should be gender-proofed to take account of barriers to participation of Traveller women, such as access to culturally competent affordable childcare.

### **Recommendation for Action in the Public Service**

8. A national action plan to mainstream Traveller employment across all facets of the public service should be established, with targets set for all relevant agencies.

### **Recommendation for Action in the Social Inclusion Programmes**

9. SICAP organisations should ensure Travellers are aware of self-employment and social enterprise opportunities and there should be a high degree of flexibility for providers to facilitate local context and conditions. These actions should be underpinned by more ambitious targets for both Traveller participation in and outcomes from these supports.

### **Recommendation for Action in National Policy**

10. Cognisance should be taken of the particular needs of Travellers in all employment policy including Future Jobs Ireland, Pathways to Work and implementation of the public sector duty. There is also a need to gender-proof policy in relation to Traveller women.
11. Specific targets should be set across all policy proposal areas and incorporate mechanisms to measure outcomes for Travellers.

### **Recommendations on Monitoring Implementation of the NTRIS**

The following recommendations are offered to facilitate effective and transparent monitoring of the NTRIS implementation plan:

12. The Department of Justice and Equality should establish and lead a NTRIS Implementation Working Group. It should consist of senior officials from the various Departments, agencies and bodies involved in the delivery of the strategy, along with a sub group of the NTRIS Steering Group. This Working Group should have responsibility for the timely delivery and ongoing monitoring of the strategy. The Working Group should report quarterly to the Minister of Justice and Equality and the NTRIS Steering Group on progress and challenges which emerge.
13. The NTRIS Implementation Working Group should set up a clear monitoring matrix, as soon as the Departmental targets are agreed. This monitoring matrix will facilitate transparent, effective monitoring of progress in all areas. It should be broken down into policy goals, objectives, measures, actions, outputs, outcomes and timelines. This matrix must clearly show lines of accountability.
14. The Department of Justice and Equality should make sure that a distance travelled approach<sup>1</sup> is used to measure progress and performance and that flexible responses emerge as the actions and outcomes unfold.
15. The Department of Justice and Equality should publish detailed progress on the monitoring framework on a quarterly basis on its website.
16. The NTRIS Implementation Working Group should report within its own structures and to the most appropriate Oireachtas Committees.

---

**St Stephen's Green Trust, PO Box 950, Newbridge, Co Kildare**  
**Tel: (045) 480666; email: [sinead@ssgt.ie](mailto:sinead@ssgt.ie); website: [www.ssgt.ie](http://www.ssgt.ie)**

St Stephen's Green Trust is a company limited by guarantee not having a share capital, registered in Dublin, Ireland. Registered company number: 447527. Registered office: 75 Weston Park, Churchtown, Dublin 14. CHY number 10449. Charities Regulatory Authority number 20026547.  
 Directors: Donal O'Brien (Chair); Jordan Campbell; Dr Avila Kilmurray; Anna Lee; Dr Mary Murphy; Stephen Rourke.

---

<sup>1</sup> Distance travelled in this context refers to the progress made in achieving soft outcomes that lead towards sustained employment or associated hard outcomes as a result of participating in an initiative or service and against an initial baseline set on joining it.