PAVEE POINT
TRAVELLERS CENTRE

The Development of Appropriate Mechanisms
to Monitor Educational Access, Participation and
Outcome by Gender for Travellers –
the role of equality data mechanisms focusing on
ethnic and cultural identity

Final Report March 2007

Contents   **Page**

1. **Introduction to the project**

1.1. Pavee Point Travellers Centre applied to the Gender Equality Unit in the Department of Education and Science to carry out a project that would explore the most appropriate mechanism to ascertain on a continuing basis Travellers engagement with the education system. In Ireland a range of players including the Office for Social Inclusion, the Equality Authority, the High Level Officials Group, and the Disadvantage Educational Committee have noted that assessing Travellers progress within the educational system is difficult given the lack of data off which to work and evaluate policy developments and practice. As the recently published Traveller Education Strategy noted on page 84 "*In the education system, as in many other areas, data specific to Travellers are not collected at present for publication. The 2002 census is leading in this area.*" Pavee Point has always believed that it is important that data is not collected on Travellers alone but that data on ethnicity is collected as part of the broader data collection system. To this end the organisation has lobbied for the inclusion of an ethnic identifier question within the Census and other information systems so that good data could be built up on Travellers and other minority ethnic groups' issues.

1.2. Initially the focus of the project was:

1.2.1. *"To research how to ascertain the most appropriate method to monitor educational access, participation and outcomes for Traveller boys and girls, men and women. We will pilot an equality data mechanism inclusive of ethnicity in the administrative systems of a cross-section of education providers and co-relate it to data collected on gender.*

1.2.2. *To analyse the data generated and to make recommendations on data collection and education policy."*

1.3. After discussion within the Steering Group on the details of the project a number of questions within the project proposal were deemed to be inappropriate given the timeframe and current data levels. In particular that a statistical project could not answer 'what is the nature of Travellers' participation and outcomes within the education system?'; 'Is there a significant differential between their access, participation and outcomes and those of their gender and ethnic counterparts in the majority population.' It was noted that a project of this nature should identify and pilot a question and subsequently seek its inclusion in the mainstream data collected by the Department of Education and Science. And so the more detailed specific questions would be answered over time as the baseline data would start to emerge on a systematic basis. There was a feeling within the Steering Group that such questions should be asked and answered through a longitudinal study.

1.4. So it was decided that this work would be carried out through:

1.4.1. Building on the pilot health ethnic identifier question (conducted jointly by Pavee Point and the Department of Health and Children) and the Census ethnic question including a gender dimension;

1.4.2. Consultation with Travellers and other minority ethnic groups;

1.4.3. Identification, negotiation with and buy-in of education providers;

1.4.4. Piloting of the mechanism and its potential in the longer term to create available data on access, participation and outcomes; and,

1.4.5. Documentation and dissemination of the learning.

1.5. As an integral part of this project it was recognised from the start that to facilitate the development of more equitable education the principle of diversity should not only be included in the work of the educational body itself but also in the data collected in the system. To this end the project focused not only on the issues of ethnicity and culture but also its interplay with the issue of gender. Data on gender is collected within the education system at present. If the interplay of gender and ethnicity are seen as important then ultimately ethnic and cultural data should also be collected as part of the education administrative system. The European Union Monitoring Centre on Xenophobia and Racism noted in its report "Across all ethnic groups, females with a migrant or minority background generally do better than males, particularly at the primary and secondary level." (p V-VI) However, this project per se will not pursue these issues in any depth but will present a potential data mechanism that could feed into long-term analysis and development.

2. Methodology

2.1. The project commenced with background research on the issues of:

2.1.1. educational disadvantage and the data gaps to be addressed in this regard;

2.1.2. the explorations both at home and abroad for 'the inclusive school' and what it should inform its development;

2.1.3. how the issue of ethnicity within educational and other statistical systems are dealt with in countries like Great Britain and Australia.

2.2. Initially it was agreed by the Steering Group that Question 14 used in the 2006 Census on the respondent's ethnic and cultural background would be piloted. However, one member of the Steering Group raised issues around the limited nature of this question when asked in isolation and so the question was expanded to include a country of birth question; a language question; and a religious question. Given the gender dimension to the project a question in this area was asked as well as a question on the respondent's date of birth.

2.3. Given the Traveller specific nature of most adult education and alternative training provision to the community conducting a pilot ethnic and cultural question in this part of the education system was deemed as not useful at this stage of the project. And so the focus was placed on the formal education sector. Initially it was envisaged that two schools in Dublin would be approached a primary and second level believed that a focus on Dublin only would be too narrow and it was agreed to seek four schools: two primary; two secondary; two Dublin based; two based in smaller towns.

2.4. The Steering Group was very conscious that data collection can be a sensitive issue for many people and in particular in the area of identity. And so contacts with potential schools were identified initially through the Steering Group itself and then through the Visiting Teacher Service. Six to eight schools were considered for the project: five were approached and three participated in the end. Pavee Point provided an information flyer; a letter for   the parent's consideration; and the questionnaire itself for dissemination and collection. This report contains the findings and recommendations from all aspects of this pilot project.

3. Travellers' educational status

3.1. Travellers' educational status is considerably lower than that of their settled peers. The Census in 2002 revealed that for 67.8% of Travellers (whose full-time education has ceased), primary school education was the highest level of education they obtained and that 63.2% of Traveller children under the age of 15 had left school. The Census 2002 figures give the most comprehensive picture we have across a range of Traveller issues. This situation arises even though it has been acknowledged that inadequate data undermines good policy and practice development. In the Office for Social Inclusion's first annual report on the National Action Plan Against Poverty and Social Exclusion, it was noted that properly assessing the achievement of the Traveller education targets was hampered by a lack of systematic information.

3.2. In the Department of Education and Science's publication 'Guidelines on Traveller Education in Second-level Schools' (2002) it notes that 'School policies should facilitate Traveller enrolment.' However in terms of the issue of early school leaving it does not explicitly say what should be done though it does note that 'The monitoring and tracking of attendance, and liaising closely with families and local attendance committees where they exist, can have a significant impact.' Nor it is entirely clear how the National Education Welfare Board's role ties in with the issue of attendance and outcomes for Traveller children from the school system. In both this publication and the one focusing on the primary sector the importance of the school planning process seeking to be intercultural and inclusive is highlighted. The role of the school development process which seeks to successfully manage innovation and change within the school was also discussed.

3.3. "The promotion of equality has grown as a focus of public policy in Ireland in recent years." Good data is essential for all key players, including Travellers themselves, to get a handle on how these principles are feeding into practice on the ground and encouraging Travellers to maintain and develop their engagement with the formal education system.

3.4. Addressing exclusion demands a concerted effort across a wide range of issues not just the education sector. As Dr Felicity Armstrong, University of London at the joint INTO/EA conference on 27.3.04 on 'The Inclusive School' said "while we can start the process of developing an inclusive society in schools, there is much to be done in the community in terms of attitudes, education and practices, and at the level of legislation in order to safeguard the social and cultural life of Traveller communities.'" (p31) As the Equality Authority's publication 'Schools and the Equal Status Acts' notes "The inclusive school prevents and combats discrimination. It is one that respects, values and

accommodates diversity across all nine grounds in the equality legislation – gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community. It seeks to positive experiences, a sense of belonging and outcomes for all students across the nine grounds. Outcomes include access, participation, personal development and achieving education credentials." (p1)

3.5. In the Equality Authority's report 'Diversity At School' it was noted "There is no accurate record of Traveller attendance rates in compulsory education or on their performance compared with members of the settled community. Among the reasons for this is the fact that there has not been an agreed ethnic identifier question to date on school data. While there is information on the numbers that enrol, neither the rate of participation nor the levels of attainment are available. The absence of basic research and official statistics on the subject of Traveller participation and attainment is itself an indication of the lack of importance accorded to the education of Travellers." (p94)

Wider Policy Context

4.1. The issue of data and the impact of gaps in same on policy and practice developments is not only an issue from a Traveller perspective but it also one from a wider educational disadvantage and ethnic perspective.

4.2. In the Educational Disadvantage Committee's 2005 report 'Moving Beyond Education Disadvantage' the following definitions are outlined: *The Education Act defines educational disadvantage as "the impediments to education arising from social or economic disadvantage which prevents students from deriving appropriate benefit from*

education in schools." A more general definition sees educational disadvantage as "a situation whereby individuals in society derive less benefit from the education system than their peers" (Combat Poverty Agency, 2003)." (p1)

4.3. Though this quote focuses mainly on the issue of socio-economic disadvantage the core points are applicable to a range of issues including discrimination and exclusion experienced by minority ethnic groups. As the European Monitoring Centre on Xenophobia and Racism report on Migrants, Minorities and Education noted *"School attainment and the quality of education have a decisive impact on the pupil's future employment opportunities. Unfortunately, evidence gathered in this study shows that despite numerous endeavours to improve the educational accomplishments of migrants and minorities, for the most part, their achievements lag behind that of the majority groups."* (foreword, pIII)

4.4. Further on in the report 'Diversity At School' it is noted that *"Education legislation has identified equality as an important governing principle in the life of both schools and third-level institutions. Under the Education Act 1998 schools are required in their school plans to state the objectives of the school relating to equality of access and participation and to identify the measures that the school proposes to take to achieve these equality objectives."* (p106)

4.5. In the report of the Educational Disadvantage Committee 'Moving Beyond Education Disadvantage' a number of observations and recommendations are made that are important for this project.

    4.5.1. *"Develop a primary school pupil database to facilitate the identification and ranking of schools and pupils according to indicators of socio-economic and educational disadvantage."* Recommendation from EDC submission No 1 to Min ES (p6)

    4.5.2. *"Build a more comprehensive profile of pupils and their socio-economic situations across government departments and services; undertake a study to establish the kinds of data that should be held at school level, regional level and centrally on each pupil."* Recommendation from EDC submission No 2 to Min DES (p7)

4.6. Again the equality focus of these recommendations is socio-economic status but they are readily applicable to minority ethnic groups. As the EUMC's report also noted *"Direct discrimination and acts of racism appear to be less common in the field of education compared to other areas, such as employment or housing. However, indirect and*

institutional forms of discrimination often contribute to the reproduction of inequalities. Certain groups, such as Roma and Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers, Muslims from a variety of countries, African and Caribbean Blacks, or migrant labourers from Eastern European, African, and Asian countries, are more likely to experience racism and discrimination than others." (p123-124) Good data is crucial in building up a realistic picture so that policy and practice development and implementation will address the issues arising and produce concrete outcomes for students from these backgrounds.

4.7. The Educational Disadvantage Committee noted *"From our research and analysis we have identified a number of principles that we believe must inform the strategy for educational equality:*

    4.7.1. A rights-based approach to equality;

        4.7.1.1.   Inclusion of diversity;

        4.7.1.2.   Integration of strategies, structures and systems;

        4.7.1.3.   Coherence of provision;

        4.7.1.4.   Focused target-setting and measurement;

        4.7.1.5.   *Monitoring of outcomes and results."*   *(p27)*

4.8. With regard to data from an ethnic perspective the need for more consistent collection of ethnic equality data was identified in the Government's National Action Plan against Racism (NPAR) 'Planning for Diversity'[1]. This is the main policy instrument in this area of concern.

4.9. Under 2.7 of the NPAR there is a commitment to 'Inclusion through the development of a comprehensive approach to social and equality statistics'. The development of a comprehensive 'statistical and data framework focussing on social and equality objectives will assist in the process of setting targets and measuring progress in related areas'.

4.10. The need for such data is tracked throughout the NPAR, for example under measure 4.9.1 in the Plan is a commitment *"Develop disaggregated statistics/data on cultural diversity at all levels of the education system on a phased basis as part of a formal statistics/data strategy by the Department of Education and Science"*.

4.11. These commitments are consistent with the recommendations of the report of the National Statistics Board (NSB), which provides the rationale for a comprehensive national strategy on social and equality statistics[2]. Of further relevance is the Central Statistics Office study of the statistical potential of administrative records in six

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[1] Government of Ireland, (2005). The National Action Plan Against Racism 'Planning for Diversity'
[2] National Statistics Board, (2003). Developing Social and Equality Statistics.

government departments.[3]

4.12. The Equality legislation, in particular the Equal Status Acts 2000-2004 have also helped to inform and underpin the development of this paper. The Equality Authorities Report, Diversity at School' further called for an agreed ethnic identifier question on school data.

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[3] Central Statistics Office, (2003). The Statistical Potential of Administrative Records.

5. Learning from Abroad

5.1. In the United Kingdom ethnic data is collected in the educational system. As the Office for National Statistics notes in general *"The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 guards against discrimination and gives public authorities a general duty to monitor policy and service delivery for different ethnic groups. This duty encourages the collection of statistical data on ethnicity to assess the likely impact of services and policies on different ethnic groups and to monitor any adverse impact."* (p15)

5.2. While with regard to the issue of education and the implications of the Race Relations Act as amended in 2000 the Office for National Statistics notes *"Educational institutions bound by the general duty also have specific duties, as follow:*

   5.2.1. *Schools must assess the impact of all their policies on ethnic minority pupils, staff and parents. The emphasis here is on monitoring pupil's attainment levels, by their ethnic groups and*

   5.2.2. *Institutions of further and higher education must assess the impact of all their policies on ethnic minority students and staff. They must also monitor, by racial group, student admissions and progress, staff recruitment and career development."* (p16-17)

5.3. This information is collected when the child starts school. The Department for Education and Skills have provided a sample information leaflet explaining why this data is collected and how it will be used is sent to the parents. This leaflet is accompanied by a letter requesting the parents to complete the attached data collection form.

5.4. With regard to who identifies the child's ethnicity, the official advice given is that for children up to 11 years old their parents should identify their ethnicity; while for older children their own preference should be taken on board. This advice was given in particular with regard to children with a dual heritage.

5.5. This data is available only to the school itself; the Local Education Authority and the relevant government Department; and is not passed onto third parties. The primary reason for this is the issue of confidentiality and that ethnic data is seen as sensitive personal information.

5.6. The Office for National Statistics in its publication 'Ethnic Group Statistics' explores the rationale of collecting national and ethnic data together and advises against it: primarily for reasons of clarity and securing the best response rate.

5.7 Cross Border-border research has recommended that the UK legislation relating to positive statutory duties be considered in Ireland. (Watt, P. & F. McGaughey 2006) "Improving Government Services to Minority Ethnic Groups". This is also in line with commitments in the National Plan Against Racism to investigate positive duties based on experience in Northern Ireland.

5.8. However the learning from Australia's Equality Opportunity Commission would indicate that including a nationality question or a substitute one, for example, yours or your mother's country of birth, is important to capture the complexities of identity. Such an approach is particularly important as migrants can adopt the nationality of the host country. This will capture second and subsequent generations' identities; including their needs and issues to be addressed.

6. Building on the work to date

6.1. The collection of data and its use embody complex dynamics. It involves not just data collection but clear mechanisms for its analysis and application to a range of equality mechanisms. As Pavee Point in its publication 'Traveller Proofing – Within an Equality Framework' (2002) noted: *"In order to accurately Traveller proof, and develop a full understanding and corresponding policies and strategies to tackle the barriers and problems faced by the Traveller community full and accurate information is required. Information needs to be gathered through all stages of involvement within services and structures, including access, participation and outcomes. As part of a full and comprehensive understanding of issues, a system of ethnic equality monitoring needs to be developed and implemented so that information re: ethnic background can be collected, in an appropriate, sensitive and effective manner....It is only with the collection and collation of information re: ethnicity within an equality framework, that the notion of promoting a human rights culture or tackling issues such as racism and discrimination can be achieved. All agencies and service providers should collect this information, using trained staff and promoting an information strategy re the value and need for such an exercise."* (p8)

6.2. This education project is building on other work undertaken by Pavee Point and other agencies including the Department of Education and Science. Under the EU Integra project the research document entitled 'Equality Proofing Administrative Procedures' (1998) it was noted that:

6.2.1. The wider context should be taken into account when implementing administrative procedures;

6.2.2. Such work should focus on equality of outcome while focusing on monitoring; targeting; and impact assessment;

6.2.3. It is crucial to engage all of the key players in the design and delivery of such procedures;

6.2.4. Clarity is required as to the collection; collation and analysis of such data;

6.2.5. All of the key players must understand the rationale of such procedures and in particular their end use;

6.2.6. There is a need for both a bottom-up and top-down approach i.e. a positive interaction of the national and local developments;

6.2.7. Links to other policies and relevant targets important.

6.3. On p14 of Pavee Point's 'Traveller Proofing – Within an Equality Framework' (2002) it

was noted that:

6.3.1. All educational establishments would be required to include an equality section in their registration forms, which clearly states that the information gathered in that section is to be used for the sole purpose of promoting equality and addressing inequalities. In that section, to be completed only by those registering, they would identify to which ethnic or cultural group they belong.

6.3.2. The data generated by this question would be submitted with the other general data to the Department IT section. The relevant databases should include the necessary fields in order to collect, collate and disaggregate this data. This should be done in such a way as to enable tracking of progress through the education and training systems of members of any ethnic group, gender etc. The use of the PPSN was muted in this regard.

6.3.3. The disaggregated data would be then published regularly and systems put in place to bring the relevant stakeholders together to consult with them, to analyse and review the data, identify and plan actions to address the issues it throws up, set targets and review implementation of actions.

6.4. In two hospitals (Tallaght and the Rotunda) a study conducted by Pavee Point and the Department of Health and Children was undertaken entitled the 'Ethnicity Pilot Project' to collect information on the ethnicity of hospital patients. At the end of this study it was envisaged that the results would be evaluated to look at the possibility of collecting ethnicity information across the whole public hospital system. The Health Services Executive are rolling out an ethnic identifier across all their services in 2007 (as cited in the National Action Plan on Social Inclusion 2007-2013, Office for Social Inclusion, March '07) and the Health Research Board will be administering this data collection using a similar question from the Tallaght and Rotunda study.

6.5. Within the study ethnicity was defined as:

6.5.1. An ethnic group can be broadly defined as a group of people who share certain background characteristics such as common ancestors, geographical origin, language, culture and religion. This provides a distinct identity as seen both by members of the group and by others.

6.6. Four key principles were identified as important to ensure a good response rate to the study and they include:

6.6.1. Participation is voluntary;

6.6.2. Data collection is by self-identification only;

6.6.3. Information will be anonymous and under no circumstances will individual patients be identified;

6.6.4. Data will only be used for the purposes of reporting on the results of this pilot project.

6.7. To design the pilot question an earlier draft of this report was disseminated to the Steering Group for feedback and discussion. To tease out the issues arising members of the Steering Group met with others invited by the NCCRI in their offices in July and finalise the contents of the question. As agreed previously the question would build on the Q14 in the 2006 Census. And though the advice from Britain was not to include a national and ethnic question in the same questionnaire the meeting decided that the learning from Australia's Commission on Equality was more appropriate to an Irish context and that this approach was more consistent with the Census question for 2006 which asked about ethnic and cultural background. However in order to avoid confusion a country of birth question was asked: 'What is your country of birth? Give the country where your mother lived at the time of your birth'. The questionnaire contained in Appendix 1 was agreed at this meeting.

7. Survey Results

7.1. Given the presumed sensitivities about the issue of ethnicity it was decided to make contact with schools through the Steering Group itself. Three schools were identified: one in Dublin (second level); one in Clare (second level); and one in Mayo (primary). However, the Dublin school was not pursued as there had been a change of personnel in the School; and the Steering Group member who had approached them believed it was unfair to ask new staff to run with such a pilot when they were only establishing relationships with other staff, parents and pupils.

7.2. As the Steering group had advised that the pilot be run in four schools around the country rather than only two schools in Dublin, the Visiting Teacher Service working on the north side of Dublin were asked for their support in identifying two schools in Dublin. One second level school in the north west of the City was identified. Locating a

primary school proved to be more difficult; and though one school had initially agreed to participate they pulled out when more data on the nature of the project was provided.

7.3. Once the initial contact was made and participation in the pilot agreed to the project worker then took over maintaining that contact and working with the schools in rolling out the project. An information leaflet was developed (appendix 2) along with a letter to the parents seeking their support for the project (appendix 3). These two documents along with the questionnaire itself (appendix 1) were sent to the schools for their consideration and feedback. One school raised the issue of translation which had not been budgeted for – so it was back to the Steering group members with contacts in this area. The NCCRI got the letter translated in Polish and Lithuanian; one school got the letter translated locally into Urdu; and another school got it translated into Bosnian.

7.4. One of the schools took care of all the photocopying itself; Pavee Point undertook all the photocopying for one of the schools; and most of the photocopying for the other school except for the letters in languages other than English.

7.5. The survey was undertaken in mid-November and the response varied across the three schools from 4% to 79%. However, it should be noted that in the case of the school with a response rate of 79% the school issued a questionnaire per family rather than pupil and were pleased with the response rate of 115 / 150. As there are 264 pupils in the school and 121 replies were returned this gives a response rate of 46%. The school with the lowest response rate was the Dublin school which has 1140 pupils in the school and only 45 of whom returned the questionnaire. However, it should also be noted that at the time of writing part of the survey results for the third school continued to be mislaid in the post, they were sent by the school near the Christmas rush time.

7.6. As part of the project the key teachers involved were asked to complete a feedback questionnaire: two of the schools returned these and as it turned out it was the schools with the highest and lowest response rates. It is also interesting to note that the school with the highest response rate was the primary school. The information contained in these questionnaires will be contained in section 8 of this report 'Looking to the future'.

7.7. Chart 1 gives the survey results for the three participating schools. One of the interesting features of the survey was how the respondents classified themselves. The interaction between Q1 and Q2 in the vast majority of cases was predictable: most people who identified their ethnic background as Irish were born in Ireland. However, some other responses were interesting and could throw up challenges for disaggregating data. For example, some respondents who identified their ethnicity as C7 (any other Asian background) noted Pakistan as their country of birth; while others who noted Pakistan as their country of birth identified their ethnicity under D8 (other) where respondents are requested to write in their response rather than tick a box. Figure 1 presents the finding about student's ethnicity.

Figure 1:

Ethnicity Pilot Result
(n=180)
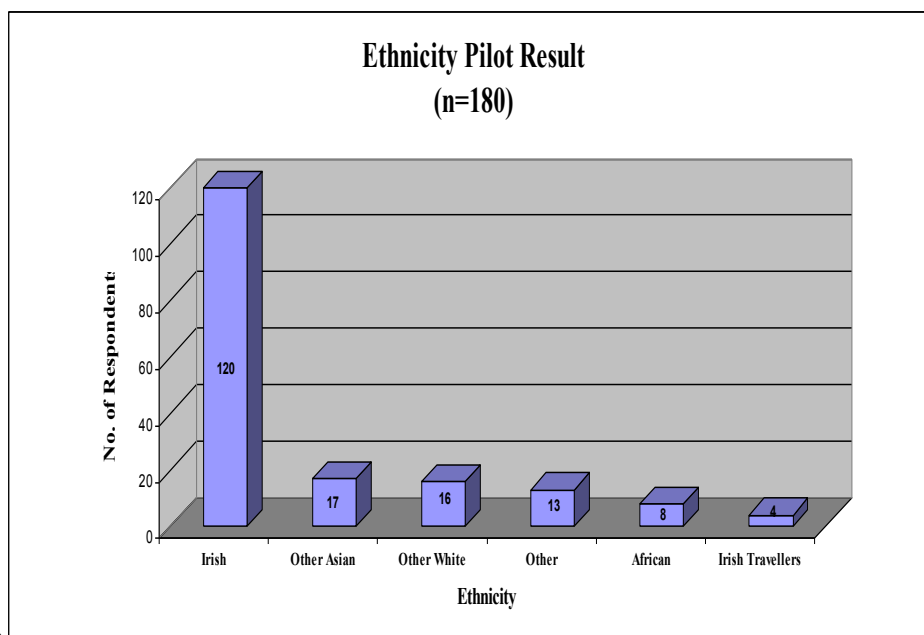
7.8. A3 (any other white background) appeared to be an underused category given the number of European respondents who identified their ethnicity under D8 (other). Is it fair to assume that these respondents are white? It appears to be a reasonable assumption to make as most people are not conscious of their skin colour unless it differs to the majority around them. This response suggests that the A3 category requires some explanation otherwise the category D8 could become a catchall for data that ideally should be in another category.

7.9. With regard to the religion 75% of respondents identified their religion as Roman Catholic. The next largest religious category was Islam at 16% – however it should be noted that this result reflects the religious profile of the school with the highest respondent rate. However, it is important in the categorisation of religion that the main categories reflect the current religions in the country. A number of respondents identified themselves as 'Other'-8%, which suggests the need for additional language categories. Figure 2 presents the finding about the student's religion.

Figure 2:
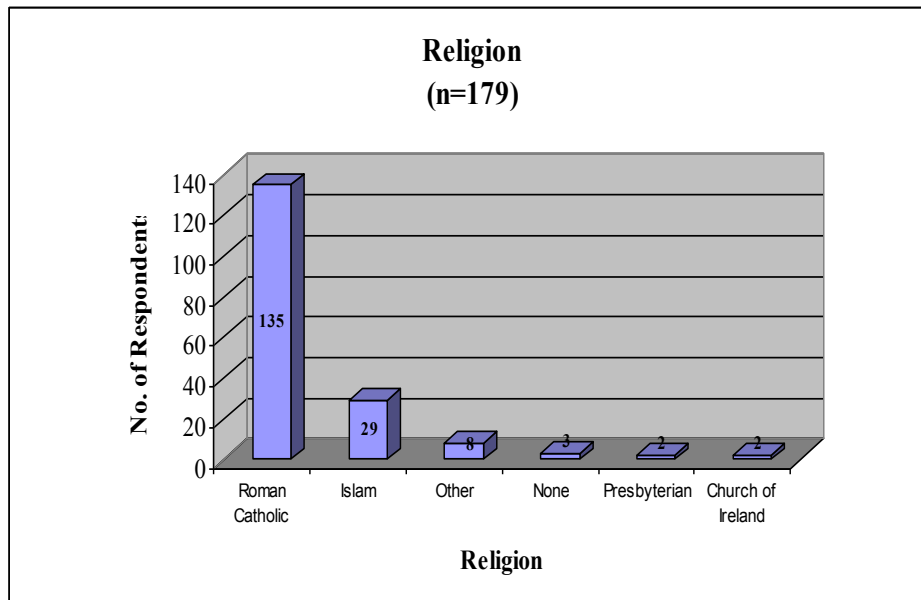
7.10. With regard to language English was identified as the preferred language for 72% of the respondents. Urdu was the next biggest single category at 7% - a result again which is influenced by the response rate of one school. Arabic and Polish were the next. A number of respondents identified a bilingual preference: including 5 respondents who identified Irish as one of their languages. The NCCRI publication, Improving Government Service Delivery to Minority Ethnic Groups, (2006) highlighted the experience of Northern Ireland in terms of categorisation of languages, where the Annual Return Form for the Department of Education collects data on ethnicity, religion and language, the number of languages highlighted were limited. The authors suggest 'it would be more useful if the table on the first language reflected more clearly the nationalities living in Northern Ireland.' (p61) Again 4% picked the other category which suggests the categories need to be widened. Figure 3 presents the finding about the languages students speak.

Figure 3:

Languages Spoken by Students
(n=179)
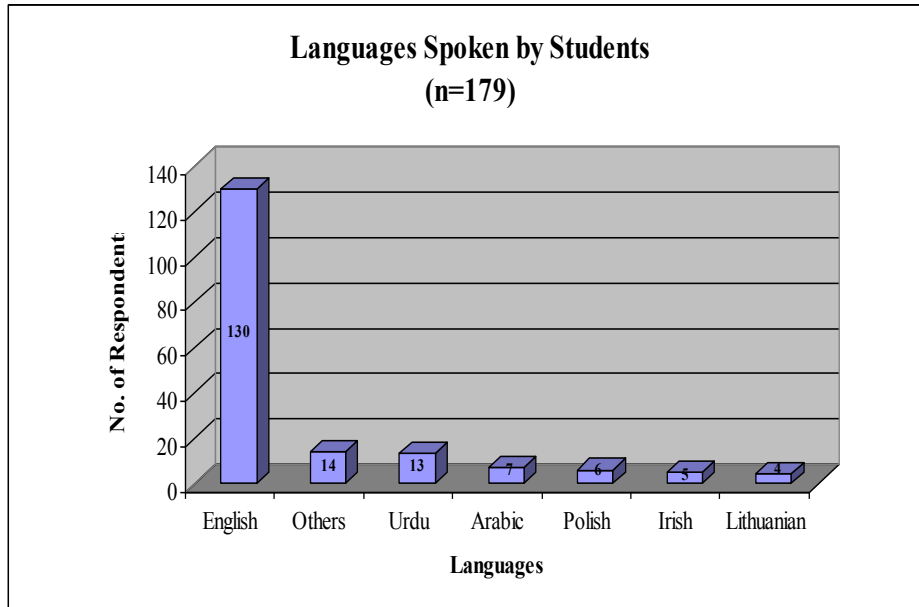
7.11. With regard to gender 43% of respondents were male and 57% were female. In this category one respondent did not answer this question - in most categories at least one respondent did not answer a question but there was no discernible pattern it just appears people overlooked a question. The following chart depicts the finding about the student's gender.

Figure 4:

Gender distribution of respondents
(n=180)

Legend: Male, Female
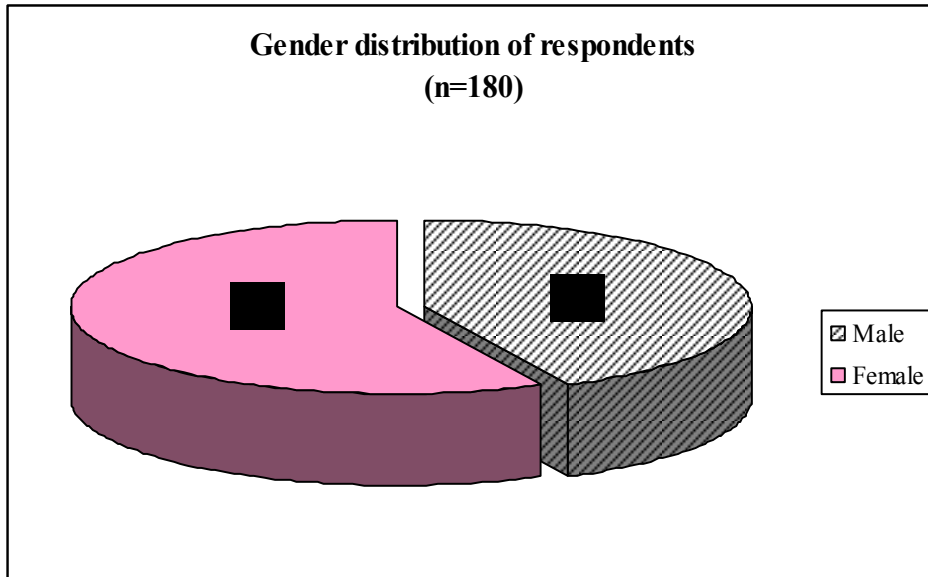
7.12. The date of birth question proved useful as a cross reference when inputting the material from the questionnaires. It also threw up an interesting dilemma and in particular for the school that issued one questionnaire per family: and that was the parents included their date of birth instead of the child's. 14% of the respondents were adults with the vast majority of them coming from the school with the highest response rate.

7.13 The issues that arose in relation to the statistical gaps point to the following:

7.13.1 No briefing with Parents, School BOM, teachers or student council took place, this was on offer via the Project worker for the project.

7.13.2 The information strategy on the pilot came through a third party and not the project worker who could have addressed any questions or issues arising.

7.13.3 The autonomous nature of the school system meant that each school completed the pilot in their own way, which in some cases impacted on the data collected.

8. Looking to the Future

8.1. In the feedback questionnaire (appendix 4) schools were asked to identify why they thought there had been a good response rate and what advice they would give to other schools conducting the survey. The school with the highest response rate noted that:

    8.1.1. The parents were interested;

    8.1.2. The literature was sent out in various languages; and,

    8.1.3. The school followed up on responses.

8.2. And they would advise that:

    8.2.1. The survey is sent out and collected on the same week e.g. out Monday, back Thursday for Friday;

    8.2.2. That where possible the letters to the parents are translated into their preferred language; and

    8.2.3. Put the survey into an envelope as it improves the response rate.

8.3. The schools were also asked to identify why there hadn't been a good response rate if that was the case. In response the second school noted that though they had asked over their intercom for each class to send a rep to collect the survey and not all classes did no. It is a large and busy school and another survey on transport was being carried out at the same time.

8.4. With regard to advice they would offer other schools carrying out such a survey that would recommend that:

    8.4.1. Send the information on the survey home and ask the parents to sign a cut-off sheet saying they do not want their children to participate;

    8.4.2. Then the questionnaire could be completed in class at a specified time e.g. extend the morning tutorial by 10 minutes.

8.5. The schools were asked to identify the challenges that arose during the pilot survey and they identified:

    8.5.1. Explaining the nature of the survey;

    8.5.2. People not focused;

    8.5.3. Therefore hard to get people to return the completed forms;

8.5.4. As noted in Section 7.12 the date of birth question caused some confusion in one school as the parent's were unsure whose date of birth was being requested.

8.6. In response to the question on whether schools could deal with the challenges the survey presented themselves: one school answered that it could and the other that it could not. In terms of potential supports the second school wondered if someone from Pavee Point visible at the time of handing out and collecting the questionnaires would have helped. Assistance had been offered by Pavee Point to all of the schools in terms of explaining the nature of the survey and why addressing the educational the data gaps for Travellers and other minority ethnic groups are so important. This offer was not taken up.

8.7. In terms of the advice the schools would offer the Department of Education and Science the following was noted:

8.7.1. The question should be asked separately: one school noted that this would facilitate the information being used by other Departments;

8.7.2. The forms should be sent out mid-term to avoid clashes with administrative work at the beginning and end of term;

8.7.3. The questionnaire should be included as part of the school enrolment system: one school noted that this could then provide information for the DES Language Supports, for example;

8.7.4. Clarity as to whose date of birth is being requested: a potential issue at primary level;

8.7.5. Once parental permission has not been denied get pupils to complete the form at a set time. In keeping with the practice in the UK this would obviously only apply to second level schools.

8.7.6. One school answered in the affirmative while the other school queried whether such a question should be asked as part of the exit data collected in the system. Pavee Point would argue that such a development is crucial if Traveller engagement with and outcomes from the education system are to be monitored.

8.7.7. Keep the process as simply as possible;

8.7.8. Translate the information for parents; and,

8.7.9. Provide adequate secretarial supports to schools to carry out such work.

8.7.10 The feedback from participating schools raises questions for the DES, particularly in relation to two areas. Firstly, the administration and collation of data and who's role it

is, how accessible it is, the need for follow up on information collected and the current level of administration work schools currently carry out act as impediments to data collection. A clear policy lead is necessary in order to get buy in from schools on the use of equality data mechanisms and the integration of data collating systems. This would include an information campaign, training for school administrators and agreed protocols as to how the information is gathered to ensure consistency.

9. In Conclusion

9.1. The purpose of this project was to explore the most appropriate mechanism to ensure that overtime a good and steady flow of data would be available to ascertain Traveller men, women, girls and boys engagement with the education system at all of its levels.

9.2. One of the striking features of the project was how few Travellers were attending the schools identified through the Steering Group and its contacts. However, this fact should not detract from the relevance of an ethnic identifier within the data collection mechanisms within the education system. Pavee Point has long argued that information should not be collected on Travellers alone. But that data on Travellers and other ethnic minorities should be collected as part of a broader equality framework. As the Traveller Education Strategy noted in 10.7 *"In all instances, Travellers should have the option of self-identification where such data are being sought within an equality framework."* (p84)

9.3. While on p97 of the Traveller Education Strategy (DES, October 2006) it is recommended that "Data, in an agreed format that is acceptable to Travellers, should be collected to ensure that the progress of Travellers throughout the education system is tracked, that targets for participation are set, and that appropriate resources are then made available. Where the educational outcome is not reached it should be possible to identify these immediately so that appropriate culturally sensitive interventions can be made."

9.4. In an increasingly diverse Ireland with many calls on resources, good planning informed by reliable information will play in important role. As the pilot illustrated commitment by practitioners, parents and / or students was required to successfully carry out the pilot. However, as the pilot also illustrates commitment can be in limited supply. To address this issue and ensure good quality and on-going information the request for this data must be built into the mainstream educational data streams. The schools in their feedback recommend that this information is collected separately and for reasons of administrative burden at a separate time to enrolment and other procedures. If such an option is chosen then it will be important to include an additional question so that this information can be correlated with other information e.g. students' results in state exams; and early school leaving data. It was not included in this pilot for reasons of sensitivity but it would need to be included in any mainstreaming mechanism and that is the pupils' PPS number.

Conclusion: Survey Results

Ethnic or Cultural Background

Ethnic or Cultural Category	Clare	Dublin	Mayo	Totals	Sample %
A - White					

1 – Irish	9	37	74	120	66%
2 – Irish Traveller	0	0	4	4	2%
3 – Any other White background	0	2	14	16	9%
B - Black or Black Irish					
4 - African	2	2	4	8	4%
5 - Any other Black background	0	0	0	0	0%
C – Asian or Asian Irish					
6 – Chinese	0	1	1	2	1%
7 - Any other Asian background	0	2	15	17	9%
D – Other including mixed background					
8 – Other	3	2	8	13	7%

Country of Birth

Name of Countries	Clare	Dublin	Mayo	Totals	Sample %
America			1	1	1%
Australia		1		1	1%
China			1	1	1%
Czech			2	2	1%
England	1		4	5	3%
Germany	2			2	1%
Holland	1			1	1%

Iraq			1	1	1%
Ireland	8	38	78	124	69%
Kurdistan Iraq			2	2	1%
Lithuanian			5	5	3%
Nigeria		1	2	3	2%
Pakistan		2	10	12	7%
Poland	1		5	6	3%
Romania		1		1	1%
Russia			2	2	1%
Slovakia	1			1	1%
South Africa	1			1	1%
Sudan		1		1	1%
Syria			5	5	3%
UK			1	1	1%

Religious Belief

Religion	Clare	Dublin	Mayo	Totals	Sample %
Roman Catholic	9	36	90	135	75%
Church of Ireland	0	0	2	2	1%
Presbyterian	0	0	2	2	1%
Methodist	0	0	0	0	0%
Islam	0	6	23	29	16%
Orthodox Christian	0	0	2	2	1%
Judaism	0	0	0	0	0%
None	1	2	0	3	2%

27

Other		5	1	2	8	4%

Language Spoken

Language	Clare	Dublin	Mayo	Totals	Sample %
English	7	39	84	130	72%
Urdu	0	1	12	13	7%
Arabic	0	2	5	7	4%
Polish	1	0	5	6	3%
Irish	2	1	2	5	3%
Lithuanian	0	0	4	4	2%
Other	5	1	8	14	8%

Gender

Gender	Clare	Dublin	Mayo	Totals	Sample %
Male	9	15	53	77	43%
Female	5	30	68	103	57%

10. Bibliography

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14. Travellers in Ireland; Central Statistics Office, 2004

Appendix 1: Pilot Question

Question 1

14 **What is your ethnic or cultural background?**
Choose ONE section from A to D, then ✔ the appropriate box.

A   White

1 ☐ Irish

2 ☐ Irish Traveller

3 ☐ Any other White background

B   Black or Black Irish

4 ☐ African

5 ☐ Any other Black background

C   Asian or Asian Irish

6 ☐ Chinese

7 ☐ Any other Asian background

D   Other, including mixed background

8 ☐ Other, write in description

Question 14 2006 Census Form

Question 2

What is your country of birth? Give the country where your mother lived at the time of your birth

_____

Question 3
What is your religion? Tick one box only
        Roman Catholic
        Church of Ireland
        Presbyterian
        Methodist
        Islam
        Orthodox Christian
        Judaism
        None
        Other _____

Question 4
What is your first or preferred language? _____

Question 5
What is your gender?
　　　Male
　　　Female

Question 6
What is your date of birth? _____/_____/_____

Appendix 2: Information Flyer

Introduction

Pavee Point has always believed that it is important that data is not collected on Travellers alone but that data on ethnicity is collected as part of the broader data collection system. To this end the organisation has lobbied for the inclusion of an ethnic identifier question within the Census and other information systems so that good data could be built up on Travellers and other minority ethnic groups' issues.

This project was initially called '*The Development of Appropriate Mechanisms to monitor educational access, participation and outcome by gender for Travellers*'. As the Project progressed the Steering group sought to narrow its focus to the development of the mechanism and its testing. While it became clear that to develop this initiative for Travellers alone would run contrary to the spirit of the proposed Travellers Education Strategy of an integrated, intercultural and inclusive approach, as well as the organisation's own work and that of other partners whose remit would be broader. And so the project strives to:
Build on the pilot health ethnic identifier question and the ethnic question in the Census;
Consult with Travellers and other minority ethnic groups;
Identify and negotiate the buy-in of education providers;
Pilot the mechanism; and,
Document and disseminate the learning arising.

Building on the work to date

In the Equality Authority's report 'Diversity At School' it was noted *"There is no accurate record of Traveller attendance rates in compulsory education or on their performance compared with members of the settled community. Among the reasons for this is the fact that there has not been an agreed ethnic identifier question to date on school data. While there is information on the numbers that enrol, neither the rate of participation nor the levels of attainment are available. The absence of basic research and official statistics on the subject of Traveller participation and attainment is itself an indication of the lack of importance accorded to the education of Travellers."* (p94) Into the future and in an increasingly diverse Ireland this situation will not only apply to Travellers but to the newer communities as well.

In two hospitals (Tallaght and the Rotunda) a study was undertaken entitled the 'Ethnicity Pilot Project' to collect information on the ethnicity of hospital patients. Within the study ethnicity was defined as: *"An ethnic group can be broadly defined as a group of people who share certain background characteristics such as common ancestors, geographical origin, language, culture and religion. This provides a distinct identity as seen both by members of the group and by others."* At the end of this study the results will be evaluated to look at the possibility of collecting ethnicity information across the whole public hospital system.
Four key principles were identified that are applicable to this education project:
Participation is voluntary;
Data collection is by self-identification only;

Information will be anonymous and under no circumstances will individuals be identified; Data will only be used for explicit purposes of this pilot project.

A partnership approach

This project is funded by the Department of Education and Science and the lead partner is Pavee Point Travellers Centre. The Steering Group participants include: the Departs of Education and Science and Justice, Equality &Law Reform; the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism; the National Education Officer for Travellers; the National Women's Council of Ireland; and the Curriculum Development Unit.

In the development of the project and its own work the NCCRI hosted a meeting of the Steering Group and other potential partners to discuss the most appropriate question to be used. The learning from the UK indicates that combining a nationality and ethnic question is not advisable. While learning from Australia indicates that a more complex and varied question is required to capture the realities of people's identity in increasingly diverse societies.

Arising from these discussions and in light of the fact that most Irish people are clearer on the issue of nationality than ethnicity it was decided to ask a range of questions. Such an approach should help to raise awareness about ethnicity and its applicability to all people; as well as providing respondents with a sense that their identity will be acknowledged. This is a learning process and all comments and inputs are welcome.

In the UK experience they advise that children over 11 should answer the questionnaire themselves; while for younger children parents should be asked to complete the form. The advice from education practitioners here is that parental involvement is important, and that the form should be completed with their children.

Horizontal Principles
No doubt in a school setting the heading to this section would lead to a variety of jokes. It is a technical term used within the European and national planning and policy environments as a strategy to encourage the inclusion of issues that should apply across a wide range of initiatives.

Gender is one such principle and in keeping with this and the original focus of the project respondents or their parents will be asked to identify whether they are a boy or a girl.

For further information contact
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Pavee Point Travellers Centre
46 North Great Charles Street, Dublin 1
Tel: 01 878 0255 ext 110
Email: te@pavee.iol.ie

Appendix 3: Letter to Parents

<div align="center">

School Headed Paper

</div>

<div align="right">

October 2006

</div>

Dear Parents,

Enclosed you will find an information leaflet about a pilot project seeking to find the best mechanism to collect ethnic and gender information on school children. You may wonder why such information is being collected and for what it will be used.

Many commentators and policy makers have noted that good data is essential to inform and support the development of quality services. At present within the education system concerns have been expressed about the inadequate data on the socio-economic and ethnic data of children in schools. Such a gap means it is very hard to ascertain how measures aimed to tackle educational disadvantage or support the inclusion of particular children within the system are meeting their objectives.

This project is seeking to build on the Census question and the work undertaken in the health area to address the ethnic data gap and to ensure that good baseline data is collected systematically. To this end it is important that everyone in the School completes a questionnaire – every one of us has an ethnicity even though we may not be aware of it unless we travel abroad. The information collected will only be used for the purposes of this pilot and confidentiality will be assured.

The Steering Group for this particular project consists of the Departments of Education and Science; Justice, Equality and Law Reform; the Curriculum Development Unit; the National Women's Council of Ireland; the National Consultative Committee on Racism and Interculturalism; and the lead partner Pavee Point Travellers Centre.

Your participation in this project would be greatly appreciated. I would be grateful if you would return the questionnaire with your child by the end of this week.

Yours sincerely,

Appendix 4: Feedback Questionnaire

Name of School: _____

Address: _____

_____

_____

Contact person: _____

Contact details: _____

How many pupils are in the school? _____

How many pupils responded to the survey? _____

Were you happy with the response rate?   Yes: ☐   No: ☐

If yes:
    a. Why do you think there was a good response rate?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

    b. What advice would you give to other schools carrying out this survey?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

If no:

c. Why not?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

d. What advice would you offer to other schools carrying out this survey?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What challenges arose during the survey?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

e. Was the School able to deal with this itself?   Yes: ☐   No: ☐

f. What supports would have been welcome?

_____

What advice would you give to the Department in rolling out these questions across the education system?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Should the question be asked separately?   Yes: ☐   No: ☐

Should it be included as part of the school enrolment system? Yes: ☐ No: ☐

Should it be included in the exit data?   Yes: ☐   No: ☐

What supports should be in place to mainstream this question?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix 5: Steering Group Members

Name

Maugie Francis

Mary Corrigan

Niall McCutcheon

Annie Dillon

Mary Gannon

Philip Watt

Rhona Mac Sweeney

Brigid Quirke

Ronnie Fay

Bríd O'Brien