



# Roma EDEM Project Training & Employment Roundtable

**A Traveller NGO's perspective on  
Employment and Training and  
Access to Further and Higher Education**

*8<sup>th</sup> November 2006*



# Two Key Premises

- Real improvement in Travellers' living circumstances and social situation requires the active involvement of Travellers themselves.
- Non-Travellers have a responsibility to address the various processes which serve to exclude Travellers from participating as equals in society.



# What's happened in the past year?

- 6 month internship in Civil Service
  - Lead agency the Equality Unit in the Department of Finance
- FAS Strategic Initiative for Travellers
  - Lead agency FAS
- Travellers as Doctors
  - Lead agency Royal College of Surgeons
- Equality policy for customers
  - Lead agency FAS



# Civil Service

- Building on work undertaken with Civil Service Commission 4 years ago.
- Building on work undertaken with Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.
- Directive from the High Level Officials Group process.
- Lead by the most powerful Government Department.



# Key elements

- Active involvement of Traveller organisations
- Documenting of experience
- Outreach
- Good and clear information
- Built into existing human resource structures
- Lead from the top
- Impact of equality legislation on embedding equality into the system



# FAS SIT

- Building on work on the Traveller economy including EQUAL project '*Pavee Feens Hawken*'
- Strong political support to respond to Travellers 'traditional work'
- Directive to FAS to develop appropriate responses for 'job ready' Travellers
- Pilot approach in four areas
- Small / limited national development fund



# Key elements

- Each pilot was allowed to develop in its own way
- 2 worked better because:
  - Serious attempt to respond to the Traveller economy and support it
  - In one employment grants were used and these applied to the self-employment option as well
  - In the other pilot the fact that it was based in a Traveller group gave it added weight
  - Particularly important as the facilitator there was pursuing a formalisation approach



# Travellers as Doctors

- Desire to actively include Travellers.
- To achieve this the RCS worked with Travellers organisations and others working with Travellers to identify Travellers interested in participating.
- As a practical step they reduced the number of points required for two positions.
- Interestingly the two young women who explored this option took up positions in another university through the CAO.



# Equality policy for customers

- According to the Equality Authority FAS (the national training and employment agency) are the first public body to undertake this work.
- The process will take a few years to ensure staff buy-in and capacity building.
- The longer term implications of this development should be beneficial to Travellers in that equality should be a key principle in the daily practice of all FAS staff.



# In conclusion

- Only the longer term will tell if these initiatives have been successful or not.
- It is vitally important that they are also informed by anti-racism.
- Such an approach presents considerable challenges as many key players do not have the capacity to move beyond the aspirational.
- The active involvement of Traveller organisations is crucial.
- A question to ponder: should we expect those who benefit from positive action to act as ambassadors for the community?



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