



The Traveller Movement

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New Horizons Youth Conference: Education and training for the future

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About ITMB: The Traveller Movement (TM) was established in 1999 and is a leading national policy and voice charity, working to raise the capacity and social inclusion of the Traveller communities in Britain. TM act as a bridge builder bringing the Traveller communities, service providers and policy makers together, stimulating debate and promoting forward-looking strategies to promote increased race equality, civic engagement, inclusion, service provision and community cohesion. For further information about ITMB visit www.irishtraveller.org.uk

Introduction and background

Children and young people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities may often have limited opportunities to gain basic literacy and numeracy skills and are therefore disadvantaged in developing the knowledge and skills required for employment or self employment. Young Travellers may be marginalised and suffer prejudice and discrimination in schools and in the wider community. Poor literacy skills may also feed into the prejudiced attitudes towards them, if they attempt to gain paid employment.

For men traditionally these trades could be in the construction industries; for example, fencing, paving, roofing tarmac, general construction, painting and decorating, dealing in scrap metal, plumbing and tree surgery. For women, it could include; hair and beauty, childcare, fashion and design and floristry.

Historically, training or informal 'apprenticeships' have taken place 'on the job' within the extended family. However, opportunities for informally managed self employment are diminishing. Potential clients may be affected by the recession or may be wary of taking on workers without formal qualifications. Increasingly Traveller families are recognising the need for formal qualifications although often the low literacy levels may be a barrier for both young men and women.

With regard to the area of apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships and routes into sustainable employment for not only Irish Travellers, but also for all of the Traveller communities (including Gypsies and Roma from Eastern Europe). The routes and opportunities are often limited, Gypsies, Roma and Travellers are one of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable ethnic groups – frequently encountering barriers to employment that are around, education, opportunity, skills, racism and prejudice.

The Process

As a way of addressing some of these issues The Traveller Movement (TM) decided to run a conference, organised, planned and developed by young Travellers for young Travellers. The aim of the conference was to showcase Gypsy Roma and Traveller young people who have seen success in a range of careers and professions. This would have the dual outcome of both acting as an inspiration to attendees and also as being role models for young community members.

At the beginning of the summer, three young Irish Traveller women, Jennifer Corcoran, Bridy Purcell and Hellen Sherlock, came together as part of the 'Who We R' group (An Irish Traveller Youth Forum) to organise the conference. Jennifer had already been an intern at TM for almost a year. Since the conference in September, both Hellen and Bridy have both become interns at TM.

The three women did the entire organisation for the conference. This included; room booking, arranging the catering producing all publicity, selecting and inviting speakers and participants and producing an agenda and plan for the event and devising and collating the evaluation for the event, and finally producing an evaluative report of the event.

The report that Hellen and Bridy produced after the event follows:

New Horizons Youth Conference 2013: A report by Bridy Purcell and Hellen Sherlock.

The New Horizons event took place at the Resource Centre in Holloway Road in the afternoon of 7th of September.

The event was a careers advice day for young Gypsies, Roma and Travellers. The aim of the day was to offer career and job information to young people from Gypsy Roma and Traveller backgrounds. It was also an opportunity for young people to be inspired by the stories of others from these communities.

New Horizons presentations

The day began with a welcome speech by Yvonne McNamara, the director of the Traveller Movement (TM) next the three facilitators, Hellen, Bridy and Jennifer gave a brief introduction about themselves, the youth group and the aims of the day.

There were speakers from all different careers and work backgrounds including legal, beauty therapy and journalism. First up was Jennifer Corcoran who spoke about how she passed her level 2 in beauty therapy while at the same time working as an intern with the Traveller Movement. Following the end of her internship she got a part time job in the administration section of the 'The Irish in Britain'. She has plans to continue with her studies in beauty therapy whilst working part time. The next speaker was Elizabeth Corcoran who was also an intern at the Traveller Movement. After many years of hard work and determination, Elizabeth is well on her way to qualifying as an accountancy technician.

Next Mike Doherty spoke about how he went back to education as a mature student to train to be a journalist. Mike is now a freelance journalist and has also been working part-time in TM for a couple of years as the communication & media officer

Sophia Vale was an intern then a full time worker at the TM. She has now gone on to be a trainee solicitor at Howe and Co. This is a leading UK law firm who specialise in human rights, employment law, defamation, civil litigation, public law and personal injury litigation.



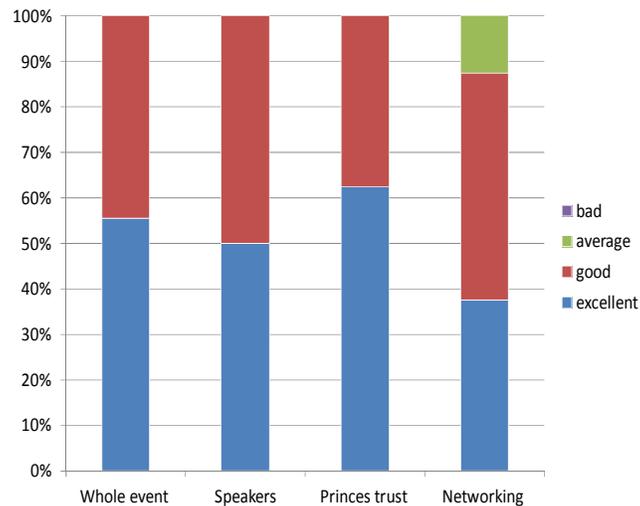
Often working woman have to struggle with work when they have young kids - two of our speakers are mothers, and they spoke about the difficulties of bringing up small children and pursuing their career ambitions. Both speakers talked about the vital support they got from their families and one in particular told us how she couldn't have managed without the support of her husband who encouraged her to carry on her career.



We heard from Sylvia Lewin, an employment adviser from Haringey who talked about careers advice and how it helps a lot of people getting into careers they are interested in. She also gave advice about jobs and opportunities which was very helpful for everyone as well as she also left lots of information leaflets for the attendees to have a look at. Sylvia ended by saying, if anyone needed careers advice or college information, that she is willing to help any young people from the Travelling communities, from other areas if they are prepared to travel to Haringey.

Evaluation

An evaluation was handed out at the end of the event. From the responses the following graph gave us an idea about the success of the day:



Conclusion and ways forward

The event was very successful on a number of levels. The conference was organised and facilitated by a group of young Traveller women. There was a clearly identified need which the event sought to address, although this was not necessarily reflected in the number of attendees.

There was much to be learned from the event, including ideas about how to attract a wider audience. As a result of this first conference, The Traveller Movement are considering the possibility of co-facilitating a construction training scheme for young Gypsy Roma and Traveller men, between the ages of 18 and 24, this will be run in partnership with the Construction Youth Trust. It will provide the participants with 30 hours of free training in carpentry, brickwork and painting and decorating. At the end of the course participants will hopefully be in the position of taking the CSCS (Construction Skills Certificate scheme) card test. The card is often a pre requisite for ensuing access to employment on building sites. In this instance, TM will be in the position of broker between the communities and the training provider.

TM is also looking at delivering a second conference for young Gypsy Roma and Traveller women, between 16 and 26. This conference would look at ways into training and employment for a range of female orientated opportunities and professions.

