

**Good Day**  
**Buenos dias**  
**Jó napot**  
**Buna ziua**  
**Dobré jitro**  
**Bom dia**



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Elaine McFeeters  
Department of Education  
Northern Ireland  
Education Provision for Traveller Children  
and Young People



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In recognition of the particularly severe disadvantages of Travellers, Government set up a Promoting Social Inclusion Working Group (PSIWG) on Travellers who prepared a report.



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Government responded to the  
33 recommendations in the  
Report of which DE has  
responsibility for 11.



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The Department of Education  
is working proactively to  
improve the education of  
Travellers through the  
recommendations of the  
report, including:



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Special arrangements to allow flexibility in allocating pre-school places to children from the Travelling community.



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Recent evaluation highlighted strengths and weaknesses in on-site pre-school provision. These will be addressed in next few months.



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Working on suitable  
comprehensive transfer  
records for Traveller children  
iro school attendance.



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# Considering education strategy for Nomadic Traveller children.



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New funding arrangements introduced on 1 April 2005 with additional £864 being allocated for each Traveller child at school (approx £600,000) per annum.



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Funding review of additional earmarked money introduced per capita funding which is equitable distribution of £336,000 per annum for 687 Traveller children.



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- Finalising reviews of Home to School Transport policy
- Considering further assistance for Traveller children regarding school uniform grants



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- All schools in NI must have a discipline policy incorporating bullying. Anti-bullying policies are quality assured by DE.
- DE is active member of Anti-bullying Forum (affiliated to British & Irish Anti-bullying Forum).



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More flexible post-primary  
curriculum:  
Alternative Education Provision  
and Education Other Than at  
School



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Alternative Education Project  
inspected recently by  
Education and Training  
Inspectorate (a professional  
body within DE). Evaluated as  
a worthwhile project.  
Further recommendations to be  
evaluated in 2006.



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Government including DE has funded research at Queen's University, Belfast to determine progression beyond AEP and determine benefits of AEP.



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Research commissioned and funded by DE was published last year – “Traveller Children’s Experiences in Mainstream Post-Primary Schools”



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# DE has developed a multicultural and anti-racist dimension to NI curriculum.

## Includes:

- Education for Mutual Understanding
- Cultural Heritage
- International and Transnational Influences
- Morality and Respect
- Local and Global Citizenship
- Diversity and Inclusion



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DE has funded 3 publications  
on Human Rights.



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DE will also be working with the Equality Commission iro Traveller Education Strategy.



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DE is an active member of the  
Racial Equality Forum and its  
sub-group – Traveller  
Thematic Group.



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In the last 3 years DE has funded education of Traveller children in excess of £1.5 million.



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# Additionally, Non-governmental organisations have been providing:

- Alternative Education Provision
- Pre-school provision
- Toybox provision



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- Only 18 % of Traveller children access pre-school or nursery, compared to 56% of children overall (**DE, 2000**).
- 59% of Travellers (16-24) leave school with no qualifications, compared to 17 % of the 16-24 population overall (**2001 Census**).



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- Toybox - early years development through play for children aged 0-4
- Toybox aims to increase children's enrolment in pre-schools and nurseries
- SELB 'preparedness for school' project
- Good local practice, but...
  - ➔ short term funding
  - ➔ lack of joined up approach
  - ➔ lack of resourced strategic vision
  - ➔ lack of clear targets



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- Supporting the transition to post-primary
- Building a strategy around good practice
  - Afterschools and homework clubs
  - Inclusion in Education Project
  - Munia Tober AEP Project



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# Summary

## There is a need to:

- Develop a drive for greater uptake of pre-school education
- Develop and sustain Toybox project
- Establish a clear strategic vision with real targets
- Establish an interagency education forum
- Tackle difficult issues



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# Alternative Education Provision

by

Au Munia Tober, Belfast



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Started in October 2003 to attempt to redress poor educational attainment and high drop out rate of young Travellers from mainstream provision.



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- Currently 20 young Travellers aged 14-18 years.
- Majority didn't attend post-primary mainstream schools.
- Funding from EC and Children in Need.



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- Offers a variety of recognised qualifications and young Travellers attend work placements for 6 to 10 weeks.
- Positive feedback from employers which is encouraging.
- The inspection report from DE was positive and encouraging.



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Young people attend 5 days a week for a total of 25 hours and attendance rates are over 90%.



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- In 2003 the young people achieved 159 educational qualifications.
- Ongoing success includes 8 young people enrolled for GCSE's and achieving a wide variety of qualifications.



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- This is all good news.
- Of course there are areas where improvements are required including government working with non-government organisations but these are all issues we can work on together.



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**Thank you**  
**Graças**  
**Köszönöm**  
**Multumesc**  
**Dekuji**  
**Muito Obrigado**



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