

STATUS TOOLKIT

“Supporting Travellers Advance through Universal Services”



This Status Toolkit is the product of a Youth Work Ireland led partnership between Involve, YouthAction Northern Ireland and An Munia Tober / Bryson.

The project was supported by Erasmus+ and Leargas.

2017



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FOREWORD



At Involve CLG, we recognise the important role that youth services across Ireland have played in youth empowerment and participation. In recent years, many services have placed a stronger focus on hearing the “seldom-heard” voices, including those of young Travellers. We warmly welcome this positive shift and acknowledge the ongoing commitment across the sector to fostering more equitable and inclusive youth participation.

This Toolkit is being delivered by Involve CLG to support that journey. It offers a Quality Assurance Framework to help youth services engage in a process of self-evaluation and to develop a Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP). This process is designed to help services identify areas of good practice and growth, with the specific aim of becoming more inclusive and responsive to the needs, identities, and lived experiences of young people from the Traveller community

The STATUS Toolkit (Supporting Travellers Access through Universal Services) Toolkit (2016), was created as part of a Key Action 1 Erasmus+ Project funded by Léargas. That project was led by Youth Work Ireland in partnership with Youth Action Northern Ireland, An Munia Tober / Bryson, and Involve CLG.

Our hope is that this Toolkit will act as a catalyst for deeper inclusion and equity in youth participation. We believe it can bring about structures to ensure that young Travellers enjoy the same opportunities to engage and lead as their settled peers.

We are grateful to the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth for supporting this initiative. Involve CLG looks forward to working collaboratively with the Department and youth services nationwide to improve outcomes and experiences for young Travellers in youth participation settings.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Power".

Michael Power
CEO, Involve Youth and Community Services

PAPER 1: Background Information

The purpose of the STATUS Toolkit is to provide a Quality Assurance (QA) 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 practices to be more inclusive of members of the Traveller community. This will help to achieve the best possible outcomes for the engagement, participation and retention of young people from the Traveller community in their projects and activities.

Context

After decades of marginalisation and discrimination, a significant number of the Traveller community still experience racism, discrimination, marginalisation, internalised oppression and a lack of real opportunities to progress personally, socially, emotionally and economically with their settled counterparts. This often results in low self-esteem and low self-confidence when operating outside the safety of their community and environment. For example, the 'All Ireland Traveller Health Study' (2010) found that Travellers are six times more likely to die by suicide than non-Travellers; and 56% of Travellers said that poor physical and mental health restricted their normal daily activities compared to 24% of the GMS population.

In relation to engagement, participation and retention of young people from the Traveller community within youth work the Nexus research¹ (Nov 2016) found that Traveller organisations identified two key barriers to youth participation:

1. Traveller culture is not recognised by youth work staff (64%);
2. Traveller culture is not recognised by settled young people (52%).

Local and National/Regional Youth Organisations further identified the following as core barriers:

1. Perceived lack of Traveller value on youth work and youth development (56%);
2. Gender differences and conditioning (52%).

From the current life experiences of the Traveller community, organisations and individuals working with the Traveller community will need to take extra and repetitive steps to create the conditions for societal change and organisational excellence in this area. Travellers themselves will require additional supports as they are not a homogenous group but rather broad and diverse with tailored needs and issues.

¹ Nexus Research Co-operative, (2017), "Including Young Travellers – Traveller participation and retention in mainstream youth services and Traveller specific funded projects", Involve (National Travellers Youth Service).



Young people from the Traveller community, like those in the settled community, are not a homogenous group, and have individual needs and contexts which need to be addressed in a manner that is appropriate to the Traveller community. There should not be a 'one size fits all.' Young people within the Traveller community can be minorities within a minority, such as young mothers, LGBT or Travellers who are married to non-Travellers.

The STATUS Toolkit is not just about equality of access but about giving youth organisations a sign-post to lead the way in the active inclusion and empowerment of Travellers in their universal services. This may require organisations to outsource Traveller culture awareness training but this should not be seen as a blockage to development and planning for inclusion.

Usage of the toolkit is a developmental process and provides a framework for real change which prioritises youth work practices, organisational cultures and also develops a critical consciousness of societal inequalities in which advocacy and change can emanate and allow Travellers reach their full potential in Irish society.

Benefits & Outcomes of Using the STATUS Toolkit

By endeavouring to create a welcoming and empowering social environment for young people from the Traveller Community, organisations will create the conditions so as young Travellers will participate fully and advance with confidence and ready to engage fully in society. By utilising the STATUS Toolkit and agreeing actions, a youth organisation is taking strategic steps within their services which will ensure better outcomes for Travellers in their personal life and in society at large.

The step by step guide will facilitate and create an organisational best practice approach in the engagement, participation and retention of Traveller young people in mainstream youth services. The engagement, participation and retention of Young Travellers lie firmly with the service provider. Having an open door policy or treating everybody equally is not enough to create equality, this requires proactive and deliberate planning to ensure better equality of outcomes for young Travellers.

The STATUS Toolkit Quality Assurance Framework reflects the models used within the youth sector for self assessment and continuous improvement across the island of Ireland.

In this Toolkit Pack you will find:

1. Background Information (Paper 1)
2. Step by Step Operational Guide for Self Assessment (Paper 2)
3. A Continuous Improvement Plan (Paper 3)
4. Examples of Evidence (Paper 4)
5. A Self-Assessment Framework (Paper 5)

PAPER 2: Step by Step Operational Guide for Self-Assessment

Prior to the STATUS self-assessment and implementation process there is a requirement from management to fully endorse and support the implementation of the STATUS Toolkit within their organisation. This requires buy-in across the levels of the organisation including governance, senior management, staff, volunteers and young people.

Step 1:

An organisational leader who will oversee the STATUS Quality Assurance process within their organisation will contact their relevant Traveller/Youth Work organisation to become more familiar with the self assessment process:

- Ireland: Involve or Youth Work Ireland
- N.Ireland: An Munia Tober or YouthAction NI

Contact Information

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Step 2:

The organisation will establish an implementation team to oversee and champion the STATUS self-assessment and Continuous Improvement Plan process. Preferably this should involve representatives including governance, senior management, youth work staff and a young person. This team is crucial to the success of the process. This team should meet 3-4 times per year to review progress and develop action plans.

This implementation team will promote the use of the toolkit throughout the organisation and begin the process of assessing the organisations commitment to promoting, engaging and retaining young people from the Traveller community within their youth service.

Step 3:

The implementation team in conjunction with their board of management create a 'statement of intent' which outlines their commitment towards the engagement, participation and retention of young Travellers in their service. This statement will highlight a commitment to the organisation's vision for inclusion of young Travellers as well as consideration to the time afforded to this. This statement is then located at the top of paper 3 alongside the Continuous Improvement plan.

Step 4:

The implementation team carries out the self assessment process using the Continuous Improvement Plan pro-forma (paper 3). The statement of intent will be recorded at the top of this paper. The implementation team then consider the examples of evidence (paper 4) and firstly identify what is in place as existing evidence or indicators according to each heading.

The team then make a note in the Continuous Improvement Plan of this existing evidence. From this evidence based list the team then rate the organisation according to the 4 assessment areas (Absent, Acquiring, Achieved, Advanced) within the self assessment framework (paper 5). Evidence is compiled on where the organisation stands with regards to its promotion, engagement and retention of young people from the Traveller community.

Step 5:

The implementation team having reviewed each of the 8 sections then:

- Consider areas for improvement within each section;
- Identify the necessary actions for implementation;
- Identify the relevant personnel to oversee the actions;
- Agree a timeframe which is realistic to achieve this identified action.

Step 6:

The statement of intent, self assessment process and Continuous Improvement Plan outcomes are presented to all sections of the organisation explaining the reasons for assessment grading and areas for improvement. Further discussions will take place at this time and the organisation will negotiate with the team to agree on this assessment and priority actions. Organisational debate and discussion should take place and is welcome as part of this ongoing process.

The commitment to this Continuous Improvement Plan is a further indication that the organisation is serious about its work with young people from the Traveller community and can serve as a tool for enhancing the culture of the organisation in working with marginalised groups in general.

Step 7:

The Continuous Improvement Plan is updated on a quarterly basis noting the key accomplishments and identifying further areas for improvement. This progress review (or a summary report) should be presented to the board, management and staff of the organisation at regular intervals.

This progress review will give the organisation the motivation to continue to strive for excellence in their engagement, participation and retention of young people from the Traveller community.

Celebrate success along the way!!



PAPER 3: STATUS Continuous Improvement Plan

Self-assessment by: _____

(name of organisation)

Date established: _____

Review date: _____

Section (priority area)		Supporting Evidence	Rating (Absent, Acquiring, Achieved or Advanced)	Identified areas for improvement
1.	Board of Management			
2.	Operational Management			
3.	Practice / Service Delivery			
4.	Environment & Culture			
5.	Administration			
6.	Participation			
7.	Volunteers			
8.	Advocacy			



STATEMENT OF INTENT (including timescale for implementation) : _____

Section (priority area)		Specific Actions to support implementation	Who will progress these and when?	Review: What has been achieved and where is the evidence?
1.	Board of Management			
2.	Operational Management			
3.	Practice / Service Delivery			
4.	Environment & Culture			
5.	Administration			
6.	Participation			
7.	Volunteers			
8.	Advocacy			

PAPER 4: Status Toolkit Example of Evidence / Indicators

Section 1 - The Board of Management

Potential actions/evidence to assess the rating for the Board of Management:

- Traveller participation/retention is an agenda item for the Board of Management meetings.
- Traveller representatives are elected or co-opted onto the Board of Management.
- A member of the Traveller community has an officer role on the Board of Management.
- The Board of Management has participated in training in Traveller Culture and Identity.
- The Board of Management subscribe to the Traveller Voice magazine and in wider publications /relevant media.
- The Board of Management supports/ advocates on Traveller issues.
- The Board of Management proactively promotes Traveller participation.
- The Board of Management understands issues facing the Traveller community locally and nationally.
- Mentoring of Travellers for participation on the Board of Management is prioritised and supported.
- Outcomes on Traveller participation across the service is reviewed by the Board of Management.
- The Board of Management reviews Traveller engagement, participation & retention in their service on an ongoing basis.
- The Board of Management creates an atmosphere of inclusivity and is sensitive to the specific needs of young people from the Traveller community.

Section 2 - Operational Management

Potential actions/evidence to assess the rating for the Senior Management:

- Senior Management staff schedule time and effort to ensure Travellers are included in their service.
- Senior Management staff actively researches local Traveller statistics and specific needs in the context of the services that they provide.
- Senior Management staff researches best practice in relation to delivering services for young people from the Traveller community.
- Senior Management staff develops mutual beneficial relationships with local Traveller groups and organisations.
- Senior Management staff actively promotes the service to the local Traveller community.
- Senior Management staff ensures their service provision is based on identified and relevant needs of young people from the Traveller community.
- Senior Management staff ensures all staff are adequately trained and upskilled in Traveller Culture & Identity.
- Senior Management staff actively ensures the implementation of best practice in service delivery for young people from the Traveller community.
- Senior Management staff promotes their services in the Travellers Voice magazine and wider publications /relevant media.
- Senior Management staff prioritises funding applications for Traveller projects.
- Senior Management staff evaluates the success and outcomes of Traveller specific programmes.



Section 3 - Practice/ Service delivery

Potential actions/evidence to assess the rating for the Practice/Service Delivery:

- Organisation identifies young people from the Traveller community as a priority within its programmes.
- Youth work staff are trained in Traveller Culture & Identity.
- Organisation can demonstrate effectively that young people from the Traveller community are welcome.
- Organisation reaches out to the Traveller Community with outreach work and house calls to ensure a full community approach and understanding is applied.
- Organisation proactively works towards supporting young people from the Traveller community being fully integrated into all their programmes where appropriate.
- Programmes are proofed to ensure young people from the Traveller community can fully engage with the activities.
- Become a proactive organisation that ensures young people from the Traveller community can access the programmes.
- Follow up mechanisms are put in place when young people from the Traveller community are disengaged and withdraw from programmes.
- Further follow up happens should young people from the Traveller community still not return to programmes.
- Traveller achievement is promoted, acknowledged and celebrated.
- Outcomes improve for young people from the Traveller community.
- Young people from the Traveller community are linked into programmes delivered by other local/regional organisations.
- Prioritise young people from the Traveller community to become more active leaders and role models within youth work and the wider society.
- Accredited training and progression to employment in the youth sector.
- Partnerships between youth work and Traveller organisations is welcomed, supported & promoted.

Section 4 - Environment and Culture

Potential actions/evidence to assess the rating for the Environment and Culture:

- Visual evidence of Traveller Identity represented in the reception of the organisation and throughout the premises.
- Representation of Traveller identity and culture is present in the displayed photographs and publicity material of the organisation.
- Organisation can demonstrate that young people from the Traveller community are welcome.
- Open day events in which Traveller families are welcomed and proactively invited.
- Develop relationships with local Traveller families which make them feel more welcome and informed to engage in programmes.
- Travellers taking part in open day events which highlight their ongoing involvement in the youth service i.e. advocate for and welcome other Traveller families to the service.
- Consideration given to Traveller creativity in the training and activities of the service.

- Organisation promotes familiarity with programmes such as ‘ENAR’ (European Network against Racism) and ‘Show Racism the Red Card’ in order to challenge and report racist/discriminatory language, practices and stereotypes.
- Traveller culture and the concept of ‘culture’ is promoted and discussed in a way that allows culture to be understood as flexible, progressive and responsive to change and diversity as well as respecting past traditions.
- Culture of exchange and interaction with other Traveller organisations and events i.e. Traveller Pride, Health days and Traveller films and plays.
- Access to information and promotion of research and needs.
- Engaging with Traveller media and promoting the service through Traveller magazines and websites e.g. Travellers’ Voice magazine and Parish of the Travelling People Magazine.

Section 5 - Administration and Finance

Potential actions/evidence to assess the rating for Administration and Finance:

- A specific budget is available to support Traveller participation and retention.
- Expenditure on Traveller youth work is identified within the overall budget.
- A value for money exercise is carried out to assess income and expenditure on Traveller specific programmes.
- Funding is applied / secured for Traveller participation on programmes.
- Finance and administrative staff positively encourage Traveller initiatives.
- Travellers recruited as interns and/or employees in the finance & administration section of service provision.
- Budgets exist to support Travellers being upskilled to take up employment roles in the service.
- Administrative & finance staff undergo training in Traveller Culture and Identity.
- Coherence and co-ordination of budget allocation to service development.

Section 6 - Participation

Potential actions/evidence to assess the rating for Participation:

- Best practice understands the culture of the Traveller community in relation to youth participation.
- There are targets in place for Traveller participation in activities/programmes and supports are identified to ensure their retention on programmes.
- The service operates an early intervention strategy with young people from the Traveller community.
- The service accepts the need for a “different” provision e.g. segregated/inclusive/ gender specific.
- Traveller participation is proactively supported.
- Retention in Traveller participation is monitored and acted upon.
- There is follow up on dropouts from the various programmes by young people from the Traveller community.
- Participation practices reflect an understanding of Traveller culture.



Section 7 - Volunteers

Potential actions/evidence to assess the rating for Volunteers and Volunteering:

- There is a proactive strategy in place to attract volunteers from the Traveller community.
- Traveller volunteers are integrated across the service.
- Youth leadership programmes are encouraged to support Traveller volunteering.
- Youth Services support the local volunteer centre to welcome Travellers as volunteers.
- Award ceremonies recognise volunteering by Travellers at all levels.
- All volunteers are trained in Traveller Culture and Identity programmes and youth work as well as other developmental training that is scheduled from time to time.
- Regular support is available for Travellers who volunteer including expenses and recognition.
- Support is provided for mainstream volunteers for working on Traveller specific projects.
- Traveller volunteers are highly valued within the organisation.

Section 8 - Advocacy

Potential actions/evidence to assess the rating for Advocacy:

- The organisation recognises and identifies the core needs and challenges facing young people from the Traveller community.
- All staff, volunteers and Board members are informed about needs and challenges facing young people from the Traveller community.
- All staff, volunteers and Board members support and advocate on Traveller issues.
- The organisation works in partnership with young people from the Traveller community on how to best have their voices heard on a range of policy, political and social issues.
- The organisation supports young people from the Traveller community to have the relevant knowledge and skills required for advocacy.
- The organisation supports young people from the Traveller community to identify methods for effectively presenting their challenges and messages in a concise coherent way which makes others take notice.
- Young people's public engagement is viewed as an ongoing journey to seek equality and social justice.
- The organisation connects into a wider alliance of organisations and groups which advocate on behalf of the Traveller community.
- Young people from the Traveller community know where they can make a contribution and where their inputs are valuable and worthwhile.
- Adapting appropriate language that politicians and civil servants readily understand alongside words and terminologies that young people from the Traveller community can equally understand.

PAPER 5: STATUS Toolkit

Self-Assessment Framework

Promoting engagement, participation, and retention of young people from the Traveller community in Universal Services.

Section	Absent	Acquiring	Achieved	Advanced
1. Board of Management	1. a Governance systems are unclear, undocumented and not in place to support the engagement, participation and retention of young people from the Traveller community.	1. b Governance systems are mostly clear documented and in place, to support the engagement, participation and retention of young people from the Traveller community	1.c Governance systems are clear, documented and in place to support the engagement, participation and retention of young people from the Traveller community.	1. d Governance systems are proactive, clearly documented and effectively implemented to support the engagement, participation and retention of young people from the Traveller community.
2. Operational Management	2.a Operational management systems supporting young people from the Traveller community in engagement participation, and retention are unclear, not communicated and un-documented and not in place.	2.b Operational management systems supporting young people from the Traveller community in engagement, participation, and retention are mostly clear, documented and in place.	2. c Operational management systems supporting young people from the Traveller community in engagement, participation, and retention is clear, documented and reviewed on a regular basis.	2. d Operational management systems supporting young people from the Traveller community in engagement, participation and retention is clearly documented effectively and proactively implemented.
3. Practice / Service Delivery	3.a Service Delivery and practice supporting young people from the Traveller community in engagement, participation, and retention is inadequate.	3.b Service Delivery and practice supporting young people from the Traveller community in engagement, participation and retention is satisfactory in most areas.	3.c Service Delivery and practice supporting young people from the Traveller community in engagement, participation and retention is developed in all areas.	3.d Service Delivery and practice supporting young people from the Traveller community in participation engagement, and retention excels in all areas.
4. Environment & Culture	4.a The Identity of the Traveller Community is not recognised or celebrated or evident in the Environment & Culture of the services	4.b The Identity of the Traveller Community is recognised and somewhat evident in the Environment & Culture of the services.	4. c The Identity of the Traveller Community is clearly identified and evident in the Environment & Culture of the services.	4.d The Identity of the Traveller Community is clearly visible, identified and promoted at all levels in the Environment & Culture of the services.



Section	Absent	Acquiring	Achieved	Advanced
5. Administration & Finance	5.a No budget available for the engagement, participation and retention of young people from the Traveller community in services.	5. b Limited budget available for the engagement, participation and retention of young people from the Traveller community in services	5. c A specific budget is available with incremental annual increases for the engagement, participation and retention of young people from the Traveller community in services.	5. d New Funding & budgets prioritise the engagement, participation and retention of young people from the Traveller community in services.
6. Participation	6.a No young people from the Traveller community participate in Youth services.	6.b Some young people from the Traveller community participate with limited retention in Youth services	6.c High level of young people from the Traveller community participate and there is retention in Youth services. Some participation is Traveller led.	6. d Participation & Retention of young people from the Traveller community is clearly evident and extremely successful with programmes that are Traveller led.
7. Volunteers	7.a Volunteers cannot access training and development that will support engagement, participation and retention of young people from the Traveller community in services.	7. b Volunteers have limited access to training and development that will support engagement, participation and retention of young people from the Traveller community in services.	7. c Volunteers are offered regular access to training and development that will support engagement, participation and retention of young people from the Traveller community in services.	7. d Volunteers are provided with and are actively encouraged to participate in training and development that will support engagement, participation and retention of young people from the Traveller community in services.
8. Advocacy	8.a Advocacy for Traveller equality is not seen as a role for the service.	8.b Advocacy on Traveller equality is not structured, but happens sporadically within the service.	8.c Advocacy on Traveller equality is prioritised and structured within the services.	8.d The services prioritise Traveller equality in its strategy and has key actions identified to achieve these outcomes.

Involve

Youth and Community Services

