



The Traveller Movement

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Construction training course for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers

December 2013



About TM: 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 TM, 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.

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 some 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) in partnership with the Construction Youth Trust (CYT) decided to run a construction course for young Gypsies, Roma and Travellers, aged between 16 and 24¹. The course comprised of 6 whole day sessions. In each session there were a range of introductory 'tasters' to a range of skills including; electricity, tiling, carpentry and plumbing. As part of the course there were also classroom based sessions that focused on acquiring the knowledge and skills around the safety aspects of the construction industry. The course aim was to lead the participants to a point where they would be able to take the test to enable them to get a CSCS card².

¹ See appendix 1

² **Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS)** This is the recognized construction industry recognized card that provides the holder access to work on construction sites, and it emphasizes all aspects of construction site safety and well being.

The report that Hellen Sherlock produced after the event follows:

**Construction course for Gypsies, Roma and Travellers December 2013:
A report by Hellen Sherlock.**

The Construction Youth Course training began on the 3rd of December 2013 and finished on December 18th.. It was held at The Peel Centre in Kings Cross, London. The course which was free (funded by the Construction Youth Trust) and ran for six days - two days a week over three weeks. The young men who took part were motivated by the chance to get the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card which is an essential health and safety requirement for anyone who wishes to work on any construction site now.

As well as acquiring the knowledge in order to be able to take the test and get a card the card, the course provided an excellent opportunity to develop skills in tiling, carpentry, plumbing, working with electricity etc... The Traveller lads who attended to course all saw themselves as eventually becoming self employed.

Four Roma (one from Slovakia) and four Irish Traveller men took part. During the practically based training the young men learned about tiling, carpentry, plumbing, working with electricity. The course was a mixture of practically based activities and classroom theory based work, in order to prepare the lads for the CSCS card test. Each of the days featured a taster of a different construction skill. Each lad had a board, on which to complete the tasks, the board was to become their practical piece. The board was bordered (carpentry skills), and then tiled and grouted. Then a range of pipe work was added, which involved welding and cutting pipes accurately.

Here are some quotes from some of the course participants and the course trainer.

Rudolf (Slovak Roma)

Peter: *What have you learned?*

Rudolf: *I have learned a lot because I didn't know how to do tiling, carpentry, plumbing; now I know"*

Peter: *How have you liked working with the Irish traveller lads?*

Rudolf: *I found it really good having a relationship between us is really like we are a close family*

Roland (Slovak Roma)

Peter: *How have you found this course?*

Roland: *I came to this training to learn some trades to work in the future"*

Peter: *Which skill are you best at?*

Roland: *Plumbing, copper pipes and carpentry*

Patrik (Slovak Roma)

Peter: *How have you liked the course?*

Patrik: *I really enjoy it I'm thinking of reconsidering my options because I would like to do plumbing in the future"*

Peter: *What have liked most about the course?*

Patrik: *I like the tiling*

John & Douglas (Irish Travellers)

Peter: Tell us something about the course?

John & Douglas: The trainers Rob Wright is a very nice guy, this course was very challenging very good for experience really helpful for the future we have skills we didn't know we had.

Rob Wright (Course trainer)

I am the London trainer for the construction youth trust.

We have 6 young lads here today all between 16-24 cracking bunch of lads nothing but fun were having here were having a great banter, I started the course with a bit of trepidation – I have had Traveller groups attend the training before and we had trouble. These lads are the first group to come and start early with no hurry to leave at the end of the day.

Issues affecting The Traveller Movement for policy consideration:

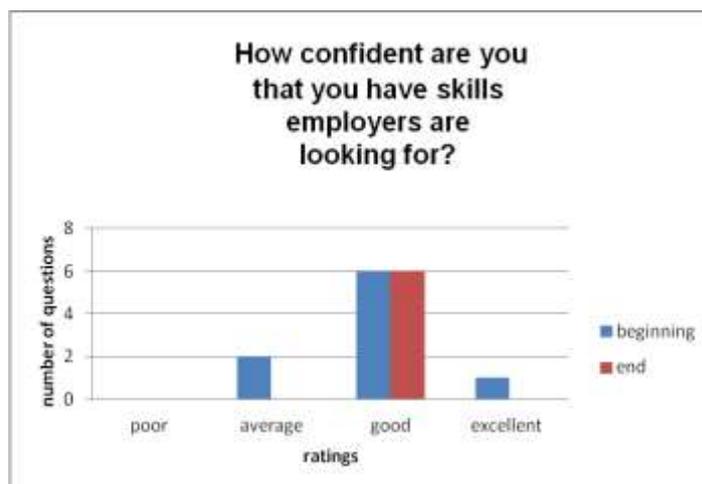
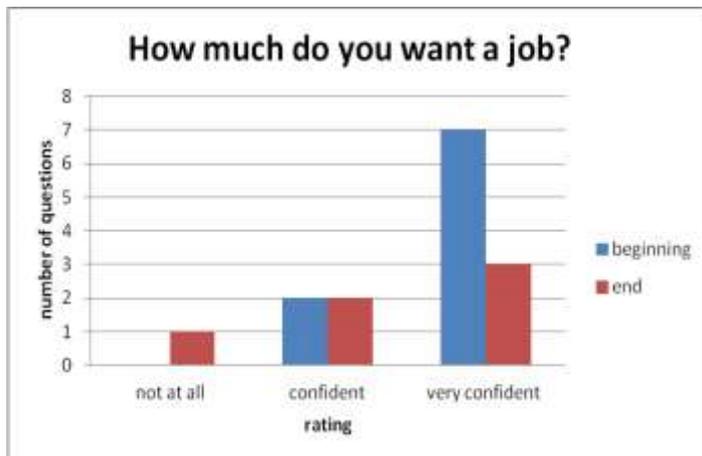
- Historically the cohort have found informal employment via their own networks
- Literacy and numeracy needs of the group could be a barrier to completing the CSCS, therefore making more formal employment hard to find
- Those communities that are still mobile find it hard to sustain apprenticeships
- As with other groups within the UK, the inflexibility of college course start dates can be an issue
- Many of the young people will require pre-apprenticeship training to be able to secure employment. Not all colleges provide this
- Insular nature of parts of the community can mean that awareness of opportunities may be limited

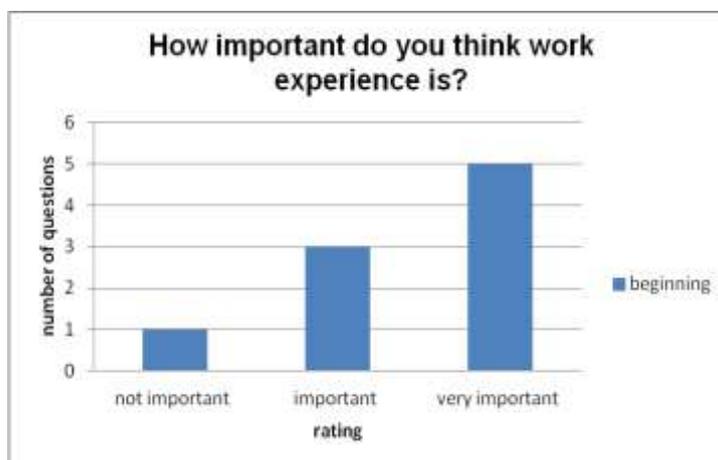
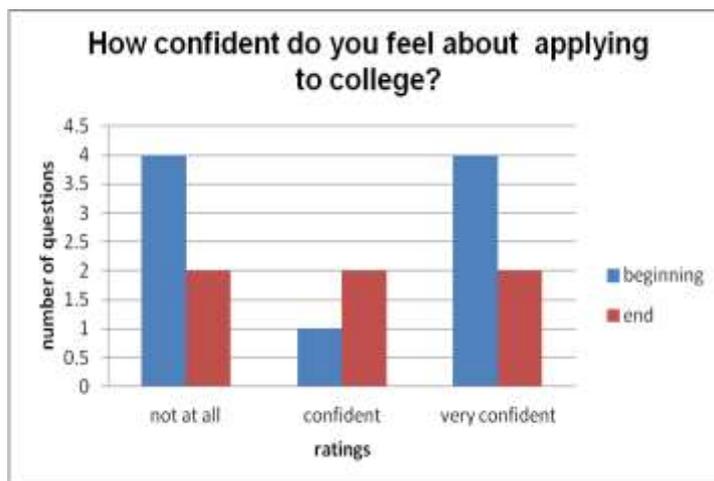
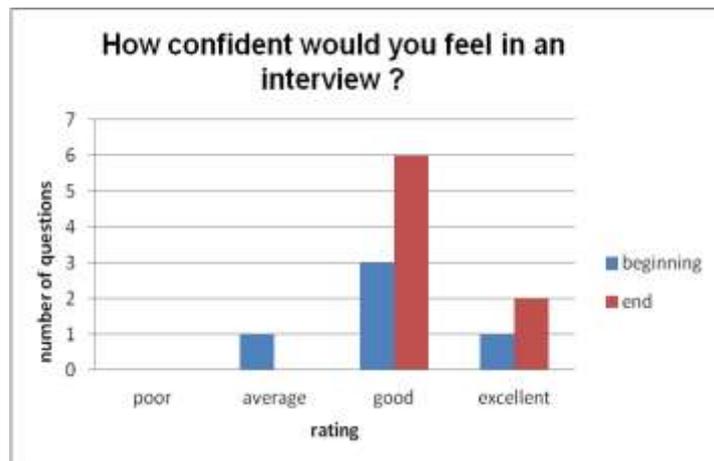
Moving Forward:

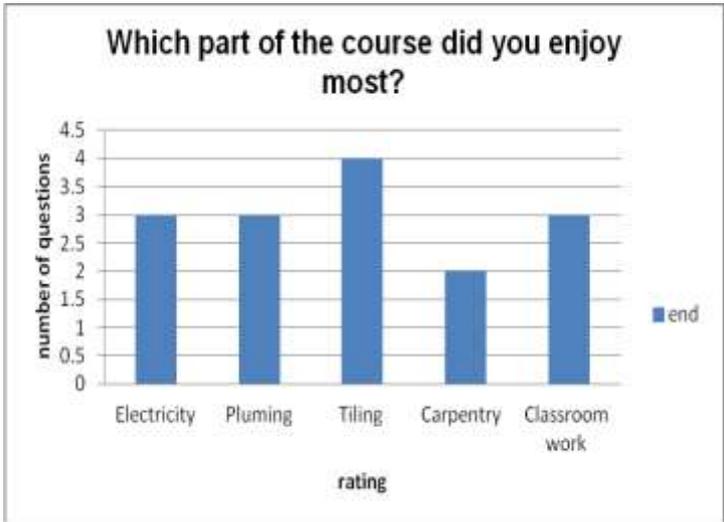
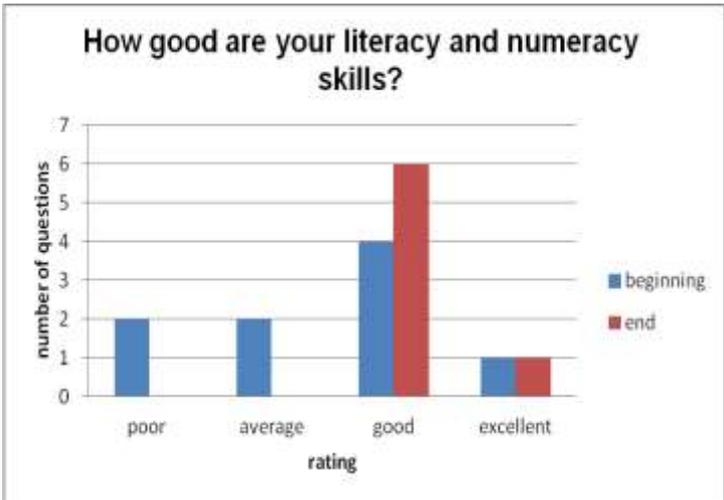
- There is a need, and not just for the Traveler community, for roll-on-roll-off pre-apprenticeship training. Short courses, delivered ideally within the community, that bridge the gap
- Not all young people realise the need for employment or training in August, ready for a September college intake.
- Not all young people are able to engage in employment or training at 16 years old. At CYT we work with many young people who do not wish to re-engage with employment or training until they are 19-24 years old. Due to the nature of funding for apprenticeships this can make securing one at this age hard.
- Shared apprenticeship schemes are becoming more popular. These are where several companies provide the necessary training over the 3 years of an apprenticeship to share the cost and the load. It also encourages companies to take on apprentices even where their workload is uncertain. However, the young person is still required to attend the same college, so although the flexibility of the apprenticeship may suit the Traveller community the inflexibility of the college may not.

Evaluations by course participants.

We gave out an evaluation form both at the beginning and at the end of the construction course.







Photos of the training







Free course for young Travellers to get your CSCS card



Interested....telephone: 0207 607 2002

The Traveller Movement and the Construction Youth Trust are running a series of 6 whole days of construction training for young Gypsy, Roma and Travellers between the ages of 16 and 24 living in Great London. At the end of the course successful students will be able to get the CSCS (Construction Skills Certification Scheme) card. This is essential for working on construction sites.

WHERE

The course will take place at:
The Peel Centre, 21 Percy Circus, Kings Cross, London WC1X 9EY
Nearest station is Kings Cross.

WHEN

The dates for the training course are:
Tuesday 3rd and Wednesday 4th December (9.30am-4pm)
Tuesday 10th and Wednesday 11th December (9.30am-4pm)
Tuesday 17th and Wednesday 18th December (9.30am-4pm)
Attendance at all 6 days will be required to gain the CSCS card.

HOW

Full details and a referral form can be downloaded from the Traveller Movement website:

www.irishtraveller.org.uk

OR

Call the Traveller Movement on: **020 607 2002**

Email us: hellen@travellermovement.org.uk

Places for this course are limited