

## PAVEE POINT TRAVELLERS CENTRE

Pavee Point is a voluntary non-governmental organisation which is committed to the attainment of human rights for Irish Travellers. The group is a partnership of Travellers and the majority population working together to address the racism and exclusion Travellers experience in society. It has been involved in direct work with Travellers since 1985.



PAVEE POINT  
Travellers Centre

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**COMMUNITIES CHALLENGING RACISM:  
CREATING AN ANTI-RACIST COMMUNITY ORGANISATION.**



# Introduction

**T**his 15-minute video and user booklet has been produced to enable Community Development Projects and Family Resource Centres to ensure their work is anti-racist in both its ethos and practice.

It is recommended that your Management Committee watches this information video with a view to developing an Anti-Racism Code of Practice.

An Anti-Racism Code of Practice is essential for any community organisation to try to ensure equal outcomes for all members of the community.

## How to use this video and booklet

**T**his video and booklet should be used by a facilitator, who has familiarised him/herself with the video and booklet in advance.

The video features real life examples of events that have occurred during the work of Community Development Projects. The video reproduces these scenarios and facilitates discussion at particular points. Relevant questions are raised during the video for viewers to consider. This booklet provides some notes for the facilitator and some definitions to help discussions.

The booklet also contains some guidelines for Management Committees in drawing up an Anti-Racism Code of Practice.

## Notes for Facilitator

**T**wo scenarios are presented in this video. Relevant questions are raised during the presentation of each of these scenarios. The video should be paused and a group discussion should take place at these points.

Please find questions below to help facilitate these discussions. Use a flip chart to record the points raised in the discussions.

# Scenario 1

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**T**ake a look at the following scenario and consider the questions raised. Immediately after the entire scenario is completed discuss the incident with the group and describe how it could be dealt with.

- **Who has power in this scene?**

The crèche worker, by virtue of her job, has power in this scene. It is sometimes difficult for people to realise the power they have. Even the fact that one is part of the majority/dominant population gives one a certain power.

With power come responsibilities and choices. How we use our power can determine whether one discriminates or not.

The crèche worker also has a prejudice against the Roma woman. This prejudice is based on negative stereotypes.

Prejudice simply means to 'pre-judge' before hearing or seeing the evidence.

The challenge is to be aware of our stereotypes and prejudice because they can have little to do with reality. We should not rely on them to make judgments as they can lead to discrimination.

When a person has the power to act upon their prejudice - discrimination can result.

**Prejudice + power (in action) = discrimination.**

When prejudice is based on the belief that one person is superior to another because of ethnic background this results in racism.

Racism is a distinct form of discrimination and exclusion faced by ethnic minorities. It is based on the misleading belief that some ethnic groups are inherently superior to others because of their ethnicity, skin colour or nationality.

**Prejudice + power + ideology of 'race' superiority = racism**

- **What do we mean by community?**

Communities are made up of a variety of people - people of different religious beliefs, different ages, people of different abilities and people of different cultural or ethnic backgrounds for example.

No community remains static. Movement of people into and around Ireland is not a new phenomenon. Membership of the community changes and people's roles within the community change. Diversity is the norm. This challenges us to accommodate difference.

- **What sort of outcomes can an Anti-Racist Code of Practice achieve?**

- ❖ Your work can be more inclusive of the community - minority ethnic groups, including Travellers, are part of the Community Development Programme and Family Resource Centres
- ❖ An Anti-Racist Code of Practice can help promote cultural diversity and make your organisation more representative of the community as a whole
- ❖ It can provide a clear expression of the ethos of your organisation

# Scenario 2

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- **How is discrimination expressed in this scene?**

In this scene Sean fails to see Traveller issues in the context of human rights or anti-racism.

Instead he is influenced by prejudiced views in society and wants to stay 'in' with his local residents.

Neither is Sean aware of the implications of using the organisation's resources to campaign against a Traveller halting site. This is due, partly, to the fact that he does not seem to be aware of the policies of the organisation.

Sean does not view himself as acting in a racist or discriminatory fashion.

Neither does Sean seem to be aware of the power he has, given his status within the community and within the community organisation.

It is often when we are not aware of our own prejudices and when we take our power for granted - that we risk being discriminatory or racist.

- **What would the consequences of Sean's actions be for the organisation and the way it is perceived, if unchallenged?**

If it was known that Sean was campaigning against a Traveller halting site - with the support of the Community Development Project or Family Resource Centre - people might think the organisation was anti-Traveller. People could feel encouraged to think that discrimination against Travellers could be justified in some way. This, in turn, could lead to promoting discrimination against Travellers or other minority ethnic groups. Negative impacts on people's quality of life and their human rights could ensue as a result of this behaviour.

The organisation might risk alienating members of minority ethnic groups from its work and it might risk alienating other anti-racist organisations in the area.

# What is Racism?

Racism is a specific form of discrimination and exclusion faced by minority ethnic groups in Ireland. It is based on the false belief that some 'races' are inherently superior to others because of different skin colour, nationality, ethnic or cultural background. Racism deprives people of their basic human rights, dignity and respect.

Racial discrimination is defined in Article One of the UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965):

*"In this Convention, the term "racial discrimination" shall mean any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life."*

## Next Steps

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**T**he following are questions to be addressed by the management committee on conclusion of the video

- 1 How would you go about drawing up an Anti-Racism Code of Practice?
- 2 How would you ensure that those in your project are educated about the Code of Practice?
- 3 What staff member in your project will be nominated to monitor the implementation of the code and ensure that it is brought to attention of volunteers, staff and management when necessary?
- 4 Who will be responsible for ongoing anti-racism training within the organisation?