



**‘Working Towards Inclusive
Practice in the Early Years’
Inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller
culture in early years settings**

20th June 2007 Birmingham Hippodrome

**Conference presentations
Conference evaluation report
Practice sharing session discussion notes**

COLETTE MARSHALL, UK PROGRAMME DIRECTOR, SAVE THE CHILDREN

Thank you Michelle, good morning. Thank you very much for coming, it is great to see so many of you, particularly when I know so many of you are busy, to come and share this day with us and share your learning and your thoughts. So thank you to Michelle and the whole team and everyone else who has helped make this day possible.

Save the Children has organised an annual conference on early years Gypsy, Roma and Travellers since 2005 as part of a national project that we are running. We are really excited to host this year's event which aims to promote the inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture in all early years settings and to highlight the resources that help make this possible. Save the Children has a long history of working with Gypsy and Traveller communities to improve their access to services, particularly in the area of education because children from these communities, and young people, highlight this as one of the key challenges they face.

As a community the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller population experiences racism and discrimination in many different ways such as accessing adequate health care and education. Indeed, the Commission for Racial Equality, as many of you will know, has recently identified racism against Gypsies and Travellers as "extreme, pervasive and socially unacceptable." This is something that is often exacerbated by the level of prejudice we see in the British media. Indeed in a representative poll conducted by MORI in 2003 more than one third of adults who took part admitted to being personally prejudiced towards Gypsies and Travellers, which was greater than the level of prejudice reported towards any other ethnic minority. The Swann report of 1985 'Education for All' identified Gypsy Traveller pupils as being strongly affected by factors such as racism and discrimination, myths and stereotyping. It highlighted the need for greater links, and stronger links, between parents and schools. Nearly 20 years later, sadly, the problems still seem to be the same, according to the children and young people that we speak to.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils in England continue to be the group most at risk of failure in the education system with access to schooling a serious problem particularly for the most highly mobile children and those living in unauthorised encampments. The fact that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children are still the group most at risk of failure in the education system continues to be a great concern to us at Save the Children. This is why we developed this early years project with funding, for which we are very grateful, from the Department for Education and Skills.

It is hugely encouraging that the government is committed to improving the education of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children within the current education system. As part of their national strategies there is the national Gypsy, Roma and Traveller programme which many of you here today may well be currently involved in. This pilot programme involves piloting and evaluating materials

and approaches in eleven local authorities developed and designed to raise the achievement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils. There is also much greater emphasis on personalised learning across areas in schools, which is learning that should meet the unique needs of every child. If effective this could be of real benefit for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children in terms of inclusion. This should mean working towards dismantling barriers to learning whatever their causes and to foster the best possible chances for learning.

In the pre-budget report in Dec 06 the chancellor announced further funding through the schools standards grant of 130 million pounds in 2007 and 2008 to be paid directly to schools to help them deliver personalised learning and extended schools services. The challenge for us is how do we get this to be targeted for these children?

This conference is for all practitioners who already engage with these communities and families in their work, but it is also very much aimed at those who have not yet worked with children and families from these communities and those who may never work directly with them. Gypsies and Travellers of Irish Heritage are ethnic minority groups recognised under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. All statutory settings are therefore duty bound to include these groups within their resources and within their activities. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children therefore attending settings should see themselves reflected in resources and activities in and outside the classroom. And all children should have the opportunity to understand and celebrate these cultures as all children benefit from a more inclusive education. It is also through engaging with resources and activities reflecting the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture that children can at last understand and value these cultures and then go on to challenge prejudice and negative stereotypes.

So what do we hope that you might get from today's conference? Well we hope to provide opportunities for you to share learning and practice and perhaps to develop fresh ideas for working at a local level to improve services and to consider issues relating to regional policy and practice. There will be the opportunity to hear from Chrissy Meleady, from Early Years Equality, about the benefits inclusive education has for achievement and attainment in early years. From Jelena Petrovic who is also from Save the Children from our project in Montenegro, it is very kind that she has come across today and will provide valuable insight into the extreme poverty and discrimination Roma face in eastern Europe today. And Richard O'Neill, who as a member of the Traveller community, will also talk and give his perspective. And finally we will hear from Richenda Riches from Norfolk TES who will talk about how good quality early years outreach work can really reach to these children. So thank you very much for joining us all today and I hope you all get a lot out of it.

CHRISSEY MELEADY, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, EARLY YEARS EQUALITY

Thank you very much everybody and thank you for allowing me this time to come and talk to you today. I had a disconcerting experience upon arriving here and entering the foyer; I was walking past one of your round pillars in the

reception areas and I suddenly looked and thought it was a mirror. I had to look again and it was Russ Abbott in a red wig. So it has unnerved me a bit, you will have to bear with me with my nerves a bit now!

What I wanted to talk to you about was to put into context some of the aspects that we are here to look at today around inclusion but to also put back some historical considerations of what we are working with. I have been writing a book about slavery and racism as part of the bi-centennial commemorations in terms of the trans-Atlantic exploitations of African people and I came across a poster that I had never seen before from Elegia in Romania in 1852 and it said 'for sale a prime lot of Gypsy slaves for sale by auction at the monastery of Saint Elius, May the 8th 1852, consisting of eighteen men, ten boys, seven women and three girls all in fine condition.' It is not very well known in terms of understanding of enslavement and enslavements across continents that Gypsy communities were frequently sold into slavery by dominating populations within the European context and often subject to extreme abuses in that enslavement process. I also came across issues the 17th century with Dutch police and civilians who undertook heathen hunts. In 1637 Sweden banned all Roma in Sweden itself on fear of execution if they entered the borders. In 1721 Charles the 6th emperor of Holy Roman Empire executed all Roma men and cut the ears off every Roma woman and child who existed within his confinement areas. In 1999 70% of Roma children in the Czechoslovakia republic are in special schools and Euro wide we have had major problems in terms of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community inclusion.

I was party with Amnesty International a while ago looking at issues around Gypsy population, particularly the Roma community around Slovakian. And how entire Romany communities were being subjected to criminal type of perceptions and that when one person committed a crime the entire community were criminalized as a result of that crime. Amnesty International report stated 'the common reported pattern that has emerged from all of these reported incidents is of a dawn raid on mass, police using dogs and restriction by the police of the movements of the Roma inhabitants, police officers using racist abuse and ill treatment'. Those of you who were here at the conference last year will recall that I spoke about similar incidents here in the U.K.; in York, in Sheffield and more recently we have had further raids and some police forces, though not all of them, have been perpetuating these abuses. More recently in the Darfield area of Barnsley we have had 16 Gypsies and Travellers and non-Gypsies beaten up by the police after the Darfield horse fair. In the night time I was called out and they had dog bites and the dogs were set onto them, there was Parvi gas sprayed in the face of a ten year old Irish Traveller boy and a barmaid were beaten up and non-Traveller people were also were explaining to me how they had been subject to abuse. This was March 17th this year and yet Amnesty International are talking about other places, this is UK Amnesty International yet we have this perpetuation here amongst us in the UK. Despite having a wide range of equality legislation including the International convention of the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination in 1969 the Race Relations Act 1976, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989, Human Rights Act 2000 we have the E.U. Race directives and we also have the Race Relations (Amendment)

Act 2000 and we also have Equality Act and more recently coming into force is the single Equality Bill all of it highlighting the need to uphold people's rights and protections and to prevent the possibility of unfair treatment yet here amongst us in the U.K. we are consistently seeing Gypsy and Traveller communities and all their diversity being subject to extreme forms of human rights abuses and what do we have within that process is that we generally have a high level of non-intervention and even in some cases complicity by the government and also other equality agencies about raising the issue of racism. Issues were raised to the CRE in their recent take in relation to the Gypsy and Traveller community. As you know, we all went through a process a while ago at local authorities to see what the experiences of Gypsies and Travellers were within those local authorities and the local barriers and whether local authorities are adhering to the legislation they are required to adhere to. At that time we were arguing to the CRE that what was needed was not another investigation, another accommodation needs assessment, not another force of looking again and again at what the issues are but actually dealing with this rather than non-intervention and complicating in what is happening across the whole of the country. The political response has been sometimes of incitement, as you know, if we go back to Michael Howard, and we could name from every party the incitement in relation to Gypsies and Travellers within particular areas and in relation to discrimination and the denial of the experiences of Gypsies and Travellers. Inaction, verbal condemnation, we have had this consistently all the time. And within this context, early years children and their families are living within communities and experiencing this, sometimes on a daily basis and sometimes infrequently, depending on their experiences in different areas. Sladack, Czechoslovakian writer, in 1988 wanted to bring down the criminal age of responsibility in Czechoslovakia for Roma communities to the point of birth because they were criminals from the moment they were born. Early years children been victimised in such a way is absolutely appalling, from all of our perspectives.

But if I move now to the early years because I think what is important for us always to remember is when we are working, or from the particular communities concerned, what their actual experiences are on the ground. Every day practitioners and policy makers are having to work with these issues and work with the impact of these types of behaviours every day. You are building up trust with communities, this takes a long time to build up with the Gypsy and Traveller community because of their experiences going over many centuries. And then you get a dawn raid; a dawn raid consisting, potentially, of 300 police officers with dogs and helicopter support onto a site with 12 pitches which is an example I gave you previously. I can give you combined raids with the Department for Work and Pensions, police Gypsy Liaison officers supporting interventions as well as other departments also going in. The pieces are being left to be picked up by you, working with the children and families concerned and others within the communities as well.

From an early years perspective one of the most important things is the aspect of inclusion and it is not just also about including children but it is also about the positive outcomes children have. Everybody can be given an equal

opportunity if people are committed to provide that but it is the outcomes, ultimately, that matter at the end of the day. And what we have been doing as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage development is diversity proofing the programme, or trying to. I put in sections to them, as recommendation, in terms of the Gypsy and Traveller community. In terms of outreach work, as you will all know, it is not included as part of that overall drive really. So I am concerned, even with the EYFS and some of the aspects within it, that we are having omission. If we are talking about the welfare principles and the learning and development requirements they have to be culturally specific and they have to take into consideration issues of anti-discrimination. It is all very well using terms about the unique child, which is a line that we drove, and in terms of the inclusion line, we all drew that very hard and wanted the principles embedding from the start, but we also wanted human rights principals for all children and we also wanted specific mention made to minority populations inclusive of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community as strong running themes all the way through. In relation to the Every Child Matters agenda, again, with that context was that practitioners and people in policy making were being asked to ensure that being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and economic wellbeing. Where does that put us in terms of working with particular communities who come from a base of absolute disadvantage and being subject to discrimination? It is how do you work within those perimeters and how far do you have to go? In terms of the KEEP process, within the new guidelines, in terms of key elements of effective practice again has profound impact on you as workers, people making policy for Gypsy and Traveller communities and the relationship with children and adults are one of the core areas.

Save the Children and other organisations have done some fantastic work in terms of inclusive practice for the Gypsy and Traveller community which has been very effective across the U.K. We have been monitoring roll out among the community to find out how things are working out and to find out how these interventions are making a positive impact. The work has had wide ranging impacts across the board in terms of inclusion and how other children perceive other communities and how families and communities perceive them. I think one of the major achievements has been in one area we work in that we have been having quite a lot of areas not wanting to have sites, as you know. Whilst the government are driving forward saying they want transient sites and more sites, what we are in battle with, at the moment, is that when you are talking to politicians and also planners and enforcers what they are saying is that they have no more green belt land and that they have no brown field land either to be used and that is the line, so where do they go ultimately in the end? How do families access the early years services? How do they get through the planning dimensions that are going on all the time? What you get, in some cases, is families have been pulling off roadside, buying a piece of land and placing themselves onto the land then putting through the applications for planning and then being condemned because they are not doing what the general population are doing in terms of putting the application in first. What would you do in those circumstances if your been moved from pillar to post every so many weeks? Your moved

consistently from one place to another place; where early years workers have been building up good relationships, creating impact in terms of children's achievement and attainment and well being and then they are being moved on elsewhere and then it starts again, the process starts again and again. So what we are trying to do is get to the root causes for families as well and tackle those inequalities.

What I wanted to say to you today primarily is that whilst we have the gamut that Richenda will talk about later in terms of the break down of the work directly with children and families is that where does it place us working in this field in terms of institutional racism that children and families are subject to every day? How far are you prepared to go as workers and as organisations in terms of standing up for that because, at the end of the day, what we have found is that early years practitioners and workers are also subject to that racism for being the supporters, the workers and the allies and the advocates for the Gypsy and Traveller community and that very often goes unrecognised. Something I have recognised, and others have recognised in this field, is that it takes a lot of courage to consistently pick up those pieces of what institutional racism is doing to the community every day. The work you put in has far more achievement and impact in terms of the educational attainment than the government is driving. It has more impact in terms of the dignity and respect and the inclusion for our communities and I would like personally to thank you all for the effort that you make because I am aware that with our race agenda here in the U.K. very much we have had a historical agenda of a skin colour parody, where that particular form of racism where it is absolutely endemic and is not in any way to be condoned is the prevalent one that governments and authorities are keen to link with. When it comes to other forms of racism, and in particularly Gypsy and Traveller here and the anti-Gypsy and Traveller racism, it is very much ignored.

I wanted to finish off with a film that people have asked me to show. Some of you may have seen this before so I apologise. For those of you who have not seen it and have asked me to bring it, it shows the reality of where in the early years we have situations of children. Steven Lawrence was at school with two of the people who went on to murder him, playing side by side, engaging with each other, yet where do their paths diverge as children got older. How did some go on to murder and another be murdered? And the same with the film, how can we save all our children from going down a path of extreme racism and murder.

Johnny Delaney film shown

Just the final thing is the importance of the work for early years I cannot emphasise enough because as you all know it is the formative years within our sector when we have the most reach to children, families and communities. For people in youth work, it is often too late to engage hearts and minds, to get children, families and communities to work together. With the new role-out of work we have the opportunity that we have never had before, in terms of the KEEP requirements, of reaching out to communities and working collectively to put an end to some of the abuses and difficulties we have been

experiencing within our work and within our communities and the opportunity for our community for cohesion and to eliminate racism and discrimination in our society. Thank you for coming today to rally that cause.

JELENA PEROVIC, ROMA EDUCATION PROJECT, SAVE THE CHILDREN

I will speak about the Roma in south-east Europe. I work for Save the Children, UK in south-east Europe. Save the Children UK work in Bulgaria, Serbia and Kosovo, Bosnia Herzegovina and Montenegro. First I will describe the living conditions of extreme poverty and marginalisation in this region then I will focus on educational issues of Roma children in south-east Europe and in particular the problems relating to the pre-school education and finally I will give a brief overview the efforts the governments in this region are undertaking to improve the lives of Roma.

There is a serious lack of reliable statistical data about Roma in south-east Europe, a region that is believed to be the home of the greatest number of Roma in the world. It is estimated there are 3.7million Roma, of whom about 1.7million people or 46% are children. They live in south-east Europe in Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Kosovo. There are great differences of estimates and official data due to the fact that many Roma are not registered. While the majority of populations are declining in this area, the Roma populations are rapidly increasing. Roma communities in south-east Europe do not constitute a homogenous population as among them there are different religious affiliations, cultures and historical experiences. Many Roma in the region speak one of the dialects of their mother tongue, many also speak fluent language of their home country.

Roma have been historically discriminated against in south-east Europe. The first recorded incident of Roma dates back to the middle ages, since then Roma have had a low social status including that of slaves. In Romania they have been seen as alien to the mainstream culture and society; under Ottomen rule Roma had to occupy the less attractive plots in the urban and rural areas, the predecessors to today's ghettos. During the Second World War the Roma population was also displaced, while elsewhere the victims of Nazi oppression. Under the communist regime the policy to Roma was assimilation and forced labour market, though this was less rigidly applied in the former Yugoslavia. Many thousands of Roma lost their homes and emigrated abroad as a consequence. The decline of employment and mass fallout deepened the divide. The majority of Roma are poor and are amongst the most excluded people in south-east Europe. The experience of the child is that of marginalisation, poverty and exclusion, poor housing and poor infrastructure are followed by social isolation. Roma are residents of slums; they often lack property rights and cannot register their home at a permanent address and have no documentation so they are unable to access basic services. As a consequence many children are not called to school when they reach school age and they cannot access health services. Often those living in slums are not included in statistics and governmental social studies.

In other words Roma are in fact invisible, living on the margins of societies that do not care.

All estimates clearly indicate that Roma are heavily over-represented in the poorest sector of society. In south-east European states with high unemployment rates and a relatively well educated workforce it is especially difficult for Roma to get a job. Unemployment among Roma, aged 15 to 55, ranges between 44 and 70%. In addition most Roma have marginal jobs which do not permit them to benefit from labour rights. Roma are left to do work no one else would like to do; it is mostly hard work, in poor conditions and is not beneficial to their health. Employment opportunities for Roma women are even more limited than for men due to lower level of education and skills due to discrimination. There is insufficient data regarding the collection of welfare benefits for Roma families in the region. Roma often do not collect pensions. High number of children means that they are in great need of receiving child benefits but most social security in the region is spent on pensions not on child benefits and welfare. Thus lack of information and complicated application procedures, restrictive eligibility conditions, lack of registration and lack of formality in which Roma live result in them being, to a large extent, excluded from social welfare schemes. Material poverty is both the cause and the effect of the negative social and economic exclusion. Children are the key to breaking the vicious cycle of poverty.

Rather than helping to overcome the disadvantages of Roma children across the region the education systems contribute and further perpetuate the exclusion. Finally cultural and social obstacles combined with discrimination hinder their access to quality of their education and leave many children in segregated schools and classes channel them to special needs education or leave them without any education. Roma people are heavily over-represented among those without even basic literacy skills. Roma aged 25–35 have a better literacy rate than those in 15-25 age group indicating the current situation is not improving. The literacy rates for Roma women are consistently lower than for Roma men indicating there is also an issue of gender inequality as well as access to education. There is a lack of preparation for formal education, therefore they are at a disadvantage when they start school. In addition Roma children have few role models in the area or neighbourhood who have higher education and qualified work. Thus pre-school education is important for preparing children for school and especially for Roma children. In south-east Europe coverage is very low except in Bulgaria and Romania where $\frac{3}{4}$ of children enjoy some form of pre-school. However, even in those countries enrolment rates for Roma are worryingly low at 16 and 17% respectively. Pre-school provision is lowest in Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo. There are very few pre-schools in rural areas, while in the cities the priority is given to children of working parents, which means that poor children with unemployed parents are simply left out. Children who are foreign speakers are many enter pre-school suffer additional institutional discrimination through the lack of support provided. Very few pre-schools offer help to enable Roma children to acquire the language skills they need to enter primary school. Inter-cultural

learning and understanding the language and more on individual initiatives is needed than on institutional capacities and policies.

As with pre-school, it is children from the poorest and the most socially excluded families and communities who are least likely to enrol in primary school. Research shows that Roma children count for a large proportion of those not involved in primary schools. Studies indicate a vast gap in enrolment even between Roma and non-Roma living in the same neighbourhood. The gap is severest in Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina and Montenegro. Not having the capacity to cover all costs, inadequate preparation, discrimination and low quality education are the main causes of the exclusion from school.

Unlike rooted prejudices that Roma are not interested in education, most Roma consider education important for their children but they face significant obstacles caused by poverty and discrimination. There is wide recognition that with Roma poor education is the cause of poverty and marginalisation but also that poverty prevents many Roma people from participating fully in education. Furthermore, Roma parents consider discrimination within the schools and within wider society to be a major factor in undermining educational progress. Discrimination is perceived as coming from teachers and children; ranging from humiliating treatment and lack of attention and harsher punishment to bullying.

Governments have the ultimate responsibility to ensure children attend school during the years when it is compulsory. The decade of Roma inclusion, 2005-2015, is a political commitment in central and south-east Europe to improve the socio-economic status and social inclusion of Roma within a regional framework. The decade is an international initiative that brings together governments, inter-governmental and non-governmental organisations as well as Romani civil society to take steps to improving the welfare of Roma and to review such progress in a transparent way. The decade of Roma inclusion was launched by the World Bank in 2005 focusing on four target areas which are; housing, employment, health and education. Nine countries taking part in the decade of Roma inclusion are; Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovakia. Each country participating has to develop a national action plan specifying the goals and indicators in the four priority areas. Decade watch is the first assessment of government action on implementing the commitments expressed under the decade of Roma inclusion and it is a monitoring report prepared by teams of Roma civil society leaders. It shows that countries must move from sporadic measures based on powered projects often based or co-financed by international partners to integrated policies and programmes.

Hungary is the most advanced country participating in the decade. Following at a substantial distance from Hungary is the main group consisting of Bulgaria, Slovakia the Czech Republic, Romania and Croatia. Macedonia and Serbia lag slightly behind, mainly because of their reliance on donor support in opposition to the governments own leadership in implementing the decade. While Montenegro remains in pre-decade stage of commitment.

So far the biggest barrier in the decade's implementation has been the lack of data on Roma covering information on employment, health and housing. Data collection is sparse, irregular and not nationally representative. Only the systematic and regular collection of this segregated nationally represented data will allow governments to report on the outcomes of their efforts under the decade in 2015. The decade agenda has not been consistently and systematically translated into actions on the ground. It is essential that the decade is implemented at the municipal level because in most countries the municipalities are the key education, employment and health service providers and need to lead the outreach and communication with the Roma communities, thus political will is necessary to translate plans into government finance and inclusion policies, ensuring the national programmes filter down to the municipal level.

As opposed to other priorities areas, in education many countries have moved from sporadic measures to some degree of programme or policy. A Roma education programme was established and has played a key role in advancing the development of policies and programmes of financing or co-financing activities in many countries. Some form of pre-school programme is in place in every country, mostly in the form of free of charge provision one year of preschool and sometimes it is associated with measures that specifically promote access of Roma to kindergarten or early childhood programmes. Alongside the development of greater resources regarding the language, history and traditions of Roma, governments have undertaken specific monitoring of the level of Roma participation in pre-school. It would take almost 15 years to cover 80% of Roma children with pre-school education, with a targeted increase of 5% per year in south-east Europe. Thus explicit and implicit access barriers for Roma remain across many countries and they are likely to be overcome only if governments move to better integrate and co-ordinate measures as well as to enrol Roma in a more and more systematic policy design and service delivery.

To conclude children must be set as a priority concern, especially during the period of transition and reform of services and structures of the countries of south-east Europe. A sick, hungry or illiterate child cannot wait until the economy gets better or until his or her parents find a job because childhood is not an opportunity that comes back. Thank you.

RICHARD O'NEILL

See you don't have to actually be good to get picked to do this you just have to turn up. Always be reliable! My name is Richard O'Neill, I am a Traveller from the north-east and what I wanted to do was to talk for about ten minutes about some of my experiences at school and the early years and I am probably going back to about 1962 when I was born and those sort of mid-60's and how different things are now, thankfully.

Before I do I just wanted to say it is quite difficult sometimes coming to these things, when you have a look around and there is probably only about, well

having a look round, there is probably only about 5 or 6 of us here today so we are quite outnumbered. This often happens so when we go to schools sometimes that is the negative thing, being outnumbered in a situation like this. The positive thing is when you go to a school, which I do a lot to do storytelling, we are seen as quite exotic – but that is being a man for you! How many men have we got here today? So we are the minority here today we've got to try and stick together. I think it shows us how far we have moved on because I think probably, maybe 30 – 40 years ago, a conference like this about education would have been mostly men, so I think that is a good thing.

Let me take you back to, as I promised, to about 1962 and I was born in a caravan in the North-East and my parents didn't have a site they didn't have anywhere we just stayed where we could. I cannot really remember having any books in the caravan. and I can't remember any of my relatives having any books. The way to share information was really storytelling; we would learn about our culture, we would learn about our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents. And that was really enough for us. School was something that was sort of done to you. My Mam was quite keen for me to go to school and she taught me to read a little bit before I went so I would be ahead of the game. My mum was quite tough, she was about 5 foot 2" and pound for pound probably one of the toughest women around, I think. She said I was going to school so I was going to school and I don't know if anyone has a tough mum like that but when she said I was doing it, I was doing it. I was really apprehensive about going to school because I was the first Traveller, the first person from my family to go to school and the only Traveller in the school. It was quite daunting to go to that school, but I have got to say that pretty much the kids weren't too bad and the teachers weren't too bad and I game home with a couple of things on my first day; one was a new reading book and the other was head lice – can't always win can we! Which I promptly, not the book I am sorry to say, but the head lice I shared with everyone on the camp which made me very popular, which was another mark against school.

What I would like to say is that because I go round to lot of schools now and do a lot of storytelling you do see a lot of Traveller kids in the schools and I do see a lot of little kids so their parents, through the work you have all being doing are actually thinking ok, maybe it is not a bad thing for these little children to go to schools. And it is not just about getting little children into schools, the pre-school and the infants, it is not just about that I don't think with Travellers. I think it is really, really important not just for the children but for the parents. I know that there a lot of Travellers in their 20's, 30's and even 40's who have actually accessed education because of the work people like you have done. I don't want you to think today, and Chrissy mentioned earlier on and I want to reiterate that, I don't want you to think because other people may think early years it is just about little kids who wet themselves, it is not actually important for education. I think it is vitally important education because what you do actually does set the tone for how children are later on. The work you do actually impacts on other children, they learn about Gypsy and Traveller children, they learn about the diversity and education is about giving people the opportunity to do something differently. And when I say the

opportunity I don't mean that every Gypsy and Traveller is going to go right through the education system and end up in universities, well people may not want that but it is about giving them the opportunity and I think what you do is vitally important for that.

What we were talking about, I have done two workshops today and we have had some fun, and if you weren't in my workshop then you really missed out because they will tell you I was good, wasn't I? They got me on a good day and everything went right. So we had a lot of fun and we were talking about storytelling and it is about communication and I think the only thing I will leave you with before I hand you over to the next person is when we communicate with people we have actually got to think where they are coming from and if they are a professional and they are getting paid to do it we have got to think more about that because they are our customer. I'm sure you do this already but this isn't for you, this is for the people that aren't here today who you can pass this onto.

Gypsies and Travellers are interested in education and they do want to become educated and they do want to learn but let me tell you a little, leave you with a little story and see how keen you would be as a parent to let your children go to this school.

Let's imagine we all got rich today and we decided to leave England and go and live in rural France because it is so nice. And we move into this village and we buy all the local property and we get the local people to do these properties up for us. The economy is really good and everyone is really pleased, these English people are fantastic we love them and then we get a band of lager louts who come into the town for some reason from England. They go into the local bar and they smash the place up and they are really abusive to everyone and they put someone in hospital. How keen do you think you would be to send your children to the local school the next day? This is what happens to Gypsies and Travellers a lot of the time; some Gypsies and Travellers may come into an area who aren't very nice people and those children have got to go to that school. One of the jobs we have to do is to educate people that there are some Gypsies and Travellers in the community who aren't very nice people but the vast majority, like the vast majority in any community, are decent people who are interested in education. Ok, thanks for listening and maybe next time we can do a workshop together.

RICHENDA RICHES, CO-ORDINATOR, NORFOLK TRAVELLER EDUCATION SERVICE

Hello everybody, I'm Richenda Riches and the co-ordinator bit is fairly recent and it is only part time. What I have been is an early years advisory teacher for the service and I still am for two days a week. I'm here to talk to you about good practice outreach in relation to the EYFS.

I just feel it would be helpful to remember what Chrissy said this morning about omissions. What she reminded us of is there is no mention in the EYFS of outreach practice. So it is up to us here, people here in this audience who

are working outreach with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children to raise that and to use the knowledge and the language we have, to build those omissions and to ensure as she said, yes our work is about inclusion but more than that, more importantly than that it is about making sure that there are positive outcomes for children; we should be motivated by that primarily.

So here is a young Gypsy/ Traveller who has accessed a nursery position, I love this picture he is so intently filling those bottles. And here is the obvious quote that goes with that

“the most effective way to promote the education of Gypsy and Traveller children is to ensure that they are able to gain access to education during the foundation stage.”

But we have got to remember if we are thinking about positive outcomes for children and real inclusion that there are many reasons, still, why Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children cannot access what this little boy has accessed; mainstream early years opportunities and other early years services provided in integrated provision like what we see provided in Children’s Centres.

I am not going to go into today what those reasons are, I think we have heard a lot about that already this morning and as practitioners you will understand those reasons. But suffice to say they cover things like lack of availability of play places, high mobility making it difficult to access a settings and I think inappropriate to be placed in a setting. If a family is being moved on regularly, how appropriate is it for a three year old in that group to be put into a different setting so regularly alongside the stress they experiencing from being shifted on; what is that doing for their wellbeing?

So, if every child does matter we have to accept that outreach provision is a pro-active and an inclusive response to ensuring positive outcomes for these children in their learning. Here is a Gypsy Traveller father with his two young children at home. This father was very keen, as Richard was saying, for his daughters to access educational opportunities. The little girl on the left, he really wanted her to access nursery education but that was not a possibility while they were living roadside in a trailer and being moved on and on, so there was a delay in her being able to access nursery. She wasn’t able to access nursery until they were able to access housing, which is what they wanted. So there was a period of time between being two and half to three and a half approaching four where accessing mainstream was just impossible for her; so that is where the outreach had to come in.

Save the Children will soon be publishing an outreach practice guidance document; it aims to provide practitioners who are already providing or planning to provide outreach provision. This will include Children’s Centre managers. There are flyers about, promoting this document. Do pick one up and when you go back to your local authority make sure people in Children’s Centres or developing Children’s Centres have this information because they are the one’s that are having to think very carefully about how they carry out outreach work.

This quote comes from the Sure Start practice guidance of 2006, I am not going to read it I'll let you do that (see PowerPoint)

So, there is that little girl again and there is she is on the right accessing mainstream nursery education and there she is on the left at an outreach play session. It was done in that period of time where she was able to access where the family were in temporary housing; they had moved from being roadside in a trailer to being in temporary housing and this play session was the last one before she accessed a nursery in that village. On the right she has been able to access a nursery on a more permanent basis in a permanent housing. So we all agree that outreach play provision should promote and encourage and support families to access mainstream provision. In addition what ever outreach play provision that is provided should support children's learning and development especially when that service is the only service that child receives.

This little girl; it is a mad photograph I'd really like to say can you work out what is going on here? Some of you who attended the conference a couple of years ago may remember I spoke about a girl at that; well this is Jessie. I was doing play sessions with her at that time and I think her story is relevant here. Her parents did not want her to access early years education in the mainstream, her father was very protective of her and he had had some horrific experiences of school. Her family lived on a tolerated lay-by site with water and portaloos and the local area had a very negative opinion of the site, still do; so you can understand why, as Richard was saying, her parents felt concerned about her going into a local nursery. So we provided outreach play sessions, she is an extremely bright and clever little girl. Do any of you know the story "oh get off our train by John Burningham? Well she loved books and she borrowed a book at the end of each play session, she would make her dad read it to her and this was one of her favourites. This was her imaginatively playing out that book; so there is the train tracks, the animals and the little boy in the book. It is a dream in the book, if you haven't seen it do get it, the boy is dreaming he is on a train and the animals are joining him on the train. She laid down in the middle of the train track and I said what are you doing. "I'm oi get off our train". She is dreaming and enacting the dream of the book; that is seriously sophisticated imaginative play, I was very impressed. Then I had to get in and fall asleep but I am not showing you the photograph of that!

A lovely thing about a digital camera in these cases is you can celebrate the learning and the moment. I took the photo of Jessie and then she took the photo of me so there is the IT learning; the use of the camera.

Jessie did access reception, she started in reception class; her dad agreed to that, when she turned four. There was very quickly afterwards a raid on the site where she was living, actually on her 5th birthday. And the family shifted and she has not been in school since and I think that is understandable, what I feel as an early years practitioner is comforted to know through the outreach provision, she did receive really high quality learning experiences. I am pleased to say while she was in the reception class her base line score was

above average in the class. I think that proves there can be positive outcomes for children.

This is really, really important and I don't think there is a single person in the room who would not agree with me, the individual feature of outreach work is the two way learning that takes place. In other words it is not the "doing too" culture it is "doing with"; what we learn from the Jessie's of the world and their parents is invaluable and that is what outreach work does because it enables us to go back to the services we work with, with an informed knowledge and we should be able to adapt what we do to become more inclusive.

Key issues for outreach practice, this is based on the research that Save the Children did in preparation for the document that is to be published. The key issues are organisation – so for those of you who are planning your outreach work to the community these are the key areas to be thinking about. How do we organise our outreach work and how do we ensure quality of practice?

This is the picture of a promotional fun day on an organised site. So in terms of organisation there are quite a lot of current outreach strategies used, these will not encompass everyone but these are the main ones that are used at the moment.

- Playbuses and vans – going out into the community,
- Group play sessions/ drop in sessions – these usually require some on site facility so they are again quite exclusive to those families that are highly mobile or living on sites without these facilities available. The other thing to remember about group play sessions, on site, is there will always be parents and children who do not want to be part of those groups even though they are living on a site. They might be the families who are finding it difficult to settle onto the site, but it is important to remember that just because you are providing some form of outreach provision on site they may not have a single community need.
- Fun sessions/ events – they tend to be promotional and Sure Start local programmes did quite a lot of these types of things where Sure Starts were given funding to hand out promotional things like balloons when you are registering events so these promotional events are used for these. This is fine but they are not good enough on their own as they are sporadic; lets go in and do something, a one off event, and they need to lead to some other more planned organisation of the work. I can't bear it when I hear practitioners say we had such a fun day it was great, and then you say "so who are you working with now on the site?" and you get "oh I don't quite know yet." What's the point? So they need to be really well thought out. When I say promotion they do not need to be promoting a service they need to be promoting the really important thing of play of learning. So those sort freebies that often go with event need to be relevant to the community.
- Playboxes/ playsacks and kits – fantastic approach as it provides the one to one service and they are either provided in a one to one session or a small group or they might be provided as a loanable resource to

the family to be borrowed for a certain period of time. Sometimes both things happen e.g. in Leeds they do a play session and then loan the things that were used in the session. That can be very complex work for practitioners as you may be working with one family and there will be a baby of seven or eight months, up to a four year old with maybe a toddler in between, so you cater for a very broad developmental range in one session so the organisation has to be very tight. There will be other learning activities for under 5's that may be incorporated into other agencies that visit sites e.g. mobile library services or after school clubs. It is about quality that needs to be really tight. If you are providing an after school club and you have older children accessing the service how valuable is that service for the one under 5 who may be attending that group? What are they gaining that they couldn't get from outside play playing with their siblings?

Lets go onto the EYFS.

I am sure you have all seen it but I have brought a copy to show you what it looks like. I am going to give you the background context here. So here EYFS is a single quality framework that builds on and replaces the birth to three matters framework, the early years curriculum for 3 and 4 year olds and the national standards for daycare. So it brings all three into one document, an integrated document that sees no distinction from care and learning which is an amazing step forward. In the past people were continually talking about how can a child learn if they are don't feel cared and their wellbeing is not strong. We know that as early years practitioners and this is a wonderful step forward; there is not that distinction anymore.

It is in two parts; the statutory framework and the practice guidance. You will all be pleased to hear that the statutory framework is much slimmer than the practice guidance, so what is statutory is easier to read.

The statutory framework lays out the learning and development requirements and the welfare requirements that early years providers must comply with. Now that should include us all not just people who are in registered settings, not just people who are in children's centres, it should include every single outreach work in Traveller Education Services as well. We do need to be thinking in terms of these requirements if we are going to be thinking in terms of equality. The principles of the EYFS are grouped into four themes and Chrissy mentioned those this morning. A unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments and learning and developments. Now those principles support a holistic picture of early education and early childhood and I think that is really important for early years workers. It is encouraging because as an outreach worker you often get to see a more holistic view of the child you are working with. When a child is in a setting you may only see one or two facets of those principles but when you are working in the home outreach with families you are very much seeing a holistic view so that works for us.

Pages 8 –10, see how helpful I am, introduce the framework and they take us through specific requirements which can be translated as the essential of the

quality of practice, remember what I was saying about organisation and quality of practice being key.

First of all having a principled approach – knowing what we are doing, being practical about what we are doing and having a good underlying principle to what we are doing and that is supported by being able to hear Richard speak, members of the community speak. It is that two way learning because our principles are based on the community that we are working with.

Delivering service to an excellent standard – providing equality of opportunity.

Partnership work – this may be with parents or other services

Improving quality and consistently – this is a difficult one isn't it in our work, this word consistently, it is so difficult to achieve when you are working with unique individual children and when you are working in a national way.

Differences occur between counties but the child and the family may experience both so how are they experiencing the consistency?

Laying a secure foundation for future learning.

I just want to give you an example there, Nottinghamshire TES run a play bag project and it is fantastic. What they did was to look specifically at the base line scores of the children that had benefited from the playbag project when they went into school and what they discovered was that those children's base line scores were improved where they had experienced the playbag project, the outreach work. In other words that piece of outreach early educational work had supported a secure foundation for those children's learning.

This is a child on a playbus, in fact this child is another child that didn't access any mainstream and I hasten to add that that is not because the play bus was on the site it is because of the concern the family had again, really genuine fears, and because the local pre-school and not got a good reputation for it's practice. These issues were big enough for him not to access a mainstream. He accessed the playbus, but this is only for two hours once a week.

Compare that to children who are getting 3.5 hours in setting five days a week. This is what we need to be challenging because we know this stuff we really do. Ok he is accessing something but what is the quality, what does it mean for him?

We need to be making a common sense translation of the EYFS, we can use the learning and development requirements to address and support the learning, quality and equality of the work that we do. We can think about the welfare requirements in terms of the human rights of the children we are working with. If we don't make a common sense translation of the EYFS Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children may find themselves excluded from the quality assurance it aims to provide, so we have to do that and use what we have got. It may not be what we want or hope but it is what we have.

Thinking in terms of welfare requirements and learning and development requirements, remember about the enabling environments there are definite standards in the document about resources and environments and I just want to give you a couple of examples of how outreach practitioners have thought carefully about how they have thought about the environment and resources

that have enabled real quality learning to take place. On the left you can see the fab resources, this is Beeston Hill Sure Start in Leeds and I was talking about before that they do play sessions and also loan resources to families. See how beautifully kept those resources are, how they are stored and organised and they are contained in a room with a sink in it so the practitioners can come back and clean the resources and organise them. It is just speaks volumes about how the practitioners value the children they are working with. Compare that to the outreach worker that borrows a few resources and sticks them in the back of their car and drives around with resources in the back of a car and has no where to store them. This is the case for many outreach workers still so this is about setting those standards. On the right hand side this worker has thought so carefully about preparing the environment so that this child can access a bit of messy play. Gluing activity, so her learning opportunities have not been restricted because her learning is taking place out of the mainstream. There has been respect there also because the practitioner is working in someone's home. These aspects can be informed by the EYFS, supported by that.

As well as the welfare requirements there are also the learning and development requirements and they include the early learning goals, the educational programmes that early years practitioners use and the assessment arrangements. Now assessment arrangements are incredibly important and the educational programmes would include your strategies, your outreach strategies how you deliver. But they would also include your planning for your programmes so you wouldn't just pitch up and do a session based on a whim you felt you wanted to do, you would be thinking about the individual child, where they are at in their learning and development what you can do as an experienced practitioner to support that. Don't get me wrong I am not saying that you don't do this but there are situations where people who are invited by services to do outreach work are not supported properly to think about the real outcomes for the children they are working with. I think people in this room who are doing that good work should be talking strongly about the need for the quality.

In terms of assessments I had an interesting conversation on the phone with a practitioner who told one of the areas they are concerned about is the early years profile returns because there will be Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children who access the foundation stage in school and they might be there for a few weeks or a few months but if they are not there when the foundation stage profile return has to be made then they get no score, there is no assessment being made on their early learning. Current advice appears to be that if the child is still on role at the start of the second half of the summer half even if the child is not there then the school must make a return based on the observations based on the last day of that child's attendance, so I think that is helpful in supporting us to give advice to schools if a child is not there an assessment cannot be made.

Last slide 'Training for mainstream providers' many practitioners do become involved in the training of settings for inclusion and hopefully the awareness raising part will hopefully be delivered with a community member. Where we

have a role is when we are talking about developing inclusive provision and practice and that side of the training should include supportive messages of quality outreach practice.

I think that ties me up, thank you for listening.

Conference Evaluation Report

'Working Towards Inclusive Practice in the Early Years'

Inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture in early years settings

Background

'The most effective way to promote the achievement of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children is to ensure they are able to gain early access to education during the foundation stage'

Aiming High, DfES

The importance of the foundation stage in children's education has been well documented yet historically there has been very low uptake of early years services amongst Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. Save the Children developed the Early Years Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Project in 2004 funded by the the Department for Education and Skills to support practitioners to address this issue.

The project committed to hosting an annual early years conference for all early years practitioners focussing on the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community and their access to early years services. This report evaluates the third annual national conference, which was held in June 2007 in Birmingham.

Conference aims

Although the Early Years Gypsy, Roma and Traveller project hosts the conference it is for early years practitioners and so it is essential that the conference is useful and relevant for those practitioners. To ensure this a planning group of practitioners is created, who, in conjunction with the Project Co-ordinator and Training, Information and Admin Officer, develop the aims for the conference. This year's planning group was made up of five practitioners from services across the country; these were Norfolk TES, Buckinghamshire METAS, Cambridgeshire Children's Services and West Midlands Consortium Education Service for Travelling Children.

The planning group discussed the continuing issue of early years settings excluding the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture through a lack of resources and teaching about the culture. This is despite the fact that Gypsies and Traveller of Irish Heritage are now recognised as ethnic minorities under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. With this in mind the theme of working towards inclusive practice was developed and the conference aims decided. The conference is also seen as an important opportunity to celebrate good practice and to network with colleagues from across the country.

The conference aims were therefore to:

- Outline the statutory duty for settings to include Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Promote the inclusion of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture in early years settings
- Highlight good practice
- Provide opportunities for networking and discussion

From this set of aims the planning group agreed an agenda which would include five key speakers and five workshops. During discussions within the planning group the growing issue of supporting newly-arrived eastern European Roma migrants was highlighted and so a speaker and workshop was dedicated to this issue.

The Conference

110 delegates were expected and although twelve did not attend on the day there was a total of 98 delegates at the conference. There was a good mix of practitioners from Traveller Educations Support Service, Children's Centres and voluntary organisations.

There were five speakers, three during the morning session and two during the afternoon session. These were:

Collette Marshall (UK Programmes Director, Save the Children) opened the conference and spoke of Save the Children's continuing commitment to working with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and families.

Chrissy Meleady (Chief Executive, Early Years Equality) spoke about human rights violations against Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and how it continues to be essential to bring children together from different ethnic minorities at an early age.

Jelena Perovic (Roma Education Project Development Officer, Save the Children) described the situation of extreme poverty and discrimination for Roma in Eastern Europe and discussed Eastern European governments' attempts to improve this through the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 – 2015.

Richard O'Neill (Consultant) who, as a Traveller himself, described his experiences of early education and how important the work this conference highlights continues to be to ensure that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children reach their potential in the education system.

Richenda Riches (Early years practitioner, Norfolk Traveller Education Support Service) who described the importance of high quality outreach work with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and families, in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage, and highlighted the development of guidance soon to be available on this subject.

There were five workshops offered to delegates. These were:

How to publish resources (Kate Evans, Sutton and Merton Traveller Education Support Service)

Looked at a project to engage mainstream publishers to improve their range, quality and availability of books that are inclusive of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture, history and languages. Examined the progress of the project so far and offered advice on publishing resources.

Bookstart (Louise Chadwick, Bookstart Midlands Co-ordinator)

Looked at how Bookstart packs are distributed and how delegates could access packs for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families. Discussions looked at the impact of book sharing and how books can be used by parents who may have literacy problems. Also examined a book that is sometimes included in the pre-school Bookstart treasure chest.

Engaging Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families with Home-Start (Amanda Brookes and Rowena Holstead, Home-Start Leeds)

Discussed Home-Start and its work with families and how to better engage more Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families with Home-Start.

Storytelling as an inclusive medium (Richard O'Neill)

Explored the benefits of using Traveller storytelling in early years settings and how storytelling skills can be used to communicate more effectively with children and families. Delegates explored the history of storytelling within the Traveller culture and how the use of traditional skills benefits all children.

Roma culture (Jelena Perovic, Save the Children)

Explored good practice models in supporting Roma children in education, developed from work with Roma children and their families in eastern Europe.

Each workshop was run twice so delegates could choose from all of the workshops for session one and session two.

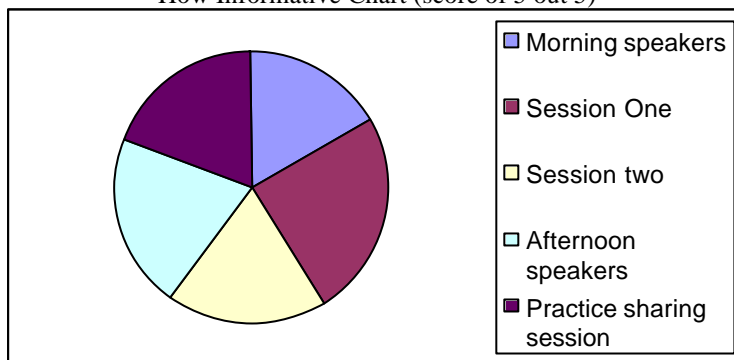
Feedback and evaluation

Out of 98 delegates in attendance we had a high return of evaluation forms with 63 completing an evaluation.

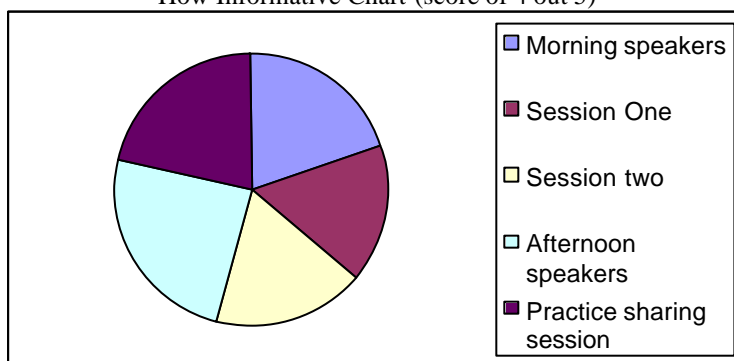
When asked how informative they found the conference. The highest overall rating was 4 out of 5, given by 44%. This was very closely followed by 41% rating it 5 out of 5.

When asked which part of the conference they found most informative, the workshops rated the highest, with 48% and 41% giving a rating of 5 out of 5 for sessions one and two respectively.

How Informative Chart (score of 5 out 5)



How Informative Chart (score of 4 out 5)



Delegates were asked to express why they gave their scores and any comments that they wished to provide on the workshops attended. Some of the comments received were:

'Professional, concise, relevant and inspiring. East European - very interesting but a bit quick'.

'I'll think of Chrissy Meleady's enthusiasm and passion for our work when things aren't going well in my early years role it will spur me on'.

'Storytelling - gave me ownership of using my own experiences. Made me think about how I communicate'.

'Session one (Bookstart) was very informative and provided excellent resources. Session two (Homestart) was good practical session (sweets were great) informative and useful. Will find out what is happening in my areas'.

'Practice sharing - became a wider ranging discussion of underlying cultural issues which was extremely helpful'.

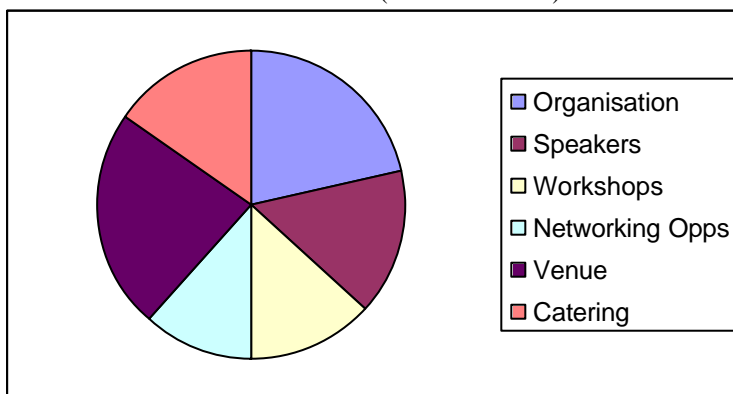
Although scores were high, there were some comments that identified issues to be addressed in planning the next conference.

'Would rather have just attended one workshop to allow for deeper/ longer discussion around how storytelling is used and to find out more about storytelling skills'

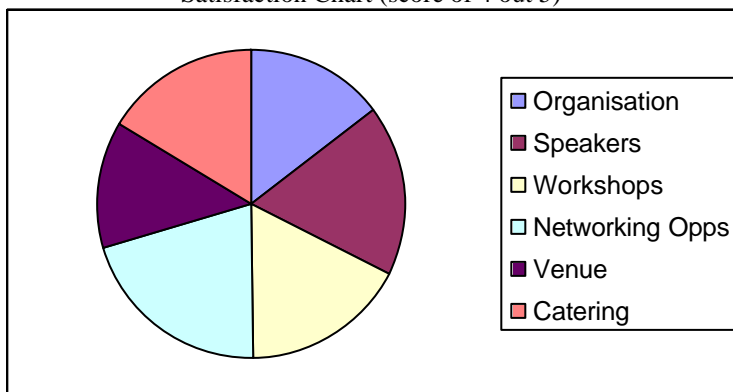
'Gain much from colleagues experiences and practice but not enough time. Helped, however, by practice sharing workshop session'.

Part of the evaluation was to assess satisfaction with the day. This was broken down into general organisation of the day, speakers, workshops, networking opportunities, venue and catering. The general organisation of the day scored very highly, receiving 5 out of 5 by 57% of delegates. The speakers continued to score well with 44% giving a 4 out of 5. The workshops again scored well with 43% giving 4 out of 5. Delegates were also satisfied with the opportunity given to network with 51% giving 4 out of 5.

Satisfaction Chart (score of 5 out 5)



Satisfaction Chart (score of 4 out 5)



Delegates were then asked to list any changes that they would make as a result of attending the conference. Some of these were:

'Focusing on strategic links and profile/ awareness-raising for partners with reference to cultural issues and attitudes'.

'Follow up some ideas, especially links to Childrens Centres and outreach work'.

'Fully recognise the urgent priority to get duty bearers to target resources towards early years interventions'.

'Make contact with Children's Centres which have newly opened in mid-Kent area'.

'Tighten up on my organisation of resources and tightening up on my assessment a record keeping. Also heard about some new resources'.

'Feedback to my team to become more inspired with early years and use Bookstart'.

'I am going to actively build links with health visitors and library services to ensure that Traveller families are able to access Bookstart packs'.

In order to ensure the relevance of the day for early years practitioners, requests were also made for any ideas/topics and speakers or workshops that delegates could suggest or would be interested in attending. These will be considered by the planning group for the 2008 conference.

Some ideas/topics suggested were:

- sources of funding,
- playbus work,
- formal forum for sharing resources,
- healthcare and access for families.

Some speakers that were suggested were:

- health professionals,
- DfES representative,
- representatives from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

Some workshops that were suggested were:

- short dramas or music,
- making inclusive story sacks,
- Gypsy Councils and their role for the community,
- a history of Travellers play,
- outreach playmap session.

Delegates were also asked to provide any other comments about the day and these were generally very positive. The main comments were:

- more time in workshops,
- more time for networking,
- more parents from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities to share their experiences/ opinions of early years education/ services.

Learning points

More time in workshops

Workshops were given 45 minutes but as they were repeated the first workshop tended to run over and take time from the second workshop. The only way to combat this is to strictly ask delegates to move to their next workshop at the allocated time and to ensure that the facilitator ends on time. However, in practice a facilitator will hope for lively debate, discussion and questions at the end of their workshop and would not want to limit this. Perhaps for the next conference we would consider running one workshop in the morning and rather than repeating it straight after, repeat it in the afternoon. Using this tactic may prevent time being taken from the second session. Also we could allocate a longer slot for each workshop. However, the conference has to be varied agenda to meet the needs of delegates, to allow for this workshops must have a time limit.

More time for networking

The issue over lack of time for networking is difficult to address. As a one day conference delegates expect a packed and varied agenda. Networking is an essential part of this but often is done over coffee and lunch breaks, we did allocate time for this but need to ensure that there is sufficient time for workshops and speakers. There was an attempt to give delegates more time to talk by providing the practice sharing session in the afternoon. Most session facilitators reported good and enthusiastic discussions but this may have not been the right arrangement for some delegates to engage with. This will be considered more for the next conference.

More Gypsy, Roma and Traveller parents sharing their experiences/opinions

The speakers for the conference did include a Gypsy parent who was going to talk about her experiences of school and how she had come to send her daughter to nursery; unfortunately she was unable to attend. In her place Richard O'Neill, who is a Traveller, spoke about his experiences of school. Gypsy, Roma and Traveller speakers/workshop providers will continue to be the highest priority for future conferences. A community member will also be approached and asked to join the planning group for the 2008 conference.

Conclusion

The scoring given for conference was, as the feedback and evaluation section shows, very high. This was both for how informative delegates found the day and how satisfied they were with the day. Those few issues that were identified have been highlighted in the learning points and will be addressed through the planning group for the 2008 conference.

Practice Sharing Session Discussion Notes

Good Practice for Inclusion	
Group One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training – including Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community members • Lobbying Local Authorities to take responsibility for every child (Every Traveller Child Matters too) • Relationships with Traveller mums • Mums visiting settings with children, witnessing this, they can then see their mum while they play and the mum is comfortable there too. • Building long term relationships with short term funding is a problem • Other council departments need to be aware of ECM agenda and outcomes, they cannot just evict if these outcomes are to be met. • Recruiting from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community • Staff should visit sites to see the environment that Gypsy Traveller children live in • Play boxes support parents as well as children, should be some culturally reflective ones too • Good high quality resources • Effectively engaging children and parents in early years can lead to the need for less support in Key Stage 1 • Stability - not been moved on • Multi-agency working, e.g. good exchange of information between health and education
Group Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representing Dad's in displays, especially Fathers involvement • Jigsaws reflecting Traveller culture, using regularly embedding them in the work • Inviting/ encouraging parents to stay in the setting with the child • Use the resources with settings that have no Traveller children attending • Home visits allow staff to become well known with the families • Staff could accompany children into settings • Awareness raising training should be led by Travellers where possible • Communicate with parents to inform them of school procedures • Make a photo diary for parents about settings
Group Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INSET training • Culturally reflective resources • Positive role models from the community

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build meaningful relationships with families • Promote independence for schools and families to work together for a successful outcome • Inclusive practice when engaging with families
Group Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important to have good links with all the agencies involved with Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT), e.g. Home-Start, Children's Centres, police... An audit could be carried out to ensure that all relevant agencies have been identified and then regular meetings set up as a forum for effective communication. Important that all the agencies know what each offers so that any signposting is done accurately. • Drop-in sessions on sites could be arranged, attended by different agencies so that GRT know what support is on offer. • Successful take-up of Early Years education can be achieved by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - building trust with the families, which can be a long-term thing - practitioners having good knowledge of the different GRT cultures - employing members of the communities or using volunteers from the communities to discuss Early Years education with the families. However, beware of tokenism! • One school has a Family Room. The GRT families are invited to different activities that may be of interest to them, not necessarily anything to do with education – e.g. information about driving for the teenagers. This gives the families the opportunity to become familiar with the school environment and helps to build trust. • Ways of introducing parents to the benefits of Early Years education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - showing and discussing photographs of children playing and learning in an EY setting – photographs available from the DfES - watching and discussing the Foundation Stage curriculum video - using play boxes to demonstrate the benefits of play • It is important that parents know that Early Years education is enhancing what they already do with their children, rather than replacing

Ideas to reflect the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture in the curriculum	
Group One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence building • Training for settings • Things to combat institutionalised racism – schools thinking they don't need to celebrate the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cultures as they don't want to draw attention to it for parents. • Data gathering • Topics that they do – incorporate Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture in the curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water – include metal buckets, baths etc. • Homes – include trailers not just bricks and mortar • Oxford Reading Tree – Magic Key characters from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities • Persona dolls • Using real life examples – real people <p>Inclusion charter mark in schools should reflect the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture</p>
Group Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role play (trailer) – stone soup pictures used in role play area • Vardos – cardboard boxes • Artefacts e.g. bowls • Stencils – canal art • Mantra – posters (website) multi ethnic stuff • Puzzles – different transport Durham and Darlington • Projects – circuses, activities linked to theme, Zippo website • Photofile – DVD's – homes/ animals/ fairs • PowerPoint for children to use • Persona dolls – communicate dialogue with Travellers
Group Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play boxes • Educational suppliers producing resources for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller inclusion • Artefacts/ objects for children to handle • Cultural resources loaned to schools from TES's • Displays that celebrate Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture i.e. Appleby and Stow fair • Positive role models .i.e. Richard • Delivering INSET to providers • Each Traveller group is identified differences and similarities recognised
Group Four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of resources, such as jigsaws and story books, that reflect GRT culture • Seizing opportunities in topics such as Homes, Transport and Ourselves and producing displays reflecting GRT culture • Introducing children to dance, music and food from GRT cultures, but beware of stereotyping. There needs to be recognition that we 'dip into' one another's cultures, e.g. the

	<p>food we eat and the music we listen to.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be opportunities for all children to share their own ways of life. • Asking parents to bring in artefacts and objects from their cultures. • Sending all children home with a disposable camera to take photos of a special event, such as a wedding, which they can share with the other children • Sending a Travelling teddy bear home, with all the children at different times, so that it can 'report back' about its visit • Using a Persona Doll as a Gypsy, Roma or Traveller to 'tell' the children about its way of life • There is a family learning project that involves GRT Dads. They take photographs of their homes and vehicles and these are made into jigsaws for use in the school/setting. The children could be involved in taking the photographs too. Another idea was to get parents involved in making Story Sacks about GRT cultures. • When the circus or fairground 'comes to town' seize on the opportunity to make children aware of this way of life. However, there is a danger that every time a circus or fairground child gets placed in a school or setting a 'big thing' is made of the circus or fair. The only learning they may ever get to do is about the circus or fair, because that is what the school/setting focuses on when they are there! • Beware of putting children on display. They may not want to be seen as someone different and exotic. • When finding out about GRT cultures, the similarities between all children need to be highlighted.
Working with highly mobile families	
Group one	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laptops/ software – families e-mail learning interactive and working • Remember strength of face to face relationships • Tailor work to include families – given high priority • Being proactive with office school staff re. Their help with Roma families • Record keeping • High quality play provision, e.g. bus sessions etc. • Bookstart packs/ health visitors/ Children's Centres, provide a link for families, providing information e.g. drop in centres • Returning to area/ providing positive experiences • Assess needs • Free packs e.g. dental • Communicate between areas – issues with data protection
Group two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Centres work closely with TES's to closely identify families also for TES to send out field officers • Aim – to visit within 24 hours, into schools within 36 hours

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depends on Head/ Leadership offer LSA and teaching support immediately • Work on site – work with librarian • Bookstart packs as introduction • Workshops (Bookstart's) in trailers • Work with circus families • Work closely with Health teams • Close relationships with other agencies • Local Gypsy Liaison officer contacts • TES and police and other agencies so they are informed of transient families
Group Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Association of Health Workers • Website: Local Authorities that have good practice; home visits with Gypsy/ Traveller families • Research information/ statistics by Patrice van Cleave • Playbus – flexible day and site visits made to circuses or fairs • As part of ELAMP project, packs are prepared • Keep red book or green card to track previous schools • Awareness of transitions and support children need • Liaison group: Connexions, Sure Start, Play Development, health workers, housing, TES • Policy Group: Police, Council, Housing, Public Health
Group four	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel packs tailored to suit individual child • E-lamp project • Family learning sessions – intensive for mobile groups.
Group Five	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a child has left a school/setting to go travelling, encourage the school/setting to continue calling out the child's name in the register, so that the other children are still aware of them • Arrange for a setting to have some 'last minute/emergency' placements so that a highly mobile child can be quickly placed. • Encourage on-going communication between the setting/school and the travelling child, e.g. postcards, emails, disposable cameras, video-diaries, use of web cams, scrapbooks of things they've collected along the way...
Resources and resource development	
Group One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books • Booklet explaining curriculum – to be shared with parents • Come count with me – popular resource (Nottinghamshire TES) • Info sheets for parent to stimulate learning activities used with books • Chatter packs/ bi- lingual materials (Newham and Redbridge TES)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using books reflective the culture • Wish to buy books from central supplier • Pooling ideas for using resources • Flat packs e.g. trailer • threebearsplay@aol.com (and notes on Traveller culture)
Group Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Association of Teachers of Travellers (NATT) • Durham EMTAS – recently produced good early years resources • Oxfordshire – Stowe Fair resources • Sedgefield Borough Council – worked with health visitors and families to produce books and calendars • Cheshire – produced books, story sacks • Shropshire C.C. project – books with families • Our Special way of life • Where we live • How we play • Traditions • Family values
Group Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational suppliers to produce high quality resources that reflect Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture • Networking with other TES to find suggestions for good practice etc. • Encourage schools to allocate funding for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller resources • Resources are part of the mainstream • Encourage Sure Start for example and other under 5 settings to purchase Gypsy, Roma and Traveller reflective resources
Group Four	<p>Some recommended resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Poorly Patrick’s Counting Book’ by West Midlands Consortium • ‘My First Box of Books’ – Durham TES • ‘Shaun’s Wellies’ – Norfolk TES • ‘Travellers’ Homes’ – Suffolk TES • ‘Rosetta Stone’ – a computer package on the Romany language • there are various websites about Roma culture