



itm Irish Traveller
movement

Traveller Youth Participation & Leadership Strategy 2021 - 2025

Supporting & Promoting the Voice of Young Travellers

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Executive Summary

This Traveller Youth Participation & Leadership Strategy 2021-25 sets out how the Irish Traveller Movement (ITM), its membership of national and local Traveller organisations and key national partners in the Traveller sector – Exchange House Ireland, Involve, Pavee Point – wish to promote and support Traveller youth participation, capacity building, empowerment and leadership across national policy spaces as well as the Traveller sector.

ITM Youth Forum

The Strategy builds on ITM and its partners' work funded through Erasmus+ and the Community Foundation for Ireland to create a youth-led forum for young Travellers to facilitate consultation and dialogue with young Travellers and decision-makers. In 2019-20 there were four Regional Youth Forum events attended by approximately 80 young Travellers and supported by a range of ITM member organisations. Participants engaged in discussions on a range of topics relevant to their lives with peers and representatives from government agencies and other bodies. Topics included mental health, education, crime, culture and identity, and discrimination. A National Youth Committee made up of youth and committee workers from a variety of Traveller organisations supported the rollout of the events.

Strategy Consultation & Development Process

An external consultant met with a wide variety of stakeholders via online platforms including 3 focus groups with young Travellers aged 15-19, an online questionnaire aimed at young Travellers, and a series of focus groups and interviews with ITM members, ITM staff, the ITM Youth Committee, DCEDIY representatives and representatives of 3 national Traveller organisations (Exchange House Ireland, Involve, Pavee Point). Questions in the interviews and focus groups set out to explore 3 key areas:

- Reflection on the regional youth forum events
- Reflection on participation & learning opportunities for young Travellers
- Vision for the future regarding participation & leadership for young Travellers

The external consultant also facilitated a series of 4 online strategy development workshops with the Youth Committee to explore the consultation findings, values informing work with young Travellers, desired outcomes and strategic priorities.



Findings from the Consultation

In addition to the feedback on the three key areas named above, the discussions and responses yielded reflections on a number of strands relevant to work with young Travellers including barriers and supports to involvement in youth provision, and features of good youth work practice with young Travellers. The external consultant used this data to develop a SWOT Analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) of the Regional Youth Forum Events 2019-20 and a SWOT Analysis of youth work with young Travellers. Valued for the experiential and peer learning potential as well as exposing young people to dialogue and decision-makers, there was broad support for the continuation of the regional youth forum events. Regarding work with young Travellers there was recognition of the lack of resources in many Traveller organisations to offer youth provision, but also a great deal of potential to strengthen engagement with young Travellers through greater collaboration, partnership and inclusive practice.

Youth Participation

The Strategy includes an overview of different understandings of participation practice with young people arising from the consultations, its theoretical underpinnings in youth work literature, and features of participation practice as indicated by some models and Irish policy frameworks with an emphasis on a rights-based approach to listening and acting on the voices of children and young people. This highlighted two key areas of focus for the Strategy's implementation:

- i) What are organisations within the Traveller sector doing in relation to listening to the voices of children and young people?
- ii) What are organisations external to the Traveller sector – mainstream youth services, government agencies and so on – doing in relation to listening to the voices of young Travellers?

This section concludes with the need to consider what participation practice looks like specifically when working with young Travellers and how barriers to participation particular to the lived experience of young Travellers such as educational disadvantage might be addressed.

Guiding Values & Principles for the Participation Strategy

The consultations and strategy development workshops generated a sense of synergy around guiding values and principles for the Strategy:

- Culturally aware youth work that is rooted in the Traveller experience & identity
- Voluntary participation where young people can 'vote with their feet'
- Youth work that is informed by a critical social education model of practice with a commitment to equality, justice & fairness
- Commitment to a celebration of diversity that pays attention to expanding female participation, LGBTQI+ and disability inclusion
- Transparency – there needs to be clear communication about the intentions of the strategy with young people and their parents
- Commitment to collaboration and partnership working with organisations in various sectors including community, youth and Travellers sectors
- A young person-centred approach
- Youth-led – heeding the direction young people want to take and fostering young people's ownership of initiatives

Strategic Priorities

Informed by the consultations and the discussions in the workshops, 3 strategic priorities emerged to form the basis of this Traveller Youth Participation & Leadership Strategy:

- To build the capacity of young Travellers in expressing their ideas and opinions to shape activities they're involved in and decision-making
- To promote participative approaches in youth programmes with young Travellers
- To promote inclusive and safe spaces for young Travellers to engage in dialogue with peers and decision-makers

Desired outcomes

The Strategy uses an outcomes-focused approach by articulating the desired changes we wish to see for young Travellers in terms of Traveller youth participation and the outcomes we would like young people in the Travelling community to experience as a result of this Strategy's implementation.

Key Actions

Inspired by the above strategic priorities and desired outcomes the Strategy sets out 6 Key Actions for 2021-25:

1. ITM Leadership Training Programme for young Travellers
2. Development & promotion of the Youth Forum as a national space for young Travellers
3. Mapping & Research of work with young Travellers
4. Practice Development on Youth Participation work with young Travellers
5. Building partnerships & relationships with stakeholders
 - i. Development of a direct link with the DCEDIY to support Strengthening of participation practice in work with young Travellers and to facilitate the meaningful involvement of young Travellers in participation structures
 - ii. Strengthen the capacity of Comhairle na nÓg structures to facilitate inclusion of young Travellers
6. Promoting Traveller-inclusive Youth Work

Monitoring and evaluation are essential to track progress and the Strategy proposes the establishment of a Steering Group to provide oversight of implementation. This will comprise stakeholders from the national Traveller organisations, ITM membership, mainstream youth sector, DCEDIY and young people. A draft Implementation Plan is included in the Appendices mapping out who is involved, suggested indicators of success, methods of evaluation and timescales. This creates an accountability system for regular progress meetings of the Steering Group.

The final piece of the Strategy lays out the necessary resources to deliver on the Strategy highlighting the need for appropriate funding mechanisms to facilitate progress towards the key actions.

Introduction

This Traveller Youth Participation & Leadership Strategy 2021-25 sets out how the Irish Traveller Movement (ITM), its membership of national and local Traveller organisations and key national partners in the Traveller sector – Exchange House Ireland, Involve, Pavee Point – wish to promote and support Traveller youth participation, capacity building, empowerment and leadership across national policy spaces as well as the Traveller sector. Building on a series of Regional Youth Forum events coordinated by ITM in 2019-20 this Strategy has emerged following consultations with key stakeholders including a number of strategy development workshops with ITM's Youth Committee facilitated by an external consultant. A key intention of the process was to develop a Strategy with young people at its heart setting out clear priorities and actions for implementation in the 2021-25 period.

This document outlines the background context to the Participation Strategy, the consultation process, a summary of findings from stakeholder engagement, our commitment to meaningful participation of young Travellers in the Traveller sector and beyond, strategic priorities accompanied by desired outcomes for Traveller Youth Participation and Leadership, and an implementation plan.

About the Irish Traveller Movement

The Irish Traveller Movement (ITM) was founded in 1990 as a national membership platform representing local and national Traveller organisations and Travellers. Since its inception it has advocated strongly for the realisation of Travellers' human rights and equality and is unified under the banner of social justice and minority rights campaigns in Ireland.

ITM challenges inequality and promotes Traveller participation and leadership in local and national settings, by developing and sharing good practice, and informing national policy. **Its vision is of:**

"An Ireland where Travellers are proud of their identity and with their ethnicity recognised can achieve their fullest potential to play an active role in Irish society."

ITM plays an integral role in policy development, with and on behalf of our members and the Traveller Community, including engaging with government through the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017-21, seeking to improve outcomes for the Traveller community.

www.itmtrav.ie



Background & Context

The Irish Traveller Movement identified three main contextual factors underpinning the need for this strategy development process:

- i) The need for youth participation and leadership in the Traveller/NGO sector
- ii) The absence of the youth voice in national, local and regional Traveller and non-Traveller spaces
- iii) Divestment in youth initiatives and infrastructure in the most recent decade, leading to a lack of Traveller youth engagement and capacity at a national, local and regional level

A key concern is that diminished resources for youth infrastructure broadly in combination with the social exclusion experienced by young Travellers have been detrimental in terms of reducing opportunities for young Travellers to find and express their voice on issues that impact their lives.

Challenges facing Travellers and particularly young Travellers in Ireland

The Traveller population is a relatively small one in Ireland with the 2016 census providing a figure of 30,987 Travellers, which is less than 1% of Ireland's total population of just over 4.5 million.¹ Data from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs from April 2020² indicates that in 2016 there were 18,018 young Travellers in Ireland. This figure represents 1.15% of the total population aged 0-24 and also more than half of the Traveller population.

There is state-level recognition that *"Travellers and Roma are among the most disadvantaged and marginalised people in Ireland"*³ and face significant challenges in regard to a range of issues including physical and mental health, education, employment, accommodation and racism. In addition to these issues, young Travellers also face unique challenges as young people and the associated marginalisation of youth generally within society. For example:

- In 2018, over 2,000 families, in which there are upwards of 3,000 children, were living in inadequate, unsafe and impermanent conditions.⁴
- In May 2017, 10% of families in emergency accommodation identified as from a Traveller background.⁵
- The rate of suicide among Travellers was found to be six times higher than the settled population, accounting for approximately 11% of all Traveller deaths, increasingly among younger Travellers.⁶
- According to 2017 figures, 57% of Traveller boys had only primary education compared to 13% of the rest of the population.⁷
- 13% of Traveller females were educated to upper secondary or above compared with 69.1% of the general population.⁸
- In 2017 Travellers were over 50 times more likely to leave school without a Leaving Certificate in comparison to the non-Traveller population.⁹
- In 2019 Travellers accounted for 19% of children in Oberstown Children Detention Campus. By comparison, Travellers account for just over 1% of the population aged 12 to 18.¹⁰

1 <https://data.cso.ie/>

2 DCYA (2020) *Young Travellers in Ireland*. Available from: <https://assets.gov.ie/72732/824dc1d2acaf4e5a93d88e640ae1ef0f.pdf>

3 DOJE (2016) National Traveller & Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017-21. Available from: http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Pages/National_Traveller_and_Roma_Inclusion_Strategy_2017%E2%80%932021

4 Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (2018). Available from: <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/29c76-traveller-accommodation-statistics/?referrer=http://www.housing.gov.ie/housing/special-housing-needs/traveller-accommodation/traveller-accommodation-statistics#2019>

5 Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government

6 All Ireland Traveller Health Study (2010). Available from: <https://www.pavepoint.ie/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/AITHS-Summary-of-Findings.pdf>

7 ERSI 'A Social Portrait of Travellers'

8 ERSI 'A Social Portrait of Travellers'

9 ERSI 'A Social Portrait of Travellers'

10 DCYA (2020) *Young Travellers in Ireland*. Available from: <https://assets.gov.ie/72732/824dc1d2acaf4e5a93d88e640ae1ef0f.pdf>

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- Young Travellers are particularly vulnerable to online hate, and identity based racist attacks. Their demographic of a much younger population indicates high social media engagement in an environment where anti-Traveller racism and offensive remarks are being articulated.
 - Intersectionality of identity – such as age, ethnicity, gender identity, sexuality, disability – mean that young Travellers often experience multiple forms of oppression and associated challenges.

Policy Context

The *National Traveller & Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017-21*¹¹ is a cross-departmental initiative setting out a number of objectives and actions across 10 strategic themes, one of which is Children and Youth. The strategy was developed following a 3-phase consultation process with input from the Traveller and Roma sectors as well as a National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy Steering Group made up of representatives from government departments, agencies and Traveller organisations. This Inclusion Strategy follows decades of activism from within the Traveller sector leading to the recognition of Travellers as a distinct ethnic identity in Ireland.

Youth Policy Frameworks in Ireland

The main national policy framework regarding children and young people is the *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures Framework*¹² and is an outcomes-based framework that sets out five national outcomes for children and young people: Active and healthy, achieving in all areas of learning and development, safe and protected from harm, economic security and opportunity, and connected, respected and contributing. One of the six transformational goals in this framework is to listen to and involve children and young people in working towards these outcomes, which means that the concept and practice of children and young people having a voice in decision-making is integral within the national framework. Building on this foundation, Ireland was the first country in Europe to develop a National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making¹³.

Both the *Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures* and the *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015-20* are to be updated and renewed in 2021, and the *National Traveller & Roma Inclusion Strategy* is coming to the end of its 2017-21 phase and preparing for a new cycle from 2022. Furthermore, the formation of the Department of Children, Equality, Integration, Disability and Youth in 2020 now incorporates the work on the Inclusion Strategy from what used to be the Department of Justice and Equality. The development of this Traveller Youth Participation and Leadership Strategy is therefore timely and presents an opportunity for greater collaborative working between the Traveller sector, mainstream youth sector and government to strengthen young Travellers' experiences of having their voices heard in decision-making and ultimately bring about better outcomes for young Travellers in Ireland.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Available from: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/775847-better-outcomes-brighter-futures/>

¹³ Available from: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/9128db-national-strategy-on-children-and-young-peoples-participation-in-dec/>

ITM Youth Forum 2019-20 – the story so far

In 2019 the ITM secured funding from Erasmus+ and the Community Foundation for Ireland to create a youth-led forum for young Travellers to facilitate consultation and dialogue with young Travellers and decision-makers primarily through a number of **Regional Youth Forum** events. Out of the awareness that this initiative would require an element of capacity-building to support young Travellers' meaningful participation in such events, a personal development component was included – a **Leadership Training** programme – which launched in April 2021 for a cohort of 13 young Travellers from across the country. Consequently, the Traveller Youth Participation & Leadership Strategy is the third component of this project.

It was intended that the establishment of a National Youth Committee would create a youth-led platform to shape the regional youth forum events, however there was recognition of the need for more capacity building among young Travellers to equip them for this kind of role. As a result, youth and community workers from Traveller organisations – Exchange House Ireland, Galway Traveller Movement, Involve, and TravAct – were recruited to the Youth Committee and supported both the rollout of the regional youth forum events and the involvement of young people in those events.

The regional youth forum events were originally envisioned as residential events with each to take place over 2 days and this would have brought additional benefits in terms of relationship-building, creating space for a range of activities, and encouraging dialogue. However, this approach presented cultural barriers, particularly for young Traveller women and it was decided to hold 1-day events instead in order to maximise attendance.

In all, 4 regional youth forum events took place with attendance by approximately 80 young Travellers and supported by a range of ITM member organisations. A fifth event was planned for April 2020 but was cancelled as a result of public health restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Each event addressed different topics – mental health, education, crime, culture and identity, and discrimination – all relevant to young Travellers' lives. They provided an opportunity for those attending to meet peers from different parts of the country, to discuss topical issues, to share their own experiences and to engage directly with representatives from government agencies and other bodies including the Department of Education, Tusla, Education Inspectorate, HSE, and National Youth Council of Ireland. Reflections on these events emerged in the consultations from young people who attended and Youth Committee members and are related in the section on findings.



Strategy Consultation & Development Process

A wide variety of stakeholders were engaged during the Strategy consultation process and as a result of public health restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all interactions took place online via Zoom or WhatsApp.

Youth Engagement

Focus Groups

There were three focus groups conducted with young Travellers:

Date	No.	Ages	Gender	Notes
3/12/20	3	15,16,19	2 Female 1 Male	2 of the young people are from Co. Dublin, 1 is from Co. Roscommon; 1 young person had attended some Regional Youth Forum events
20/1/21	2	16,16	2 Female	Both young people are involved in STAR Tuam pilot project and the Education Welfare Officer was also in attendance
23/3/21	1	18	1 Female	The young person is involved with Galway Traveller Movement and had attended some Regional Youth Forum events

Online Questionnaire

Recognising that youth engagement in the consultations had been lower than previously hoped due to low online engagement among young Travellers during 'lockdown' restrictions, it was decided to create a short online questionnaire for young Travellers. This was distributed by ITM Youth Committee members in February 2021 via a GoogleDocs form and was completed by 7x young people:

Age	Gender	Urban/Site	County
1 – 13 years	5 Female	3 live on or near a site	2 – Co. Dublin
2 – 14 years	2 Male	4 live in urban areas	3 – Co. Galway
1 – 15 years			2 – did not specify
1 – 16 years			
2 – 17 years			

Questions in the youth focus groups and the questionnaire focused on participation and learning opportunities for young Travellers and ideas to support and enable the voices of young Travellers to be heard more widely.



Groups & Interviews

The following focus groups and interviews were conducted:

Date	Participants/Organisations
27/11/20	ITM Youth Committee Focus Group*: John Paul Collins (Exchange House Ireland) Michael Collins (ITM) Jimmy Maughan (Exchange House Ireland) Eve O'Brien (ITM) Lee Anna Ward (Galway Traveller Movement) Maureen Ward (TravAct) *All present had been involved in the regional youth forum events some bringing young people to participate.
January 2021	Interviews with representatives of national Traveller organisations: • James O'Leary (Involve) • William McDonagh & Kevin Burn (Exchange House Ireland) • Andy O'Hara (Pavee Point)
1/2/21	ITM Staff Focus Group: Bernard Joyce (Director) Eve O'Brien (National Membership & Policy Officer) Michael Collins (National Youth Officer)
4/3/21	ITM Members' Consultation: Aine Byrne (Kildare LEADER programme) Mary Nevin (Longford Community Resource Ltd) Eve O'Brien (ITM) Bronagh Ritchie (Clondalkin Traveller Development Group) Marie Stokes (Sligo Travellers Support Group)
9/3/21	DCEDIY Consultation: AnnMarie Quarry Olive McGovern Linda O'Sullivan

Participants in the focus groups and interviewees were asked questions reflecting on the regional youth forum events (if applicable), participation & learning opportunities for young Travellers, and their vision for the future regarding participation & leadership for young Travellers.

Strategy Development Workshops

Finally, a series of 4 strategy development workshops were held online via Zoom with the ITM Youth Committee in the period between 27th January-10th March 2021. Attendees represent a range of ITM member organisations and Involve Youth Services:

Bridgy Collins (TravAct)
John Paul Collins (Exchange House Ireland)
Michael Collins (ITM)
April Costello (Involve Ballinasloe, Loughrea, Salthill)
Louise Delaney (Involve Salthill, Loughrea)
Jimmy Maughan (Exchange House Ireland)
Eve O'Brien (ITM)
Lee Anna Ward (Galway Traveller Movement)
Maureen Ward (TravAct)

These workshops provided the opportunity to review data from the initial pieces of consultation and to reflect on this in light of participants' own experiences in working with young Travellers. The Youth Committee was supported to reflect on the concept of participation and values for work with young people that support meaningful participation, and a case study was used as a means of exploring 'youth-led organising' from a different context. There was also a significant capacity-building dimension in the workshops through the introduction of 'logic modelling' as a means of outcomes-focused strategy development. This enabled the participants to explore desired outcomes for the Traveller Youth Participation Strategy, to develop ideas for actions that would bring about these desired outcomes and to identify overarching strategic priorities for the Traveller Youth Participation Strategy.

Findings from the Consultations

As noted in the previous section, questioning in the interviews and focus groups set out to explore 3 key areas:

- Reflection on the regional youth forum events (if applicable)
- Reflection on participation & learning opportunities for young Travellers
- Vision for the future regarding participation & leadership for young Travellers

The discussions and responses yielded feedback on a number of wider strands relevant to work with young Travellers including barriers and supports to involvement in youth provision, and features of good youth work practice with young Travellers. This information serves to build up a picture of what is needed to strengthen participation practices for young Travellers in Traveller organisations, mainstream youth services and the wider youth sector.

Based on the findings this section includes the following:

- SWOT Analysis of Regional Youth Forum Events 2019-20
- SWOT Analysis of youth work with young Travellers



SWOT Analysis of Regional Youth Forum Events 2019-20

It was mostly the ITM Youth Committee members, representatives of national Traveller organisations interviewed in the consultation and some of the young people in the focus groups who had had direct experience or knowledge of the regional youth forum events, and they contributed useful and constructive feedback about these events as summarised in the SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities & Threats) below:

Strengths	Weaknesses/Areas for Development
- Attendance by significant numbers of young people at the regional youth forum events – energy generated for coming together - A positive space for the young people to be part of, enjoyable events, positive feedback from the young people (reported by both workers & young people) - Getting to meet other young Travellers from other parts of the country they may not have otherwise met - Building a sense of solidarity, connection & empowerment of shared experiences & challenges. <i>“It’s really empowering for young people to be able to come into that space and feel connected.”</i> - Young people engaged in topical conversations & open discussions on crime, education, mental health - Young people influenced feedback to government departments regarding needs of young Travellers - contributing to policy reform - As the events progressed, the young people got used to the meeting setting & gained confidence & capacity to participate - Gender mix present at the regional youth forum events with engagement by both boys & girls <i>“Meeting the decision-makers, the kids were well able to hold their own corner.”</i>	- Need for more preparation with participants prior to regional events; focus on smaller groupwork before larger events - Keeping safe – some issues around privacy & confidentiality when discussing sensitive topics - Gender balance & geographical spread – more of a balance of involvement needed from across geographical areas; consider single-sex work first before mixed engagement - LGBT & disability – desire to work towards greater diversity - Weaker connection with youth work & working with young people on the ground - The Youth Forum as an initiative is not yet owned by young Travellers, agenda has been led from organisational level, at least initially, working towards youth-led approach – work in progress - A need to strengthen ‘on the ground’ connections with groups/projects
Opportunities	Threats
- An opportunity to experiment & learn from the events, get a sense of interest levels, a learning curve for the Youth Committee - The potential of peer learning as young people see their peers speaking out in national spaces - Potential of online platforms such as Zoom to facilitate engagement & as a tool for webinars etc - Potential to use events like the regional youth forum events to build momentum & draw young people into greater involvement, <i>“the more we do of this work, the more it will rub off on the young people.”</i> - Potential for events/conferences at the national level that enable young Travellers to become more involved & linked in – using these events as a springboard for follow-up/further activity	Ongoing impact of Covid-19 including restrictions on in person gatherings as well as pressures created for Traveller organisations providing frontline support

It was evident from the consultations that the regional youth forum events are viewed as a vital component of facilitating opportunities for young Travellers to discuss issues that matter to them and to engage directly with decision-makers.

"It was nice because there was a good mixture of Travellers and people throughout all Ireland that came together to discuss proper topics on everyday life and what a lot of people suffers but they don't come forward. But a lot of, it was very, very interesting, I would highly recommend it." (Young Person)

"The decision-makers got to see how much power and how much enthusiasm the young people have." (Youth Worker)

The opportunity to connect with other young Travellers is one that should not be underestimated given the feedback from young people:

"I got to meet all the other people that I wouldn't have known before and all of them Travellers as well... Confidence to meet other Travellers and to talk to the other Travellers that I didn't know before." (Young Person)

"A lot of people aren't really familiar with their culture and what happens around it like, a lot of people aren't familiar with people's faces and we've met a lot of people from going to that now, we're familiar with that, we've learned a lot, so I feel like more of that [would be good]." (Young Person)

These quotes underscore the importance of not only exposing young people to opportunities where they can participate in dialogue about key issues impacting their lives, but also the value that these kinds of events can generate in terms of familiarising young Travellers with the experiences of their peers, how dialogue events work, how decisions are made and so on. In this sense there are significant peer learning and experiential learning aspects of such gatherings.

One of the challenges revealed by the consultations is that there are some young Travellers with a great deal of experience of youth work including group work, involvement in specific projects, attendance at residencies, community events and dialogue events and by contrast there are many young Travellers who have never/rarely had such opportunities. This may be an issue particularly for young Travellers living on sites, as a questionnaire respondent related, *"there is not many sites and areas with youth groups, this is a big problem"*. However one of the focus group participants pointed out that the chance to go to a regional event in a new or different location would be attractive for some young Travellers saying that, *"if there were events going on away from them it would probably push them to go, it would push them to go, 'oh maybe I'll go here', get them familiar with things."*

The disparity in the opportunities available to young Travellers emphasises the need for adequate preparation in advance of such events to support their attendance and engagement. Several young people in the focus groups talked about how some young people could benefit from small group work experiences as an entry point to larger group experiences:

"Maybe try to get them comfortable in the group first instead of just throwing them into a room and telling them to speak in front of people, so if they're more comfortable with the people before speaking, they'll be more confident with a presentation." (Young Person)

Adult interviewees agreed on the need for preparation time before bringing young people together. Furthermore, one of the questionnaire responses suggested “*showing people what we do and then maybe even a taster day on how things are run and what we would be doing in the future*”. While there was enthusiasm among those who had been at Regional Youth Forum events about the chance to meet other young Travellers, a number of comments in the questionnaire showed how young Travellers may feel more comfortable attending a youth project with their friends.

In addition, some of the young women in the consultations highlighted that their parents may be uneasy about their attendance at mixed-gender events, particularly if held on a residential basis but felt that girls-only residential may be more feasible and may help to build trust. Across the other consultations there was agreement about the necessity of trust-building between youth workers and parents/families in Traveller communities to facilitate youth involvement as well as with building relationships with the young people.

Overall the strategy consultation process indicated a strong sense of support for the continuation of such events as part of the Traveller Youth Participation Strategy:

“I think there should be way more. I think it helped people to come out of their shell more, to be more vocal... I feel like there should be more of those, that like – it explains a lot while you’re there, it gets across a lot of stuff, it gets you familiar to a lot.” (Young Person)

SWOT Analysis RE: Youth Work in the Traveller Sector/ with young Travellers

Strengths	Weaknesses/Areas for Development
• Excellent examples of good youth work practice & expertise in the sector in various settings in terms of engagement & facilitation • Legacy of Traveller activism • Help, guidance, wisdom, experience & support from “key stakeholders and people who have worked in the sector for years” • Existing networks & structures in Traveller/youth/education/ community/ employment sectors • Existing Toolkits for work with young Travellers & those who are ‘Seldom-Heard’ (see Appendix 1)	• Where there is a lack of skill/capacity among youth workers/youth projects yields poor results/low participation rates • Lack of resources particularly in local Traveller organisations to support youth work e.g. unable to employ a youth worker, lack of capacity to engage with young people • Patchy nature of understanding and practice around participation and involvement of young people in decision-making processes • LGBT & disability – “It’s about trying to get that diverse voice within the young Travellers’ voice itself, finding that support and diversity for young people, those on the fringes” • Challenges with female participation & in some areas, there may be less aspiration for involvement in youth/Traveller initiatives • Service provision model vs. developmental/ critical approach to youth work – lack of consistency, some projects may have less of a focus on challenging inequalities, a lack of youth-led approaches in some areas • Challenge of reaching young Travellers who aren’t linked into youth provision, a need to broaden the scope of involvement • Impact of austerity measures has reduced youth provision & opportunities for young Travellers, with a consequent impact on progression routes into youth leadership & participation in decision-making in the Traveller sector & beyond • A lack of awareness of where good practice is happening and of what is working in terms of engagement with young Travellers • A lack of connectivity between projects and organisations working with young Traveller in different sectors; exacerbated by the disjointed nature of infrastructure

Opportunities	Threats
• Building a culture of participation & leadership as young people come through programmes/ events each year • Potential of gender-specific approaches to support involvement in culturally appropriate ways e.g. young Traveller women's events/groups, girls-only residentials • Broadening involvement through tapping into various networks so that more young Travellers can get involved who may not otherwise get such opportunities or who may not be plugged into youth provision locally • Potential of strengthening linkages between national & local Traveller organisations & mainstream youth organisations to increase access to provision, to build momentum for participation, & to support young Travellers' capacity for critical analysis & advocacy • Tapping into existing youth work expertise in Travellers/mainstream sectors, identifying & learning from what's working/not • Potential of Traveller-led youth spaces & Traveller-specific work in mainstream provision as well as integrated practice – blend of provision & spaces on offer • There is an onus on mainstream youth projects to engage with marginalised people in their local community, this may create energy for increasing young Travellers' access to youth provision • Potential for effective engagement with the government re the needs of young Travellers through strengthening collaboration & networking in existing Traveller/mainstream structures • Young people having a voice in decisions affecting them is integral to national youth policy frameworks	• Pressures for local Traveller organisations already burdened with pressing issues e.g. in addressing accommodation issues • Concerns re further cuts to funding for Traveller services & organisations • Ongoing impact of Covid-19 including restrictions on in person gatherings & the challenges that presents for development work restricted to digital spaces ("the young people will lose out on Zoom") • Complexity of structures that can be intimidating • Demoralisation because change is slow

The above SWOT analysis makes clear that while the areas for development outnumber the strengths of existing youth work with young Travellers, while good practice may seem be patchy and many Traveller organisations lack the resourcing to offer youth provision, there are many opportunities to strengthen engagement with young Travellers through greater collaboration and 'joining up the dots' through existing networks, initiatives, resources, and policy frameworks and encouraging inclusive practice. This will serve to strengthen participation and equip young Travellers to express what matters to them and have their voices heard. As one of the interviewees reflected:

"It needs to be a partnership and network of Traveller youth organisations and mainstream youth organisations who are working with young Travellers on a weekly basis. That's the starting point... it's about developing that network and saying, well, what's the work that has to be done at a club or activity level before you bring these groups of young people together and how is the coordinator of this e.g. an individual/organisation – how are they keeping the connection with that local club and how are things progressing?" (Stakeholder)

There were several recurring themes in the consultations in terms of how youth work with young Travellers might be enhanced such as strengthening early intervention efforts, using young people's interests to encourage their involvement in youth activities, and the importance of role models – Travellers active in a variety of arenas – in the community, in politics, in sport etc whom young people can look up to. There was also recognition of the importance of youth and community workers and other practitioners who are reliable, encouraging, motivating, supportive – especially in response to issues of discrimination or prejudice, who support young Travellers in a way that they can make & learn from mistakes, who apply culturally specific approaches and foster pride in a Traveller identity, and who support young Travellers to explore emerging issues from their lived experience.

This last point about supporting young Travellers to reflect on their lived experience is particularly relevant to a critical social education model of working with young people¹⁴ which some consultation participants felt is largely a missing piece in current practice with young Travellers. One of the stakeholders interviewed shared the example of a piece of work with a group of young Traveller men that included space to discuss issues they identified as important as an integral part of a wider outdoor activity-focused programme:

"We have an outdoor activities programme for under 25s and with each activity there is a workshop where we explore the emerging issues – we ask the group what issues are important to them. We're not designing the workshop; the group comes up with the issues. Workshops can be over planned, but we allow the young men to plan and explore the issues and then help to relate their lived experiences to what's going on in wider society. For example we took them to the Raise the Issues March last year and they enjoyed it, it was a means of consciousness-raising. We took them to a mental health play called 'Cracked' and they all got something out of it."

(Stakeholder)

The above quote demonstrates the potential of critical social education to acknowledge the everyday realities of many young Travellers' lives – particularly in the here and now, to create the opportunity to raise greater consciousness of how discrimination and inequalities specifically impact the Travelling community and then to consider ways in which these challenges can be addressed through young people acting out of their agency. In this sense such work is participatory because it starts from where the young people are at, helps them to develop critical thinking skills, and honours their capacity to be part of change by involving them as 'co-producers' of work towards solutions to bring about change. As such this is empowering and emancipatory work.

While some of the themes arising in the consultations are not necessarily directly linked to participation practice that involves young people in decision-making processes and structures, this Strategy recognises that youth work methodologies play a significant role in cultivating work that is young person-centred and that honours young people's capacity to exercise their voice and the following sections places participation at the heart of youth work practice and values.

Youth Participation

Participation is a much-used term in the world of youth work; however it became clear in the consultation process that there are different understandings of the concept among key stakeholders, and that these understandings sit on a fairly broad spectrum ranging from the idea of taking part in a youth activity to the notion of young people being intentionally involved as partners in decision-making processes and structures.

¹⁴ According to a critical social education model, youth work "recognises that young people are victims of injustices in society; Challenges the values of society since they are seen to promote inequality through the maintenance of the status quo; Develops consciousness raising strategies as a core curriculum approach". HURLEY, L. & TREACY, T. (1993) *Models of Youth Work: A Sociological Framework*. Dublin: Irish Youth Work Press.

It also emerged in the feedback from those involved with the Regional Youth Forum events that many of the young people who attended were not familiar with the term, 'forum', and it had to be explained, and during the events it was observed that many of the young people had not previously had the experience of being asked for their views and opinions on key issues. This demonstrates the need to familiarise young people with the concepts of participation and of having a voice and the different kinds of structures that can facilitate that. Another stakeholder reflected how it can be challenging to facilitate a youth-led approach and encourage young people to have their voices heard when these are completely new ideas and experiences:

"Not everyone knows what it is to have a voice and particularly if you're a child or a young person and you don't have the right to vote or whatever." (Stakeholder)

In youth work as a discipline and practice, participation is viewed as a core principle of work with young people:

"The participative nature of youth work recognises young people's rights to choose whether to be involved and to make decisions about issues that affect them. Recognising, valuing and building on participants' contributions and experiences means that young people are 'at the centre' of youth work practice." ⁽¹⁵⁾

Another youth work writer refers to the importance of participation in both informal and formal settings:

"Informally, every aspect of youth work should be underpinned by a commitment to communicate, involve and delegate decisions to young people...participative practice must also contain the necessary formal structures to maximise involvement and enable young people to be sufficiently involved in all aspects of the club or project." ⁽¹⁶⁾



¹⁵ SAPIN, K. (2013) Essential Skills for Youth Work Practice. London: SAGE.

¹⁶ ORD, J. (2016) Youth Work Process, Product & Practice. Abingdon: Routledge.

A stakeholder emphasised what it means for young people to have their voice and how this makes participation a distinct practice:

"...participation is not about turning up, it's about something different... it's about creating the space and the place for young people to identify what's important to them... not the issues that matter to us as adults or decision-makers or advocacy organisations – it is about giving the children the opportunity to talk about the things that matter to them and look at ways in which decision-makers can hear them. It could be around housing, but it could be completely different to the issues we as adults are shouting about. Equally in terms of access to health services or anything else. It's not to say that on the big thematic issues you don't do participative work, but you do that participative work in a way that's about enabling the child to have their voice as opposed to enabling a space where they say the things you want them to say." (Stakeholder)

There are numerous models of participation and one of the best known in youth work settings is Roger Hart's Ladder of Participation¹⁷, which lays out different levels of participation and decision-making power on a sliding scale or ladder. During the strategy development process the ITM Youth Committee considered the following model offered by VeLure Roholt and Baizerman, which expands on Hart's distinction between participation and non-participation by emphasising 4 key features of participatory practice – voice, choice, transparency and information:

	PARTICIPATION	NON-PARTICIPATION
VOICE	Young people are able & encouraged to express personal opinions & thoughts & these shape the joint work that is done.	Young people are used to express the ideas & opinions of adults. Their opinion is secondary.
CHOICE	Young people have the opportunity to participate in many different ways & can choose which of these is best for them.	Young people are not asked to participate but are told.
TRANSPARENCY	Structures for young people's participation are explicit & open for review. Young people's participation role is clear, as is adults'.	Structures for young people's participation are implicit and not discussed.
INFORMATION	Young people know both the why and the what of their participation.	Young people's participation role is unclear, & adults' role is denied. Young people are simply told what to do.

From Velure Roholt, R. & Baizerman, M. (2013) *Civic Youth Work: A Primer*. New York: Peter Lang.

These four features offer useful 'touchstones' for the implementation of this Traveller Youth Participation and Leadership Strategy going forward as a way of testing the integrity of actions to ensure that voice, choice, transparency and information are present for young Travellers.

¹⁷ See further: <https://www.mefirst.org.uk/resource/arnsteins-ladder-of-participation/>

As mentioned in the Background and Context section, the *National Strategy on Children & Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015-20* locates children and young people's voices in decision-making regarding issues that affect their lives within a national policy framework. It is rooted in a rights-based approach, particularly through the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC).

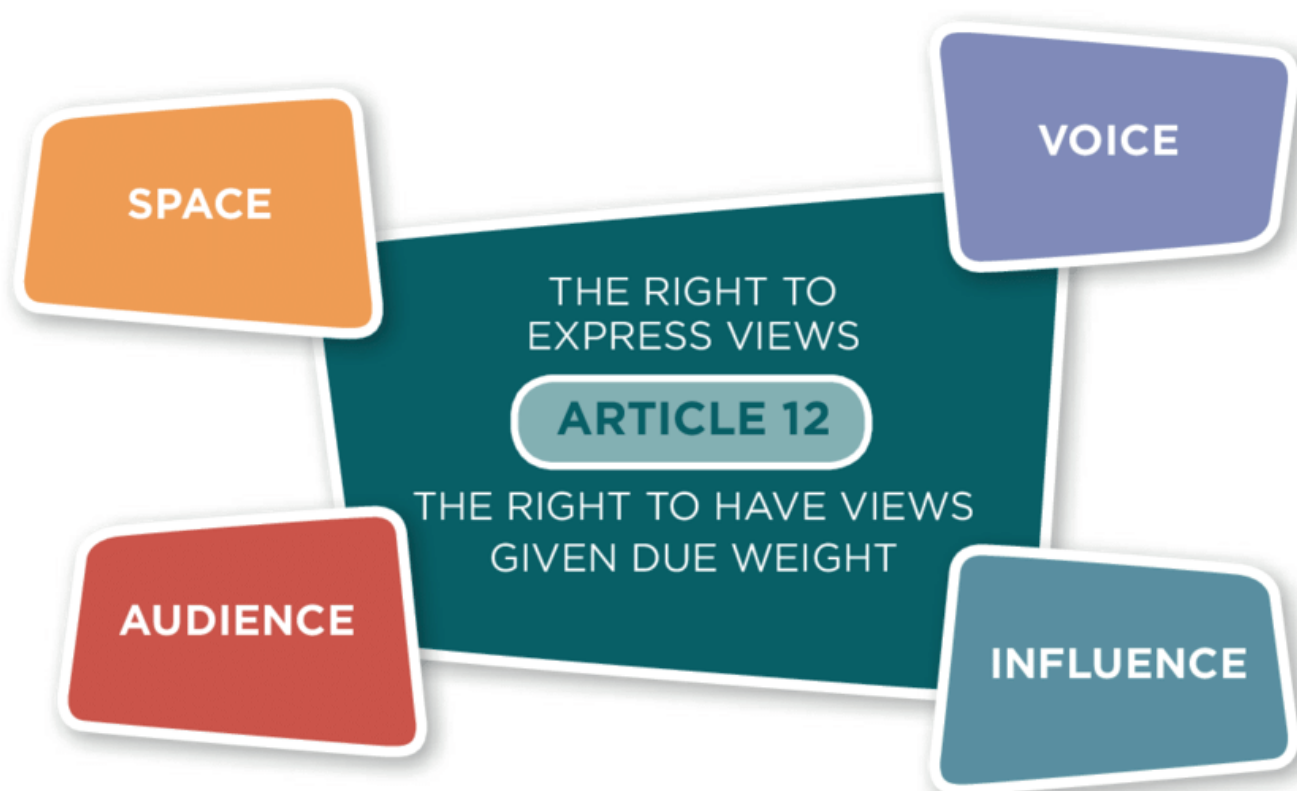
The government's Citizen Participation Unit¹⁸ has found the adoption of a national approach particularly effective in strengthening participation practice for children and young people and has therefore adopted the **Lundy Model of Participation**¹⁹ as a 'how-to' of doing this work effectively. The Lundy model, as the illustration below shows, takes its inspiration from Article 12 of the UNCRC on respect for children's views²⁰ and emphasises four elements:

SPACE: Children must be given safe, inclusive opportunities to form and express their view

VOICE: Children must be facilitated to express their view

AUDIENCE: The view must be listened to.

INFLUENCE: The view must be acted upon, as appropriate.



The advantage of adopting a model such as the Lundy model is that it supports a common language and understanding of participation practice and creates the potential to build capacity across sectors and at multiple levels of organisations and policy.

¹⁸ <https://www.gov.ie/en/policy-information/dff67e-participation/>

¹⁹ The Lundy Model is outlined in the *National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making 2015-20* which also includes a Voice Model Checklist for Participation.

²⁰ "Children have the right to give their opinions freely on issues that affect them. Adults should listen and take children seriously." (Child-friendly version of UNCRC)

The Lundy model places emphasis on adults enabling the right of children to be heard which creates an impetus towards addressing two key areas of focus for the implementation of this Strategy:

iii) What are organisations within the Traveller sector doing in relation to listening to the voices of children and young people?

iv) What are organisations external to the Traveller sector – mainstream youth services, government agencies and so on – doing in relation to listening to the voices of young Travellers?

These two questions have the potential to create a platform for exploring how participation practice can be strengthened within the Traveller sector and how mainstream youth services can be more proactively inclusive of young Travellers.

In the case of the latter it is vital to consider what participation practice looks like specifically when working with young Travellers and how barriers to participation particular to the lived experience of young Travellers such as educational disadvantage might be addressed. In other contexts there are examples where participation has been applied in a way that is informed by specific needs. For example, the Multicultural Youth Advocacy Network (MYAN) in Australia – a national body representing the rights and interests of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds and those who work with them – produced a toolkit called *Not Just Ticking a Box*²¹ which aims to help organisations consider how to facilitate participation practice with young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds. This resource brings together children's rights compliance, international standards, participation and youth work practice along with the voices of young people from refugee and migrant backgrounds and input from participation practitioners. It is therefore cognisant of the particular barriers that refugee and migrant young people in Australia face and issues that might inhibit their meaningful participation in decision-making, and outlines practice examples to enable young people to have their voices heard.

Guiding Values & Principles for the Participation Strategy

As the consultations and strategy development workshops progressed, the discussions created a sense of synergy around guiding values and principles for the Strategy:

- Culturally aware youth work that is rooted in the Traveller experience & identity²²

"Young Travellers should be able to access quality youth work that is conscious of the fact and has the ability or the skills to promote the fact that they are Traveller and give them space to talk about those issues." (Stakeholder)

- Voluntary participation where young people can 'vote with their feet'
- Youth work that is informed by a critical social education model of practice with a commitment to equality, justice & fairness
- Commitment to a celebration of diversity that pays attention to expanding female participation, LGBTQI+ and disability inclusion
- Transparency – there needs to be clear communication about the intentions of the strategy with young people and their parents
- Commitment to collaboration and partnership working with organisations in various sectors including community, youth and Traveller sectors

²¹ Available from: <https://myan.org.au/myan-reports/not-just-ticking-a-box-youth-participation-with-young-people-from-refugee-and-migrant-backgrounds/>

²² This links closely to one of the themes under Children & Youth in the National Traveller Inclusion Strategy 2017-21 which states, "Traveller and Roma children should have opportunities to participate in culturally appropriate youth programmes that meet their needs."

-
- Taking a young person-centred approach, which in practice can be exemplified in a range of ways:
 - Starting where the young people are at
 - Building trust with young people based on a sense of respect and the dignity of each young person
 - Listening to what's important to young people, tuning into their interests and needs
 - Supporting young people to say what they think
 - Providing practical supports & flexibility to support young Traveller's involvement
 - Communicating with clarity and ensuring that any terminology is explained
 - Going at their pace
 - Facilitating peer learning
 - Confidence-building
 - Youth-led – heeding the direction young people want to take and fostering young people's ownership of initiatives

The last two bullet-points are particularly relevant for participation practice and the importance of working to young people's agenda was strongly resonant in the consultations and workshops:

"The first thing is it has to be their idea – that's the core part of the participation and engagement. Now there's a way you can facilitate that to come out, but it has to come from the young people themselves, they need to be... it needs to be their game, not our game." (Stakeholder)



"...meet them where they're at and I think it's really important that we're able to hear things even if it's things we didn't necessarily want to hear... But almost not not hearing something just because it doesn't fit with the narrative, [but instead] allowing young people's voice to be truly heard, not just take what we think is the best for young people as this must be the way forward, that's important." (Stakeholder)

Strategic Priorities

"The more of a voice we give our young people, and more encouragement and have the structure in place for them, the more they'll realise that youth work is more about their personal and self-development, and self-esteem, and it's not just about trips and activities, it's about building them as young people, and as a future voice for travellers." (Youth Worker)

Informed by the consultations and based on discussions in the strategy development workshops, 3 strategic priorities emerged to form the basis of this Traveller Youth Participation & Leadership Strategy:

- To build the capacity of young Travellers in expressing their ideas and opinions to shape activities they're involved in and decision-making
- To promote participative approaches in youth programmes with young Travellers
- To promote inclusive and safe spaces for young Travellers to engage in dialogue with peers and decision-makers



Desired outcomes

Using an outcomes-focused approach in the strategy development workshops helped those involved to articulate the changes they wish to see for young Travellers in terms of Traveller youth participation and the outcomes they would like young people in the Travelling community to experience as a result of this Strategy's implementation. The table on the next page sets out these desired outcomes and splits them into short-, medium- and long-term outcomes in recognition that change doesn't happen all at once.

Key Actions

Having agreed desired outcomes for the Strategy, our attention turned to identifying key actions or activities that would be in service of the Strategy to bring about the desired change and builds upon existing activities. This requires a sense of realism about what is possible in terms of time, resources and challenges, particularly in the Traveller sector, while also creating a sense of stretch to work towards strengthening young Travellers' voice. These actions also seek to attend to the internal work of equipping Traveller organisations to listen to the voice of young people, and the external work of supporting organisations beyond the Traveller sector to hear the voice of Traveller young people. There are seven key actions:

1. ITM Leadership Training Programme for young Travellers

Recruitment of 10-15 young Travellers from across the country got underway in the latter part of 2020 and the programme began in April 2021 for an initial online phase. This programme provides a personal development opportunity for the participants, strengthening their capacity in group work, communication, critical thinking and dialogue skills.

2. Development & promotion of the Youth Forum as a national space for young Travellers

In recognition of the successful aspects of the regional youth forum events of 2019-20, there will be an ongoing programme of annual events and conferences that bring together young Travellers from different parts of the country to talk about the issues that matter to them and to engage directly with decision-makers and policymakers. The Youth Committee will continue to support the organising of these events and will recruit young Travellers from the ITM Leadership Programme and other youth initiatives to involve young people in planning activities.

3. Mapping & Research of work with young Travellers

In order to strengthen participation practice and Traveller inclusion it is vital to identify projects working with young Travellers, identify areas where young Travellers do not have access to youth provision and why, identify good practice examples both of work with young Travellers and involvement of young Travellers in decision-making (e.g. young Travellers on Boards or management committees) to find out what is working and why.

4. Practice Development on Youth Participation work with young Travellers

As noted in the section on Youth Participation, a context-specific guide for participation work with young Travellers would allow for greater understanding of the additional barriers they face to involvement in decision-making such as educational disadvantage. Practice development in this area will equip Traveller organisations to consider how they can listen to the voices of young Travellers in a way that is contextualised to their realities and that is consistent with rights-based frameworks such as Article 12 of the UNCRC. Thought should be given to the development of peer support networks at local and regional levels to support youth and community workers in developing and sustaining participatory practice with young Travellers.

5. Building partnerships and relationships with stakeholders

This Strategy recognises the value and potential of network-building across a range of sectors and initiatives to promote this Strategy and create partnership linkages including the Traveller sector (e.g. Yellow Flag, National Traveller Education Awards), youth structures (e.g. Comhairle na nÓg, Children Young People's Service Committees, DCEDIY, NYCI), education sector (e.g. support systems such as educational welfare, Student Councils), and training and employment sector (e.g. YouthReach, CE schemes). In particular, ITM and its partners wish to support DCEDIY and the Comhairle na nÓg in their goals regarding participation through working towards:

- i. Development of a direct link with the DCEDIY to support strengthening of participation practice in work with young Travellers and to facilitate the meaningful involvement of young Travellers in participation structures
- ii. Strengthen the capacity of Comhairle na nÓg structures to facilitate inclusion of young Travellers

In addressing the above sub-actions it is important to acknowledge how formal participation structures can often be intimidating to young Travellers and that building pathways and opportunities that facilitate their meaningful involvement – particularly to avoid any pressure of individuals having to represent all young Travellers – will be vital going forward. However, the benefit of strengthening relationships across sectors means that organisations such as ITM, its members and partners can be a vital asset to the equality efforts of statutory bodies.

6. Promoting Traveller-inclusive Youth Work

As noted in the SWOT analysis of work with young Travellers on page 13 there are a number of existing toolkits and resources that offer practical information and support to organisations wishing to be more inclusive of young Travellers – these are listed in Appendix 1. These resources should be promoted more widely in the youth sector and supported through training delivery where funding is available. Thought should be given to the development of peer support networks at local and regional levels to support practice development in the area of Traveller-inclusive youth work.

Monitoring & Evaluation of Strategy Implementation

Finally, any strategy needs to be monitored and evaluated to track progress against its priorities and actions, and to identify learning for future strategy development processes. A **Steering Group** (draft Terms of Reference in Appendix 2) will be established to oversee the implementation of this Strategy with meetings 3 times a year and will include key stakeholders from the national Traveller organisations, ITM membership, mainstream youth sector, and DCEDIY, as well as young people from the Leadership Programme &/or the Youth Forum. A Draft Implementation Plan is included in Appendix 3 as a potential accountability system for the Steering Group.

Resourcing the Strategy for Delivery

In order to take forward the key actions proposed in this Strategy it is necessary to ensure appropriate funding and resources are in place. This is particularly pertinent to the Traveller sector where many organisations are focused on addressing vital 'frontline' needs, for example in the areas of primary healthcare and accommodation. Ascertaining the specific resourcing needs can be assisted by needs assessment to establish information such as what Traveller organisations need to strengthen their engagement with young Travellers and to involve them in decision-making. The Draft Implementation Plan in Appendix 3 includes a column on resources that may be required to deliver on each key action such as programme or staff costs or specific expertise.



Desired Outcomes for Traveller Youth Participation & Leadership

Short-Term	Medium-Term	Long-Term
Improved access to youth services for young Travellers across Ireland	Improved inclusion of young Travellers by mainstream youth services that celebrates Traveller identity	
More young Travellers involved in their local communities/youth projects in the Traveller sector or mainstream youth services (Traveller-specific or integrated initiatives)	More young Travellers discussing issues that affect them and voicing their opinions, experiences and perspectives	More young Travellers involved in decision-making spaces, representing themselves and peers in the Traveller sector and in mainstream services
	A growth in energy, enthusiasm and confidence among young Travellers for exercising their voice in community and decision-making spaces	A growth in energy, enthusiasm and confidence among young Travellers for exercising their voice in national spaces e.g. ITM, NITRIS etc.
Strengthened culture of volunteering among young Travellers	Strengthened culture of leadership among young Travellers through youth-led spaces and young people playing an active role in the ITM Youth Committee	Strengthened culture of activism among young Travellers challenging the status quo to improve conditions for peers and their communities

About the Consultant

Deborah Erwin is a Belfast-based professionally qualified youth work practitioner with over 20 years' experience of full-time youth work and youth service management. Building on her experience of practice development and training, particularly in the area of 'Civic Youth Work' Deborah is deeply committed to young people's active participation in the civic life of their communities where they have a real say on real issues that matter to them. She has worked with a wide range of stakeholders including policymakers and public servants as well as a variety of youth-focussed agencies to identify methods of engaging with youth and to develop strategies that enable young people to shape policy and public services. Working independently since 2015, Deborah has built a successful consultancy portfolio including programme development, research, strategic review, evaluation, and facilitation. Previous clients include the Centre for Children's Rights at Queen's University Belfast, National Youth Council of Ireland, Ballyfermot Youth Service, and the Youth Training Project Team in the Department for the Economy (NI).

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Appendix 1

Existing Toolkits to Support Young Traveller Inclusion

As a result of information shared in the consultations it became evident that a variety of resource toolkits are already in existence that can support youth organisations wishing to be more inclusive of young Travellers.

- *Access All Areas – a Diversity Toolkit for the Youth Work Sector*²³ published by NYCI and Youthnet in 2012. This resource contains a chapter specific to 'Working with Young Travellers' and was developed by Liz Loftus (Involve [formerly NATC]) and Marie Fitzpatrick (Pavee Point).
- *Progressing Traveller Inclusion in Youth Work: A Training Manual and Toolkit for Youth Workers*²⁴ published by Foróige in conjunction with the Traveller Youth Needs Working Group (a part of Cork City Traveller Inter-Agency Steering Group) in 2011 and written by Joan Nolan (Foróige).
- *STATUS Toolkit: Supporting Travellers Advance through Universal Services*²⁵ published by Youth Work Ireland in 2017 and developed in conjunction with Involve, YouthAction Northern Ireland, An Múna Tober/Bryson. The purpose of this toolkit is to provide a Quality Assurance Framework whereby youth work organisations can engage in a process of self-evaluation and agree a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) to support their youth work practice to be more inclusive of members of the Traveller community.
- *A Practical Guide to Including Seldom-Heard Children & Young People in Decision-Making*²⁶ published by the Department of Children & Youth Affairs and Barnardo's in 2015 and written by Olivia McEvoy. This toolkit seeks to support professionals to ensure that children and young people who experience marginalisation in different ways have a say in decisions that affect their lives. While not specific to the experience of young Travellers it makes a range of practical suggestions that workers can apply to their setting.

Appendix 2

Steering Group Terms of Reference (DRAFT)

Aim

To monitor progress, address any obstacles in the implementation of the project, to share learning that arises from the pilot scheme and to promote a wider roll-out.

About the Strategy

Traveller Youth Participation & Leadership Strategy 2021-25 sets out how the Irish Traveller Movement (ITM) and its membership of national and local Traveller organisations wish to promote and support Traveller youth participation, capacity building, empowerment and leadership across national policy spaces as well as the Traveller sector.

²³ <https://www.youth.ie/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/Chapter-4-Working-with-Young-Travellers-all-ireland-.pdf>

²⁴ <http://www.tvgcork.ie/sites/default/files/downloadableResources/TravellerInclusionGraphic.pdf>

²⁵ https://www.youthworkireland.ie/images/uploads/general/Status_Toolkit_-_Final.pdf

²⁶ <https://www.dcy.gov.ie/documents/publications/20150903PracticalGuieSeldomHeardChildren.pdf>

Membership (numbers to be determined)

ITM National Youth Officer

ITM National Policy & Membership Officer

Representatives of ITM membership

Representatives of mainstream youth sector e.g. Foróige/Youth Work Ireland/National Youth Council of Ireland

DCEDIY representative

Young Travellers

Roles

- To act as an advisory group and provide oversight for the implementation of the Strategy
- To ensure fulfilment of each partners' responsibilities as set out in the Partnership Agreement with -----
- To monitor progress in accordance with an agreed workplan and report to the ITM Central Group on a quarterly basis
- To consider evidence gathered through internal and any external evaluation
- To advise on the wider implementation of the learning from the Strategy and to assist with the design of future phases beyond 2025

Structure of Meetings

4 meetings annually

The venue for each meeting may vary between the various partner organisations involved in the Strategy

Times of meetings to be discussed & agreed with the membership in advance

A chair provides the focus of discussion

A secretary (minute taker – ITM) will record a summary of the key discussion and a set of action points aligned with responsibilities

Communication

Regular communication to members of the group

Minutes will be circulated within 1 week of the meeting held to all Steering Group members

Appendix 3

DRAFT Implementation Plan

A Strategy Steering Group will use this implementation plan to monitor and evaluate progress on each of the key actions at regular update meetings (3 times a year). This will allow for adjustments to be made where appropriate or necessary and creates an accountability system for ongoing delivery. Using a RAG – Red/Amber/Green – Reporting System (See Appendix 4) will provide a quick way to track performance. This plan also allows for the integrity of the Strategy to be tested regularly against the priorities, actions and desired outcomes with reflection on questions such as:

- Are these the priorities that will lead to the change we wish to see?
- Are these the actions that will bring about the change we wish to see?

Key Action	Lead	Partners	Resources	Indicator(s)	Evaluation	Timescale	RAG
1. ITM Leadership Programme	ITM	N/a	Time Programme & staff delivery costs Admin Support External Trainer(s)	Training Records Young Travellers coming forward into planning activities locally/nationally (e.g. Youth Committee)	Participant Feedback Staff Review	Year 1	
2. Development & Promotion of the Youth Forum as a national space for young Travellers	ITM	Youth Committee Exchange House Involve	Time Programme & staff delivery costs Admin Support	Growth in participation Diversity of participants (urban/rural, geographical, gender, sexuality, disability) Strengthened interaction between young people & decision/policymakers Policy Development influenced by dialogues	Participant Feedback (young people, youth workers, invited guests) Youth Committee Review	Year 1-5	
3. Mapping & Research of work with young Travellers	ITM	Exchange House Involve Pavee Point	Time Programme & staff delivery costs Admin Support External Researcher(s)	Data & Analysis of current projects with young Travellers, gaps in provision, good practice examples	Steering Group Review	Year 1-3	

4.Practice Development on Youth Participation work with young Travellers	ITM	Exchange House Involve	Time Programme & staff delivery costs	Development of practitioner networks discussing practice	Participant Feedback	Year 3-5	
5. Building partnerships and relationships with stakeholders	ITM	Exchange House Involve Pavee Point	Time Admin Support	Partner Agreements/ Formal structural linkages e.g. with DCEDIY, Comhairle na nÓg etc. Policy Development Collaboration activities e.g. joint initiatives	Steering Group Review Project Reports	Year 1-5	
6. Promoting Traveller inclusive youth work	ITM	Exchange House Involve	Time Programme/ training delivery costs	Uptake of training events using existing toolkits across more organisations in different sectors Development of practitioner networks to support Traveller-inclusive practice	Participant Feedback	Year 1-5	

RAG Legend

	Off Track		Intervention needed		On Track
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Appendix 4

RAG Reporting System

This is a traffic light system used as a visual cue to track project performance. It can be added to reports to indicate how each activity is progressing.

	RED – Confident that we are not going to reach our target by the end of the year. We would need to put drastic measures in place to reach our target. Describe the mitigating circumstances
	AMBER – Not as confident as we should be, but if we put some measures in place, we should achieve our target.
	GREEN – We are confident that we are where we should be at this time of year and are on track to reach target.

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