



Irish Traveller Movement in Britain (ITMB) Annual Review 2008-2009



Some Traveller Advisory Group Members at the ITMB 2008 Conference

**Campaigning against Discrimination, Promoting
Inclusion, Participation and Engagement**

The Irish Traveller Movement in Britain would like to kindly thank their funders for supporting all the work they have undertaken in the year 2008-2009.



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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

This has been a year of tough but manageable expansion for ITMB, while we continued to provide those regular events liked by Travellers, such as Pavee Céilidh and our Annual Conference.

As our arm extended further and further across the U.K., there was increased demand on ITMB to diversify into other areas affecting Travellers, such as direct provision of local social care or prison-based support. However, we remain steadfast as a Traveller enabling, empowering and advocacy charity in the areas of national policy representation and Traveller community development. What has been made clear is there is a great need for local Traveller-led voluntary sector agencies across the country.

Our Capacity Development Project (CDP) was a most welcome addition to our ITMB programmes; engaging in large scale capacity building in the Traveller community across the U.K. Though some preparatory work occurred previously, 2008-9 saw a number of new initiatives such as advice surgeries and training programmes designed to socially empower the Traveller community.

During the year, we established a firm ITMB presence in Birmingham to complement our London base. This is a very exciting development and certainly aligns with ITMB intentions to serve England, not just it's capital.

ITMB had some expressed concerns about the effects on the Traveller community of the replacement of the Commission for Racial Equality by the larger Equalities and Human

Rights Commission. Our concerns centred mainly upon the possible dilution of the Traveller agenda. Our fears have not been realised and we have a good working relationship with the new equalities body.

ITMB has become larger. There are new members of staff and a wider volunteer input. The Traveller Advisory Group (TAG), which provides policy steering to the ITMB staff team, was served by some 20 Travellers during the year. As individuals, TAG was involved in a host of Conferences, training events and consultations. I offer my sincere and heartfelt thanks to all ITMB staff, TAG and other volunteers who contributed greatly to our work during the year.

I would also like to express my thanks to ITMB funders, sponsors and members for their generous financial and other support provided. There are also many agencies accommodating of and working in partnership with ITMB, far too numerous to mention here. On behalf of ITMB Trustees, I would like to thank you all.

Finally, I would like to thank our Director, Yvonne, and my fellow Trustees who served during the year. It has been a tough year, but we continued to develop as individuals and adapted ourselves to ITMB expansion and the ever-changing shape of services to Irish Travellers.

I hope we can all continue to work together to ensure improvement to the well being of every individual Traveller in the U.K.

Fr Joseph G Browne Chairman

TRAVELLER ADVISORY GROUP (TAG) REPORT

Having been established in the previous year, TAG made significant progress during the year. We are a group of over 20

Travellers who meet five times a year to advise on policy priorities for ITMB for the foreseeable future, but also work closely with the ITMB staff team. Occasionally, we meet in sub-groups, especially where a quick response is required to meet any significant policy development affecting Travellers.

We are a diverse group, some of our number being settled Travellers and some site and roadside. In a sense, we are a bridge between the ITMB and Travellers across the country; although we appreciate we have quite a way to go to be fully representative of all Travellers. We are all engaged in some form with other ITMB initiatives and activities.

During the year, we engaged in numerous consultations of key importance to the Traveller, Gypsy and Roma populations. The London Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment (GTANA), for example, which is a key development, included ITMB representation on its steering group. TAG helped to draft a response to the assessment as well as ensuring that Traveller consultation and involvement is an essential component to any related future developments.

In relation to Traveller community cohesion and development, we planned and held a two day event with ITMB staff to celebrate Gypsy Traveller Roma History Month in June. The event was called Pavee Céilidh and was held in Hammersmith, London. Day One was an indoor fair, with various

Traveller-friendly activities, films and music and Day Two was a policy reflection Conference with workshops on key emerging issues for Travellers. The DVD "Meet your Neighbours: Irish Traveller Role Models Speak Out" – a free resource – was launched on Day One. TAG members contributed significantly to all aspects of the DVD.

The two day event attracted Travellers from across the country, including significant numbers from the North of England and the Midlands. This was the first time the Government had supported and endorsed such an event in England. Overall, it was felt to be a great success. TAG hopes future funding and support can be attained for similar events.

TAG also developed policy papers on Traveller economic inclusion, education and accommodation for various Government Departments during the year. We contributed a Traveller dimension to the East of England Spatial Strategy and were represented on various Criminal Justice Forums.

Though we feel proud of the extent of our achievements over the year, we are also aware that we lack certain skills as a group and thus require regular training to better represent and advocate on behalf of the Traveller community. In this respect, we are pleased that the new Capacity Builders Project enables opportunity for us to further develop.

We look forward to 2009-2010 with anticipation of even greater developments.

ITMB Traveller Advisory Group

WHO WE ARE

The Irish Traveller Movement in Britain (ITMB) is a national policy and voice charity, working to raise the capacity and social inclusion of the Traveller communities in Britain. We were established in 2000 and are a registered charity and company limited by guarantee.

ITMB acts as a bridge builder, bringing the Traveller communities, service providers and policy makers together, thereby stimulating debate and promoting forward-looking strategies to promote increased race equality, civic engagement, inclusion, service provision and community cohesion.

ITMB has an established track record of active policy development, campaigning, community engagement, training and awareness raising and social cohesion work. We are shared custodians of the Liberty Human Rights Award 2004.

We have an established Traveller Advisory Group (TAG) which leads on the strategic direction and development of our policy engagement. This TAG is made up entirely of members of Traveller communities with nation wide representation.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF ITMB

- ⇒ To create an evidence and resource base for positive change for the Traveller communities
- ⇒ To promote the social inclusion of Travellers by campaigning on issues that contribute to their exclusion and to promote equality of access to statutory and voluntary services
- ⇒ To develop policy models for working with Irish Travellers and educate statutory and other services who work with Travellers
- ⇒ To maintain a presence on strategic groups and become a greater source of influence and a leading authority on Irish Travellers
- ⇒ To build the capacity of the Traveller communities to self advocate and represent themselves



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

In my first full year as Director of ITMB, what struck me most in reviewing the year was the amount of effort put in by staff, Trustees, the Traveller Advisory Group and Travellers themselves to sustain the charity and to respond very quickly and effectively to significant national developments affecting Travellers.

Our Pavee Céilidh held over two days in London was a major event celebrating Traveller Roma Gypsy History Month. It attracted Travellers from as far away as Northern Ireland and the North of England, was Government backed and was a huge success. The launch of our free DVD: "Meet your Neighbours: Irish Traveller Role Models Speak Out" was particularly well received by both Traveller and professional attendants at the event.

The much needed Capacity Builders Project began in earnest, with various training, advisory and other community empowering initiatives being held across England. We opened new offices in Birmingham to host our North of England Capacity Development Officer. No longer is London our primary focus.

We finalised our 2008-2013 Business Plan, incorporating both fundraising and marketing plans while also offering set targets for each financial year. This plan will be reviewed annually by Trustees to monitor outcomes and ensure current relevance.

Work commenced during the year for ITMB to acquire the PQASSO quality standard mark. This mark helps to indicate that ITMB is in a fit state to carry out its mission effectively.

Though the acquisition of the quality mark requires a lot of bureaucracy and involves significant input by staff and Trustees, I am confident I will be reporting the successful acquisition of a Level One PQASSO quality mark by ITMB in next years Review. This will also prove to be a significant string to our fundraising bow.

With regard to fundraising, we intend to remain a relatively small organisation, but with more widespread Traveller input. We attracted grants from a number of new funders during the year. The most significant of these was £118K+ from the Big Lottery to research into Travellers and economic inclusion.

As our key funding is primarily restricted to carrying out funder objectives, we have made inroads during the year into building an unrestricted provisional reserve fund of three months running costs by providing training. This fund is required to assist cash-flow, meet any future employment law commitments and help ITMB to continue in an emergency situation or unforeseen event.

There is great demand on ITMB to provide Traveller culture awareness training. It is a need we cannot fully meet, as it is incidental to our core mission of empowering Travellers. ITMB views the provision of training as an ancillary ITMB service which increases Traveller culture awareness, assists the charity to build a sensible current reserve and hopefully in the longer term, enable Trustees to resource one or two of its own initiatives.

Last year I set out as one of my core objectives to strengthen the ITMB office infrastructure. In this area, there have been a number of developments during the year, not least the

appointment of two dedicated part-time staff to assist in administrative and accounting functions. This enabled a more frequent office presence and allowed more time for other workers to engage in core ITMB activities.

During the year, we networked ITMB computers, enabling all staff to have access to the charity's database. Our accounts package was updated to reflect a turnover increase and to more accurately account for Projects. Some policies and procedures were updated to correspond with changing employment law. A new telephone system was installed.

There were additional staff recruited to our London and national Capacity Building initiatives and many Travellers were employed as sessional workers. As more and more Travellers become better qualified and empowered, I would hope that ITMB will continue to employ greater numbers of Travellers.

There was a huge increase in the number of people accessing our Website. We uploaded a number of ITMB resources and reports, while also keeping the site up-to-date with ITMB news and recruitment opportunities. A number of people praised our no-frills site. For her work on maintaining our Website, I would like to thank our Web consultant, Tammy Furey.

With new Projects up and running, we have built a host of new relationships with various agencies across the country. We believe networking and co-operation is a crucial component in the development of our mission. Establishing a known presence in the South of England (excluding London and it's environs) proved somewhat difficult this year. We

intend on devoting additional time next year to building the ITMB profile and make new friends in that area.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone associated with ITMB for their time, support, work and co-operation during the year. I feel very privileged to be Director of such an energetic organisation and look forward in earnest to my next set of challenges as ITMB Director.

Yvonne MacNamara
ITMB Director



People enjoying ITMB events!

SOME OF OUR PLANS FOR 2009-2010

- Achieve PQASSO Level 1 Quality Mark
- ITMB Conference in November
- Improve South of England networking
- Improve Traveller input into health services
- Improve Traveller Youth involvement in the UK
- Extensive training for TAG.
- Employ more Traveller sessional workers
- Commence Traveller economic inclusion research
- Establish closer relations and engage in joint training with Gypsy/ Roma groups
- Equip, furnish and computer network with ITMB Birmingham office
- Develop further user feedback mechanisms
- Challenge anti-Traveller sentiment or stereotyping in the media and politics
- Dedicated "Pavee Céilidh" Traveller history/ culture Website



There were many successful events through out the year.



ACHIEVEMENTS, ACTIVITIES AND PERFORMANCE

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO (CDP)

In 2008-9, ITMB built upon the foundation of the capacity building programme laid down in the previous year. This provided a solid launch pad to expand our work geographically and introduce greater depth and complexity into Project service provision. Our work was further strengthened through the acquisition of primary funding and subsequent staff recruitment in December 2008. Following extensive publicity, there was significant growth in the numbers of Travellers seeking to engage with the Project's services.

Interagency Work/ Partnerships and Networks

CDP has continued to promote and support the development of Interagency Traveller Forums within London, while also becoming more active in similar Forum establishment in other areas of the country.

These Forums provide a space for members of the Traveller community and agencies working with Travellers to come together to share information and express their concerns and issues on mostly planning and strategic matters. They serve as an important vehicle to ensure that Travellers' voices and opinions are being heard and responded to by local authorities, statutory agencies and locally-based third sector organisations.

Conference: "The Road Ahead: Travellers, Human Rights and Social Inclusion"

This year we held our second national conference in Novem-

ber 2008. The event was very well attended by a broad mixture of Traveller community members, organisations and government departments.

We held a flagship workshop on "Capacity Development." This was the most well attended workshop at the conference. The workshop introduced the work of the CDP, discussed the current national situation in capacity development for Travellers and gathered opinion among Travellers as to the best way forward for the Project.

The workshop was very successful in publicising the Capacity Development Project further among national agencies and the Traveller community. Many Traveller attendees opted to engage with the Project; mostly to develop negotiation and representational skills, but also to gain awareness of how to establish and sustain community organisations and groups.

This Conference workshop provided a platform to develop and meet some of the key objectives of the Capacity Development Project.

Capacity Development Project Training programmes

The CDP has two targeted areas for its training programmes. The first is working with individual Travellers and Traveller community based organisations to develop skills, increase operational sustainability and facilitate more effective project development and delivery.

The second is the development and delivery of 'awareness raising' sessions and consultations to agencies concerned with Traveller health and welfare.

During the year, we have worked closely with members of the community to build their confidence and skill levels in a variety of ways: through training sessions, through practical experience and through providing one on one support and development.

Our "Traveller awareness raising" sessions aim to equip statutory and other agencies with the skills and knowledge to more effectively engage with and serve the Travelling communities. These sessions are delivered by members of the Traveller community and facilitated by ITMB staff members. We anticipate significant growth for this programme over the next year.

The work of the CDP has had a huge impact on the continuation and development of previous work carried out by ITMB for individual Travellers and the Traveller community itself.

Ever increasing numbers of Travellers are engaged with services nationwide to ensure a Traveller dimension to service planning and provision. For instance, a great number of Travellers involved with the CDP have taken an active role in the first Gypsy Roma Traveller History Month, which was organized by the Government. Many others have carried a

representative role in the development of Regional Spatial Strategies across England during the year.

The future is bright for the Capacity Development Project. We have not only expanded our projects, but now have more staff in the CDP team.

CDP FUTURE PLANS

- to reach out to and train greater numbers of Travellers;
- to expand our services to more local authority areas;
- to make long-awaited improvement to Traveller input into the third sector;
- to continue to support the establishment and development of community based Traveller organisations and residents groups;
- to host a wider range of targeted regional training sessions;
- to initiate the development of more Interagency Forums;
- to ensure core Traveller input into the strategic planning and development of the Capacity Development Project.

POLICY REPRESENTATION AND CAMPAIGN PORTFOLIO

During the year, ITMB continued to engage with local, regional and national Government in relation to the development and implementation of Government policy affecting the Irish Traveller community. There was a very unsavoury local action taken by police in London and inflammatory self-serving speeches were made by a small number of politicians against the Traveller population.

ITMB was a member of the London Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment, which published its findings in May 2008. ITMB made a written response to the report, outlining its strong points and making recommendations for revision of the report. ITMB began a monitoring process of the implementation of the GTANA recommendations across London. This work continues.

ITMB also contributed to the development of an East of England Spatial Strategy, specifically the allocation of 1187 Traveller site pitches. Following some protests by some local councils, the ITMB were reported in local news media as being fully supportive of full and proper implementation of the Strategy as it affected the Traveller population.

The ITMB made a formal complaint to the Race Independent Advisory Group against police following a late night raid at Lynton Close Travellers Site in Brent, involving a mechanical digger and over 380 police officers. The site houses some 130 Traveller children who were deeply affected by the excessive and unusual action taken by the police.

More positively, ITMB acquired Traveller input into the drafting of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) written guidance on unauthorised encampments.

A small number of local MP's made inflammatory speeches or produced literature against Irish Travellers during the year. The ITMB wrote to the MP's concerned and also to their party leader. A full apology was given in some cases. There was a significant rise of inflammatory articles in the press particularly in relation to nimbyism and local Traveller site quotas. ITMB requested the Equalities and Human Rights Commission to intervene and increase their engagement with Travellers. ITMB also pressed political parties to reach a cross-party consensus on Traveller accommodation. ITMB produced a full policy statement on the latter.

ITMB also issued a policy statement on Traveller education in response to the Education and Skills Bill going through Parliament. The statement outlines a set of proposals to raise the educational attainment of Irish Travellers and related issues on which the ITMB can campaign .

ITMB jointly hosted the launch of the key Race Equality Foundation briefing paper "Gypsies, Travellers and Accommodation" authored by Margaret Greenfields at the House of Commons in January 2009. ITMB also assisted Margaret in her research into what Travellers and Gypsies think about possibly working in the health and social care sector ("A good job for a Traveller?")

ITMB has secured funds from the Big Lottery to produce its own research into the economic inclusion of Irish Travellers. It is anticipated that the end research and recommendations will contribute an Irish Traveller dimension into emerging Government strategies and policy on economic inclusion. It is to be emphasised that this new work will not replace existing policy and development work, which will continue as ever.

PAVEE CÉILIDH WEBSITE: www.irishtraveller.org.uk/pavee/

Exploring and celebrating the history, culture and traditions of Irish Travellers



NEW WEBSITE

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