

TRAVELLER EDUCATION
INTO Policies and Proposals Updated

CONTENTS

- Background
- Introduction
- Pre-schools for Traveller Children
- Teacher Education and Training
- Traveller Parental Role and Involvement
- Curriculum and Interculturalism
- Involvement in Primary Schools and Supports
- Allocation of Extra Resources and Supports
- School Development Planning
- Post-Primary Transfer and Retention, and Further Progression
- Second Chance / Adult Education Initiatives for Travellers
- Other Challenges:
 - Transport
 - Nomadism
 - Research
 - Roma Children

Background

Following INTO Congress 2003, the CEC decided to establish a Working Group to review INTO policy on Traveller Education.

The Working Group had its first meeting in June 2003 and met on four occasions. In order to help with its work, the Group was addressed by a representative of Pavee Point at its December 2003 meeting, and submissions from teachers (in particular from resource teachers of Travellers) were sought and received through a notice in *InTouch* in December 2003. The members of the Working Group were:

Ann McMahan, Limerick
Ann Rhatigan, Tallaght
Owen McCarthy, Dublin
Ann Boyle, Galway
Sheila Nunan, CEC
Tom O'Sullivan, Assistant General Secretary
Noel Ward, Senior Official

The Working Group acknowledges the input (by way of submission or consultation) of Pavee Point, of Resource Teachers of Travellers (RTTs) in Galway, Kildare, Dublin and Limerick, and of school staffs in two schools in Dublin and Mayo.

The Group began its work in the context of a number of developments including the need to update INTO policy which had previously been set out comprehensively in *Travellers in Education* (1992).

Also forming parts of the background of this review are:

- The increased momentum towards and achievement of integration and age appropriate placement of Travellers, and other children with educational needs, in mainstream primary schools;
- The development and expansion of the Traveller Education Service, including the Visiting Teacher for Travellers (VTT) Service which has taken in second level schools as part of its remit; and
- A range of other reports including the *Report of the Taskforce on the Travelling Community* (1995), the issue of *Guidelines on Traveller Education in Primary Schools* (DES 2002), and new legislative developments in education and equality.

The INTO Working Group became aware at an early stage that the DES was also engaged in the development of a five year Traveller Education Strategy, an exercise which it aims to complete by June 2004. The Working Group intends that its work will, in addition to setting out an updated statement on INTO policy, contribute towards the development of the DES strategy, although the INTO rejects emphatically the basis of the DES strategy development "that there will be little or no capacity to increase expenditure in this area in 2004".

Introduction

Traveller education has developed and expanded in the past ten to fifteen years. The level of enrolment at primary level has increased substantially, to the extent that enrolment rates of Traveller children are close to those of the settled community. Progress has also been made in terms of outcomes for Traveller children in primary education. This is shown not least by the very substantial increase in transfer to second level education, and to a much lesser extent through the participation of a small number of Traveller students at third level.

That being said, there remain serious questions about educational disadvantage to be answered in respect of Traveller children. Seriously inadequate living conditions still militate against regular attendance or success in school, and measures of educational achievement indicate that much remains to be done to raise achievement levels among Traveller children.

Our aim must be to secure top quality education for all Traveller children, to include outcomes (in terms of transfer to further levels and success rates) on a par with those of the settled community.

In addition, it is important that their experiences in education reinforce the unique and distinctive culture of the Traveller community. The development of intercultural education on a cross-curricular basis in all our schools will, if properly supported, assist in the recognition of the value of Traveller culture, as it will assist to recognise and foster the culture and cultural aspirations of all groups in society.

The opportunities to maximise the benefit which Traveller children derive from school are now supported by a legal framework. The Education Act 1998, the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Equal Status Act 2000, all support schools to promote equality and combat discrimination. Membership of the Traveller community is named in the Equality Legislation as one of the nine grounds on which discrimination is prohibited.

In reviewing Traveller education in recent years, it is appropriate to acknowledge that substantial additional resources have been devoted to this area. Nonetheless, a number of anomalies persist in relation to the provision of DES support to schools, a matter addressed further below.

It is also recognised that the question of the best use of available resources should be addressed and reviewed regularly. There are also questions regarding how education structures respond to need in the area of Traveller education. These include whether there should be a dedicated Traveller Education Unit in the Department of Education and Science, the need to develop a career structure for Visiting Teachers for Travellers, and to improve substantially the accommodation, and the conditions of employment of teachers, in Pre-schools for Travellers.

In making the recommendations below, the Working Group wishes to emphasise that it supports INTO policy as set out in *Travellers in Education* (1992). The recommendations which follow are by way of update and by way of response to the developing situation regarding Traveller education.

Pre-Schools for Traveller Children

There are at present 52 Pre-Schools for Traveller children with a total enrolment of approximately 550 pupils. The Pre-Schools are managed by a variety of voluntary bodies and located in a wide range of settings. Whereas the strong commitment of local management is acknowledged, there is a need for the DES to review the ad-hoc approach to establishment and management.

It is acknowledged that Traveller children benefit from attendance at such pre-schools. The National Evaluation Report on Pre-Schools for Travellers recommended that new Pre-Schools should be located in or adjacent to primary schools.

The INTO endorses this recommendation and views it as a positive step towards integration. The allocation and redesign of classrooms to provide an appropriate learning environment needs to be addressed in this context.

The INTO recommends:

- That teachers in Travellers Pre-Schools should be facilitated in acquiring an appropriate level of qualification, taking into account prior learning. Courses should be offered on a modular, part-time basis. A recognised course should be developed and offered to the teachers. Future employees should have a recognised teaching qualification.
- Teachers in Traveller Pre-Schools should be entitled to the same conditions of service as those which pertain to primary teachers in relation to salaries, pensions, holiday entitlements, working practices and management structures.
- Pre-school teachers should receive their full salary directly from the DES. An incremental scale and responsibility allowances should be part of the conditions of employment.
- Classroom assistants, fully funded by the DES in line with their counterparts in primary schools, should be appointed to all Pre-Schools for Travellers and those classroom assistants now in place should be offered training as necessary.
- Implementation of the strong recommendation of the National Evaluation Report (2003) on the need for guidelines on the composition, responsibilities and work of management committees.
- Visiting Teachers of Travellers should develop their role in relation to Traveller Pre-Schools, in order to incorporate ongoing support for teachers and help to develop links between parents and pre-school.
- Equipment grants paid to Traveller Pre-Schools should be increased in line with the grant paid to Early Start provision, and there should be a phased introduction of Early Start standards not only in relation to grants but also regarding accommodation, supports and management.
- Transport should be made available for children attending Traveller Pre-Schools when required. Such transport should be organised in such a way as not to erode

the three-hour school contact hours, and to include appropriate supervision on the journey.

- Each Pre-School should be supported in drawing up a programme of meaningful contact and involvement of parents. Parents should be involved in the processes of education in the Pre-Schools in as far as possible and appropriate.
- DES inspectors should play a more active role in visiting, supporting and advising teachers in the Pre-Schools, and in evaluating the operation of the Pre-Schools.

Teacher Education and Training

The success of the integration of Traveller students is dependent on high-level training for those involved in the process. The lack of priority afforded to cultural concepts in teacher training and the failure to support Resource Teachers for Travellers has ensured that intercultural ideas and methodology have not percolated through the education system. As the DES moves to integrate its support systems, the case for training becomes even stronger. Unfortunately, intercultural education remains a low priority in pre-service training and in influential policy documents such as the review of teacher education, *Preparing Teachers for the 21st Century* (2002).

In the matter of in-service, some annual training is currently available to Visiting Teachers for Travellers but training for Resource Teachers for Travellers is sporadic and uncoordinated. In-service intercultural training is unavailable to the remainder of teachers who rely on attending, in their free time, limited courses provided by organisations such as the INTO.

Teachers with direct responsibility for Traveller Children previously had access to the Intensive Diploma in Special Education, and in more recent years to the less intensive Diploma in Remedial Education.

As mainstreaming has occurred, little thought was given to devising intercultural training for teachers of Traveller children. Jean-Pierre Liegeois, a central figure in promoting equality for the Roma/Traveller population of Europe, identifies the element of structural racism inherent in such practices: “phasing out specialised school structures without ... providing special training inevitably means encouraging a policy of assimilation” (Liégeois, JP: *Roma, Gypsies Traveller*, Strasbourg, Council of Europe Press, 1994, p.40). Inclusion of Traveller children in mainstream classes pre-supposes an expertise on the part of support teachers to provide back up and information to class teachers. Unless expertise is developed, inclusion can be seen as “another assimilationist...tactic which would deny their (Travellers) existence as a cultural minority by lumping them together with all the other groups considered poor, marginalised, maladjusted and deprived” (Liégeois, JP: *Interface 39*, Spring 2001, p.2).

Teacher training remains a foundation stone of minority, intercultural and anti-racist education. It is not just teachers who require such training. At present, the lack of training of officials and the Inspectorate allows a situation to exist where even those working directly with Traveller education may fail to facilitate intercultural initiatives.

Accordingly, the INTO recommends:

- That the DES, in order to recognise the urgent requirements of integration policy, arrange with the teacher education colleges and Education Centres to provide accessible, modular, post-graduate training to serving teachers in intercultural education and related fields.
- That all pre-service education contain a set of compulsory modules in intercultural education, related to, as a minimum, intercultural resources, curriculum, equality processes in schools and minority profiles and needs.
- That induction courses of at least one week's duration be provided for those with direct responsibility for Traveller and minority education.
- That training in the principles and practice of intercultural education be made available to those delivering teacher training, to the Inspectorate and to those directly involved in Traveller and intercultural education in the DES.
- That training be made available for Travellers interested in contributing to the Traveller education process.
- That the DES ensure that teachers with expertise in the area of intercultural education are released from normal duties to participate in the development and delivery of such courses.

Traveller Parental Role and Involvement

The first object of the Education Act 1998 (Section 6) is stated as "to give practical effect to the constitutional rights of children, including children who have a disability or who have other special educational needs, as they relate to education". The Objects go on to refer to provision of an appropriate level and quality of education, to promote the rights of parents to send their children to a school of the parents' choice, to promote effective liaison and consultation between schools and parents, and to promote equality of access to and participation in education. The Act also provides that the admissions policy of schools provide for "maximum accessibility" to the school (Section 9m).

Section 9g of the Education Act sets out the right of parents "to have access in the prescribed manner to records kept by that school relating to the progress of that student in his or her education". Section 20 obliges a board of management to establish procedures to inform parents of students in a school "of matters relating to the operation and performance of the school". In addition, Section 22.2.b requires the principal and teachers regularly to evaluate students, and to "report the results of the evaluation to the students and their parents". The Act also provides for the establishment of a Parents' Association, which "shall be open to all parents of students of that school" (Section 26.1).

In relation to Parents' Associations, a traditionally disadvantaged group such as the parents of Traveller children is likely to be inhibited from taking an active role in the Parents' Association.

The INTO recommends :

- That positive action measures be put in place in order to encourage the active involvement of Traveller Parents and Parents Associations. This is a role which should be promoted by the National Parents' Council as well as by the Department of Education and Science. It will require, in the first instance, meetings involving Traveller parents in order to engage in dialogue regarding the operation and purposes of a Parents' Association and to encourage their active participation therein.
- That the DES draft, in consultation with Visiting Teachers for Travellers, an information booklet, augmented by a proactive advisory approach on the part of Visiting and Resource teachers, for the parents of Traveller children setting out the role of Parents Associations and Boards of Management, and inviting Traveller parents to take a role in each. It should be seen as part of the role of the RTT to encourage such participation.

Similar issues arise in relation to the participation of Traveller parents in school boards of management. Boards elected in 2003 will remain in office until 2007. A programme, indicated above, will also be essential in order to encourage further involvement by Traveller parents in boards of management of schools. Such a programme will have to outline the functions of a board, the expectation of a member of a board of management, and the responsibilities associated.

The INTO recommends that:

- In drafting invitations to Traveller parents to participate in Parents' Associations and Boards of Management, and in formulating a related programme of dialogue, regard is had to the guidelines produced by the National Adult Literacy Agency.
- Patrons take the responsibility to ensure that significant Traveller populations are represented in Boards of Management of local schools.

Curriculum and Interculturalism

The revised primary curriculum (DES, 1999) provides a teaching tool with which to approach intercultural objectives. While there is a general acceptance of the aims of inclusivity and respect for diversity, the Department of Education and Science states that "substantive treatment of the issue is missing" (DES: *Promoting Anti-Racism and Interculturalism in Education – Draft Recommendations*, Dublin, Government Publications, 2002, p.15). The National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) is currently introducing intercultural curriculum guidelines but this is only one strand of a programme that is required to establish an inclusive education system. Guidelines without training will be almost worthless.

There has been a number of initiatives which have made a substantial contribution to curricular resources in this area, such as Amnesty's "Lift-Off" programme and INTO's Intercultural Guidelines. There is a need to promote and develop such anti-racist cross-curricular initiatives.

The implementation of an intercultural curriculum, which aims for equal participation and outcomes for minorities, depends not only on the content of the curriculum but on the context in which it is delivered. While guidelines such as those of the INTO provide

a basis for an anti-racist and intercultural approach, a formal and uniform method of making diversity inventories needs to be devised.

The undertaking of a diversity inventory in schools, to include staff, management, children and parents, should determine both the extent of diversity and attitudes towards diversity, as a necessary precursor to implementing an intercultural curriculum locally. Such an inventory will also contribute to a national body of data enabling research on outcomes for different groups within society.

Accordingly, the INTO recommends:

- That the DES identify and develop intercultural resources, concentrating on existing high quality schemes.
- That the DES ensure the inclusion of minorities and minority culture in all curricular areas and all related literature.
- That the NCCA Intercultural Curriculum Guidelines be accompanied by in-service education for teachers in all schools.
- That the DES devise in consultation with the education partners a Model National Diversity Inventory to be used at local level, and that this become part of school planning.

Involvement in Primary Schools and Supports

School enrolment policies must ensure that a student is not denied a place because of their membership of the Traveller community. Such policies would be in line with legislation and with the outline enrolment policy devised by INTO and the principal management authorities.

The INTO supports the principle that Traveller parents must give their consent to pupils being assigned to Resource Teachers for Travellers.

Responsibility for Traveller pupils does not rest solely with the class teacher and it is important that all teaching and non-teaching staff are given opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of pupils in school.

The Group has examined the role of the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) in relation to Traveller education. Some work has already been done towards developing appropriate testing and profiling instruments for use with Traveller children. This project was developed by NEPS and Visiting Teachers and presented to the Advisory Committee on Traveller Education.

The INTO recommends:

- That school enrolment policies should also have regard to DES guidelines on age appropriate class placement.
- That school enrolment policies include positive action to support pupils from Traveller backgrounds in education.
- That school Codes of Behaviour explicitly refer to equality legislation and require behaviour that respects diversity. The Code of Behaviour should also identify

action to ensure that harassment does not occur and the steps to be taken if it does occur.

- That policies in areas such as supervision, homework, outings, parent consultation and home liaison should be sensitive to the particular circumstances of Traveller pupils.
- That the NEPS/VTT/ACTE project or appropriate test instruments continue to be developed so that it/they can have wider use.
- That Traveller children with special needs get priority attention from NEPS to ensure resources are allocated.

The National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) has responsibility for implementing the Education Welfare Act. To support the objectives of the Act, NEWB has appointed a number of Education Welfare Officers (EWOs). These Officers will have a significant role to play in supporting school attendance for Traveller children. However, the service is not yet nationwide and will be limited initially to specific areas.

The INTO recommends:

- That EWOs give priority to Traveller pupils who are not in the school system.
- That a formal mechanism for identifying such children be agreed.
- That the EWO work closely with the Visiting Teacher Service at local level.
- Where a service does not exist, that an EWO can be assigned on an emergency basis to give priority to Traveller children.

Allocation of Extra Resources and Supports

A number of additional supports are in place in respect of Traveller Education. These include the pre-schools, the RTT and VTT services, provision for additional teaching hours at second level, extra capitation payments to schools, three Junior Traveller Centres under the VECs, and 28 Senior Traveller Training Centres. The Department of Education and Science estimates the total cost of additional expenditures at current values as being €41.16 million per annum. Some three-quarters of this expenditure is accounted for by the RTT service and by the Senior Traveller Training Centres.

In examining the allocation of the additional resources and supports, questions arise not just about the optimum allocation of those supports, but also regarding other supports which are not in place or which are inadequate. These include the failure to pay additional capitation in respect of Traveller children at primary level unless there is an RTT in place in the school. There is also the necessity to increase the capitation payment at primary level. The current disparity between capitation, in respect of students of under 12 years old (€259) and those of 12 and over (€472.50), illustrates the inadequacy of the funding in primary schools.

The role of the Resource Teacher for Travellers will undoubtedly be a key focus in any examination of the allocation of additional supports. In relation to the role of RTTs, the INTO makes the following observations and recommendations:

- Welcomes and acknowledges the enormous contribution made by the RTT Service (in co-operation with the Visiting Teachers for Travellers), to secure the involvement and integration of Traveller children in primary schools.
- Supports the continued role of the RTTs as an integration resource within primary schools, and recommends that the RTT be offered relevant, regular training opportunities by DES.
- Views the RTT in a primary school as part of the resource team within the school, with special but not sole responsibility for Traveller education.
- Believes that the RTT should be deployed by the school, in consultation with the VTT, in order to make best use of the resource.
- Regards the RTT as having a particular role in the area of intercultural education, and recommends that (on publication of the *NCCA Guidelines on Intercultural Education*) the RTT should play a lead role in dissemination of the principles and appropriate practices, on a cross-curricular basis, associated with intercultural education.
- Regards the continued involvement of the RTT service in educational support for Traveller children, in seeking to build the self-esteem of Travellers in education, and in taking on a flexible role of supporting Traveller families in school-related matters, as a key resource.
- Supports the involvement of the RTT in the area of liaison with post-primary schools, in order to encourage parents of Traveller children to enrol their children in post-primary schools and to provide other necessary supports.

The Visiting Teacher (VTT) service has made an enormous contribution to the positive developments in Traveller education over the years, as is widely acknowledged. The extension of the remit of VTTs to second-level education is one example of the success of the service. It should be a priority for the DES to secure the greatest benefit possible from the experience and expertise among the VTTs. Accordingly, the INTO recommends:

- That comprehensive consultation take place with the VTT service regarding the future development of both the service itself and of Traveller education more broadly.
- That the role of the VTT in relation to the Traveller Pre-Schools, as outlined earlier, be strengthened.
- That an agreed career structure be put in place, following negotiation, for the VTT service.

School Development Planning

The key mechanism for schools to equality proof their policies and actions is the School Development Plan. The Education Act requires schools to engage in the School Development Planning (SDP) process and in May 1999 the DES launched the SDP initiative to promote the process of planning in primary schools. A number of facilitators were appointed in order to support schools in the development of planning processes.

School planning covers administrative, organisational and curricular areas. Guidelines on Traveller Education were published by the DES in 2002 and included a range of useful suggestions that could form part of the planning process.

The INTO recommends:

- That schools should state their policies and how they will be implemented in areas dealt with earlier including enrolment policy, code of behaviour, organisational policies, and curricular policies.
- That the DES retain and replace SDP staff. A number of vacancies currently exist in the service which are weakening the capacity for school planning.

Post-Primary Transfer and Retention, and Further Progression

It is widely recognised that serious problems remain in respect of Traveller students transferring to, and remaining in, post-primary education until the stage of certification. A serious and sustained commitment is required over coming years to improve the transfer rate and to retain a great proportion of Traveller students.

In order to improve transfer and retention levels, the INTO recommends:

- That primary schools should be resourced so that they will be in a position to retain responsibility for tracking former 6th class pupils until the December following the completion of their primary schooling.
- That Resource Teachers for Travellers should be supported as a key resource to ensure the transfer to post-primary takes place.
- That resources be transferred from primary school to post-primary school (resources such as Special Needs Assistants and resource teaching hours) where appropriate.
- That access to the Leaving Certificate Applied programme be available in all second level schools.
- That career guidance advice be made available at an early stage to Traveller children in post-primary schools, in recognition of their particular disadvantage.
- That Gaeilge be regarded as a core subject, and that this be considered in planning any necessary withdrawal sessions at primary school level, since an inability to succeed in Gaeilge at second-level seriously limits ultimate career opportunities.

Much remains to be done also in the area of progression of Traveller students from post-primary into further education or employment/training. Currently, young Travellers make use of Youthreach, Senior Traveller Training Centres and community workshops which are easily accessible for many Travellers and seen by them as the only training opportunities open to them. Such opportunities need to be augmented by greater access to third level education and to other programmes.

Accordingly, the INTO recommends:

- That access officers with particular resources to deal with Traveller entrants be available, with particular responsibility for ensuring that Traveller students enter training/employment or third level education (such responsibilities could be shared between FAS and the Visiting Teacher Service, subject to discussion with these services), and that there be continued support for the HEA initiative on specific access programmes for Traveller students.
- Third level education access programmes should be devised by the third level institutions: TAP (Trinity Access Programme) should be examined as a model.
- Supports, including pre-employment courses, should be devised by FAS in relation to Travellers accessing employment.
- That Traveller organisations examine and make recommendations to the Traveller community on the cultural matter of early marriages and how this is a barrier to many female Travellers accessing training or further education.

Second Chance / Adult Education Initiatives for Travellers

For many members of the Travelling community who are parents, there is a striking need for second chance education in the light of the failures of the education system in respect of Travellers previously, and in assisting them as parents to support their children through the system.

In the light of this urgent need, the INTO recommends:

- That a link should be made between second-chance education and the lives of children.
- That there be more access to and funding for family learning programmes, including funding for participants. Such programmes may be run under the VECs with a focus on helping children who are in education. The Committee noted that such programmes had been piloted in Co. Clare and had proven successful.
- Access to professional childcare, which is fundamental to any second chance education initiatives.
- That FAS funding and regulations need re-examination in respect of Travellers in the light of their educational disadvantage and possible literacy difficulties, such re-examination to include flexibility regarding time limits on schemes.

Other Challenges

Transport

Teachers working with Travellers in education have expressed to the Group serious concerns about the operation of the transport scheme for Traveller children in schools. It is argued that provision of special transport reduces contact between home and school.

The INTO recommends:

- That a comprehensive review of present transport provision take place and that there be a phased withdrawal of special Traveller transport initiatives, in consultation with the VTTs in each area.
- That special transport provision to special schools for Travellers be ended.
- That transport for pre-school children be provided where necessary in accordance with principles outlined in the section above on “Pre-Schools for Traveller Education”.

Nomadism

It is necessary for education purposes to differentiate between nomadism and transience in the Travelling community. Many families (who are more at risk in terms of possible non-participation in education), with whom VTTs and schools come in contact, are constantly moved on because they have no permanent accommodation, either standard housing or proper serviced halting sites. This is especially the case in larger urban areas.

Nomadic families who have permanent bases, either standard housing or access to facilities, tend to travel at particular times of the year and for particular purposes, generally for trading. When compared with transient families, the children of nomadic families with permanent bases are more regular school attendees.

One of the greatest challenges in Traveller education for the coming years is the formulation and implementation of strategies to address adequately the educational needs of the children from nomadic families.

In responding to these challenges, the INTO recommends:

- That the Educational Welfare Board, as a matter of urgency, establish the number of Traveller children whose families are transient/nomadic.
- That access to and attendance in mainstream education be encouraged in the case of nomadic and transient families, and that the DES put in place a rapid response in terms of resourcing for these children, many of whom are interrupted learners.
- That the DES, in cooperation with the VTT service, put in place a plan to address adequately the needs of children whose education has been disrupted by transience and nomadism.
- That a panel of Resource Teachers for Travellers be established, based on the supply panel model, to move from school to school as children arrive in various areas.

- That DES examine, as a matter of urgency, the appropriateness of establishing mobile education units for nomadic/trader families who may only stay in an area for very short periods.
- That school enrolment policies make provision for nomadism and that DES rules on capitation funding be eased to support schools in responding to children of such families.
- That a tracking system, as envisaged under the Education Welfare Act, be put in place in order to vindicate children's right to an appropriate education.
- That sustained links be developed with the education areas in the UK.
- That a transfer of records be developed for use in both the Republic of Ireland and for transfer to the UK.

Research

Apart from records of enrolment and attendance of Traveller pupils, there is no structure in place to determine the outcomes of policy and practice. Educational strategies are evaluated only through unstructured, informal communication. Indeed, the Government recently found itself in the humbling position to have to state in a European Forum that after 30 years of Traveller education, it had "no data on literacy rates for Travellers" (Government of Ireland, 2001: *Report of Ireland to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*; para. 32).

The INTO recommends:

- That the DES undertake research to determine the value of current policy and practice in relation to education outcomes for Travellers.
- That DES evaluate policy on access, participation and outcomes in the light of related international practice.
- That DES evaluate literacy and numeracy data within a formal and continuous system of ethnic equality monitoring.

Roma Children

Travellers share many cultural similarities with the larger Roma/Gypsy community in values, traditions, nomadism and in their history of marginalisation and persecution. Nevertheless, it has been a continuous struggle at international level to maintain the inclusion of Travellers in Roma/Gypsy resolutions and initiatives in the Council of Europe, the European Union and the United Nations. That battle now appears to have been won and it is, therefore, disappointing to note that Roma children are not offered the same supports and benefits as Travellers in the education system in Ireland.

The INTO recommends:

- That Roma/Gypsy children be afforded the same supports and benefits as Travellers in our education system.

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