

TRAVELLER WORDS

Limerick Travellers Development Group

Volume 1 Issue 3

EQUAL STATUS LEGISLATION

Discrimination is a reality for many people in this country. Travellers, people with a disability, refugees, the gay and lesbian community and other nationalities all live with this fear. To understand discrimination we must first look at how it happens. Discrimination happens in two ways, indirect and direct. Direct discrimination includes such things as insulting language and names, being refused services simply because one belongs to a particular group or vigilante attacks etc. Indirect discrimination is more about how practises, policies or laws actively exclude particular groups from decision making and/or how culture or rights

..At present there is no law which outlaws discrimination...

as a particular group are denied. For example, the lack of recognition of Traveller's culture within the education system excludes Travellers from fully participating in the

system. At present, there is no law which outlaws discrimination. Ireland is the only country in the E.U. where this is the case. This fact alone says a lot about our society and the legislators feeling on the issue. In 1965 Ireland signed the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination. We are therefore obliged to introduce legislation which will deal with the issue of discrimination. This legislation will be called the Equal Status Legislation and will be in two sections, employment areas and non-employment areas.

The employment section will deal with issues of discrimination in the work place. The non-employment

area will deal with other areas i.e. service provision. The present government has stated that it is committed to introducing this legislation. However, we are still waiting and becoming more anxious with the delay. The reality is that there will be a General Election next year and the possible change in government could postpone this legislation for a long time. Much support is needed to ensure that it happens this year. It is an issue that affects everyone and is about making Ireland a country where basic human and cultural rights are recognised. You can do this in a number of ways, letters to local, national and European elected politicians, information notice-boards, workshops, petitions, information awareness campaigns, supporting local, regional and national campaigns are a few of the ways local

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St. Patrick's Day Celebration



The Limerick Travellers Development Group participated in the St Patrick's Day Parade for the first time this year. It was a successful project with the group achieving first prize in the best new entry category. Preparation for the event began weeks beforehand with the theme of the float being decided through consultation with the various groups involved with the L.T.D.G. Horses were chosen as the central focus of the float with the added dimension of travelling back to Celtic times. Those who participated in the float included members of the six different youth clubs and the Community Employment scheme. The event was enjoyed by everyone who took part and we hope to take part in future St. Patrick's Day parades. We would like to thank everyone who helped make the day a success for us.

In this issue...

- ◆ Premises update
- ◆ Travellers in the Media
- ◆ Interview with Rosaleen McDonagh
- ◆ Youth Club update
- ◆ Accommodation update

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groups and individuals can ensure that the issues get on the agenda. Any action no matter how small will make a difference. We have prepared a letter which you can use to send to politicians etc. Please use it and if you want further information contact us here.

In July of this year Ireland took over the Presidency of the E.U. This year we will be hosting the Inter Governmental Conference (IGC), where the Maastricht Treaty will be reviewed and revised. This provides all those concerned with human rights and social justice with an opportunity to call for the introduction of Equal Status Legislation here in Ireland and for the amendment of the Maastricht Treaty to give social rights for all citizens a higher priority. At a local level much work is needed to raise awareness of these issues. As citizens of the European Union we each have a responsibility to ensure that the voice of the powerless is heard.

Sample Letter to send to politicians

Dear ...

The upcoming Inter Governmental Conference offers a very important opportunity for governments to reshape the European Union. You are no doubt aware that at present -

- * 18 million people are unemployed in the E.U.*
- * 3 million people are homeless in the E.U.*
- * 53 million are living in poverty in the E.U.*
- * there is a growing incidence of, and evidence of, racist attacks in the E.U.*

As citizens and residents of the European Union, we call on you to ensure that this shocking reality is dealt with by the IGC. This opportunity for a revision of the treaties should ensure that :

- The fight against poverty and social exclusion be made a priority objective for the Union, ensuring a balanced Social and Economic Union.*
- Fundamental social rights for all residents of the Union are enshrined into the Treaties.*
- Countries with an unemployment level over 7% must show that their levels of unemployment and long term unemployment are being reduced over time.*
- That conditions are created to make the voluntary and community sector a new social partner.*
- We don't develop a two- tiered or multi-tiered Europe.*

We would also like to take this opportunity to highlight our concern that to date the promised Equal Status Legislation has not been introduced. This clearly highlights the lack of priority and willingness this government has in addressing basic human rights issues. If Ireland is to take its place at the table concerned with social and human rights at a European and International level, this issue must be seriously addressed.

We will be following the developments of the IGC with great interest. We hope that your role in relation to the IGC will ensure that the issues outlined above are addressed, in particular the situation regarding our own national situation concerning Equal Status Legislation.

We await hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Premises Update

Monday the 29th of April the Limerick Travellers Development Group moved to their new premises on 4 Rutland St.. A long search had been undertaken to secure the new premises which was seriously needed to accommodate the projects expanding needs. Tuesday the 30th of April on arrival to our new location we were asked to vacate the premises due to opposition from the other tenants of the building . A week in limbo followed, no phone, no office and no activities. We survived the week with the generous assistance from the PAUL Partnership whose office we temporarily used and the help of Telecom who donated to us the use of a mobile phone. The following week we set up office in Rutland St. where we stayed until the end of June. We spent this time desperately searching for a new premises . On our second last week in June we finally managed to secure accommodation in the School Project on Cecil St. . We have rooms in this building until August. This still leaves us searching for a long term premises which we must secure in order to recommence our programmes. If you want to contact us during the month of July or August our number is the same 061-418912.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the Limerick Travellers Development Groups third edition of Travellers Words. This edition of our newsletter has many interesting articles, one of which deals with the importance of introducing the long awaited Equal Status Legislation to combat discrimination. There is also an article on Travellers in the media following a number of outrageous racist articles that have appeared in newspapers recently. The newsletter will provide you with information bringing you up to date on the projects activities including our success in this years St. Patricks Day parade. As usual the newsletter has a puzzle and poetry page for all to enjoy. If you have any articles, stories, poems, letters or ideas or would like to know more about the project, please contact me, Margaret Casey Ryan, Limerick Travellers Development Group c/o The School Project, Cecil St. Limerick. Phone 061 418912.



WHAT TRAVELLERS NEED FROM EQUAL STATUS LEGISLATION

- Travellers` culture, identity and way of life to be acknowledged and protected.
- The recognition that all types of discrimination - direct, indirect and institutional - are against the law.
- The law must clearly state that it applies to everyone.
- Arguments based on financial disadvantage which would result in the continuation of a discriminatory situation **MUST** not be allowed.
- Anyone who takes a case under the proposed Law must be protected against victimisation.
- The benefits of affirmative action should be named in and supported by the law.
- Monitoring must be undertaken to evaluate both the appropriateness and effectiveness of the law.
- Existing and new legislation should be proofed to ensure it does not prevent the promotion of equality and takes into consideration its impact on Travellers.
- Access to adequate free legal aid is essential to enable people to pursue their rights through the legal system.
- An Equality Commission should be set up which would have the necessary legal powers and resources to protect and promote equal rights. Travellers and Traveller organisations must be represented on the board of the Commission.
- The Commission would employ Equality Officers who would have the power to investigate cases and make recommendations to deal with the issues raised.
- The brief of the Equality Commission should also involve providing information and assistance to Travellers and Traveller organisations on relevant International standards and instruments; and providing educational services on good equality practice helping organisations to draw up Codes of Practice and Equal Status Policies.
- An Equality Court should be established where people could take their cases if the Equality Officers were unable to resolve the situation satisfactorily.

**National horse shoe
throwing competition**
July 26th-27th
venue to be confirmed
contact the LTDG



*Greetings and congratulations
to Teresa O'Donoghue on her
engagement to Willie O'
Reilly from Cork. Also to
Nuala O' Reilly and Martin
Casey on their engagement.*

TRAVELLERS AND THE MEDIA

The media today plays a vital role in our life as the main source for us obtaining information, news and opinions. In its task of informing the public of news it is in a very powerful position to affect our opinions in the way it presents stories and news to us. We have to be very careful when presented with information so that we can distinguish between opinions based on fact and personal opinions of the news carrier.

“Naming and blaming a particular group in society is racist”

The Travelling community have been victim to a number of racist reports based solely on the opinions of certain members of the media. Sensationalist allegations against the Travellers have been made using them as scapegoats for violence and crimes, as they are easy targets based on their cultural differences. An example of this type of article was Mary Ellen Synon's article 'Time To Get Tough With Tinker Terror Culture', which appeared in the Sunday Independent newspaper. Without any facts her opinions were expressed which have very negative implications for Travellers, fuelling prejudice and creating intolerance among the settled population resulting in further experience of social exclusion by the Travelling community. Ethical standards, fair reporting and legislation which would outlaw such discrimination should be called for to monitor media reporting. The media through fair reporting and non-racist language has the power and could offer the opportunity to develop a rich pluralistic society where reporting is always balanced and aims to promote cultural diversity. Alternatively we are left with sporadic unfair racist reporting which operates by perpetuating negative or stereotyped images of Travellers and other minority groups. Naming and blaming a particular group in society is racist.

There is a need for more media coverage that affirms Travellers culture and identity. Travellers must have an equal chance to voice their views and opinions and these should be included in all media coverage concerning them. At a local level this can happen through relationships built with local radio stations and newspapers encouraging them to recognise the importance of Traveller involvement in matters relating to them. LTDG has had some success in establishing relationships with local media where a voice has been given to the group to raise matters of concern and challenge discrimination.

LIMERICK TRAVELLERS DEVELOPMENT GROUP FAS COMMUNITY EMPLOYMENT SCHEME

Require people to fill the following positions

- Administrator, book-keeper.
- Public relations/ Arts worker.
- Women and Health resource worker.
- Literacy and Numeracy development worker.
- School Liaison worker.
- Youth workers.

Applications in writing before August 9th to the CE supervisor, LTDG c/o the School Project, Cecil St., Limerick.

If you require any additional information please contact us at

061 418912.



YOUTH CLUB NEWS

The LTDG has at present six youth clubs up and running. In all they cater for over one hundred young people between the ages of eight to eighteen. They participate in activities such as sports, art, games and the odd social event such as discos, parties and outings. All the groups but in particular the 16-18 year old young women's group were responsible for preparing and participating in the St. Patrick's Day parade.

The groups take responsibility for planning their own activities and so from time to time sit down to review and plan the clubs.

With the longer days it is hoped that more outdoor activities will be planned to link in with other Traveller groups throughout the country.

INTERVIEW WITH ROSALEEN MC DONAGH

Q. Where do you live?

A. In Herbert Street, Dublin.

Q. What do you consider to be your greatest achievement?

A. In terms of Traveller issues I was able to write a paper for the Task Force on the Travelling Community. The paper was on Travellers with a disability and it was very much in line with the attitudes of Travellers. I am also very proud of my Traveller identity.

Q. Where do you see yourself in five years time?

A. I don't know, but I know wherever I am, I will always see myself working in an environment which will involve Anti- Racism and promoting Travellers. I suppose I see myself doing some academic or teaching job.

Q. In your opinion what are the main issues facing Travellers in Ireland today?

A. The main issues are still the same as twenty years ago poverty, isolation and discrimination. I think Travellers are used as scapegoats for everything that goes wrong in Irish society. I think that there is a definite government agenda to either eradicate or assimilate Travellers.

Q. How do you view the attitudes of the settled community towards Travellers?

A. I don't tolerate it. I can't understand their blatant hatred and the way that it is structured from the individual to the governmental.

Q. What needs to happen to change the present situation?

A. Equality Legislation. Laws will be irrelevant on the statute books if Travellers don't know how to use these laws ie. more opportunities and training for Travellers are needed. Legislation is needed in a way that facilitates Travellers in terms of legal structures and discriminatory practices. Also we need to target a broader perspective on service areas ie. not just vintners, but other areas such as education, employment, local authorities etc..

Q. If you had two wishes what would they be?

A. The first that Travellers would be respected and valued as an important part of Irish society. My second wish would be that public representatives and people in the service industry over the last thirty years would apologise for being racist and that Ireland as a country would acknowledge that it has evolved and developed very strange attitudes to racial difference.

Q. Who is the person you most admire and why?

A. My mammy, because she made sure that I would get a good education but more importantly she always gave me a choice about my own identity. Because I was in settled structures she saw that Traveller identity as a choice. Also she took time out to teach me things like Cant and other things. I could make an informed choice about the way I wanted to be.

Q. What are you doing with yourself at present?

A. I am doing a BA in Theological and Biblical studies at Trinity college, I am on the Central group of the Irish Traveller Movement and I am one of the founder members of the Centre for Independent Living. I am currently involved in the Equality Campaign for Equal Status Legislation.

We would like to thank Rosaleen Mc Donagh for her time in giving this interview. The views expressed are her own and not necessarily those of the LTDG.

ACCOMODATION

At the end of March a Government Inter Departmental Working Group made a response to the Task Force on the Travelling Community which was published in July last year.

It announced that the government has decided on a range of actions which while referring to Equal Status Legislation, health and education, focused mainly on accommodation. The actions include;-

- A five year National Strategy for Traveller accommodation.
 - A commitment to the construction of 3,100 units of accommodation for the Traveller Community. This includes,
 - permanent halting sites (1,200 serviced bays) and 900 houses.
 - a network of serviced transient halting sites (1,0000 bays).
 - The introduction of new legislation to provide a framework for the provision of Traveller accommodation, including amendment of the housing, planning and local management Acts.
 - The establishment of a special unit in the Department of the Environment to monitor the national strategy, as well as a National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Group.
- Ms. Liz McManus T.D. , Minister for Housing and Urban Renewal also announced the five year strategy for Traveller Accommodation. Much of the strategy is based on the implementation of the decisions of the inter-departmental committee. One of the most significant parts of this is the inclusion of relevant Traveller organisations on the National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Group which will monitor the implementation of the strategy. Other central parts of the strategy include
- the participations by each major local authority of a five year plan for the provision of Traveller accommodation in their area and it's adoption by the elected Council.
 - the amendment of the Housing Acts and the Management Acts to impose on local authorities the obligation to prepare and adopt these plans within a certain period and empower and obligate Managers to formally make the plan and ensure it's implementation.
 - Traveller accommodation committees should be set up in each local authority area involving a representative of the elected members and officials of the local authorities and Travellers. This is to facilitate the development and implementation of local authority plans.
- The announcement of the approved actions and strategy is welcomed by the LTDG and we look forward to their implementation.
- A Traveller Accommodation Group is already being set up between Limerick Corporation the LTDG and local Travellers. We hope that the government will announce and implement similar strategies in the areas of health, education, anti-discrimination , employment and enterprise in the near future.

Accomodation Survey

An accommodation Survey is being carried out on Traveller accommodation in Limerick by the Limerick Travellers Development Group. It is expected that the results of this survey will be available in September. The survey will give a good overview of Traveller accommodation present situation and future needs.

Later on this year the LTDG will be carrying out an extensive research into the unmet needs of the Travelling community in Limerick city. Details of this will be in the next issue of Traveller Words.



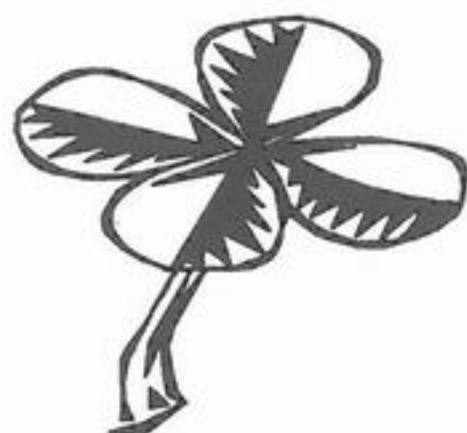
CURRENT ADDRESS

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Limerick.

The telephone and fax numbers will remain the same -

Tel. / Fax 061- 418912

POETRY AND PUZZLE PAGE



WORD SEARCH

- BRACELET
- CHAIN
- EARRINGS
- GOLD
- LOCKLET
- NECKLACE
- PENDANT
- RINGS
- SILVER
- WATCH



N	E	C	K	L	A	C	E
C	A	H	S	G	B	S	B
W	R	A	R	O	U	I	R
A	R	I	P	L	Z	L	A
T	I	N	N	D	J	V	C
C	N	D	N	G	M	E	E
N	G	J	I	O	S	R	L
A	S	H	T	M	T	H	E
O	B	L	O	C	K	E	T
P	E	N	D	A	N	T	O

Winner of our last editions poetry competition

ANAGRAM

- NOICATEDU EDUCATION
- LEAHHT
- DEMI
- RATVELLRE
- MMOCUTYNI
- VEOMMNT
- LUCTREU
- UOYTH
- MOWNE
- RASPC



If you would like your poem to be published in our newsletter please send them to me Patricia Doyle.

Travellers and settled
no difference is there
we are all equal
in God`s care.
The Travellers are painted
so very wrong, the
settled can`t see
what`s going on. The
culture we have is
so very dear, to the
Travellers themselves
there is always a fear,
that we`ll have to
change our way
Patricia Doyle.

Travellers have no legal
rights, nor have we
any say, we don`t fit into
society
or part of everyday. We
only want to be
treated fair, but
the settled people
just don`t care, what
they say, or what
they do to the
Travellers, for we
are human too.
Patricia Doyle

A TRAVELLERS MIND
When does it end, We
pass through life,
with tormented minds
and wondering lives,
not knowing the reason
why
Is our life a test to
be our best, to smile
to greet, Or to be like
the rest.
When does it end, our
Roving lives, why did it
all begin, God knows all
he is our only friend,
and in his kingdom
Discrimination will
never be seen and all
people will be human
beings
Rosie Cauley.



Community Employment Experience

My name is Patricia Doyle. I'm a Traveller living in Limerick. I worked on a CE scheme for two years. I'm writing about my experience on the scheme. Before I joined the scheme I always thought that all settled people were against Travellers but now I realise that this is not true, there are a lot of settled people working with Traveller to get their rights. I have learnt a lot about Travellers and settled people. I have gained a lot of confidence to talk up better for myself in the last two years. I think it is a great scheme for any Traveller to get involved in. There were three settled people in our group and they were great and very supportive. I would like to thank them very much. I would also like to thank the Travellers that I worked with, they were a great group. Our scheme has finished and I wish everyone in the group the very best of luck in the future.



My experience on the CE scheme:

by Mary Butler

I have always had an interest in Travellers issues, so participating on the LTDG's Community Employment Scheme gave me a great opportunity to meet Travellers and gain a better understanding of their culture and needs. The two years were very interesting and I learnt a lot about the hardships Travellers endure because of the discrimination they must deal with at both personal and institutional levels. The scheme provided us with the space to lobby for the introduction of Equal Status Legislation by writing letters to Ministers and confronting the media on negative publicity about Travellers. Both settled and Travellers worked well together as a team. I hope that this will contribute to both communities coming closer together working and living in a more positive way. For me, I will continue to work on Travellers issues supporting the need for anti-discrimination legislation and also bringing a better understanding of Travellers needs to the settled community.

Limerick Travellers Development Group

CHAIRPERSON:

Margaret O' Reilly.

PROJECT LEADER:

Siobhan O Donoghue.

YOUTH AND COMMUNITY WORKER:

Paul Ginnell

YOUTH AND COMMUNITY WORKER:(CE supervisor)

Brid Mahony.

ADMINISTRATOR:

Brid Kiely.

YOUTH WORKERS:

Teresa O' Donoghue and Timmy Casey.

WOMENS GROUP

Sr Mary Smith.



LIMERICK TRAVELLERS DEVELOPMENT GROUP

C/O THE SCHOOL PROJECT, UPPER CECIL ST.
LIMERICK

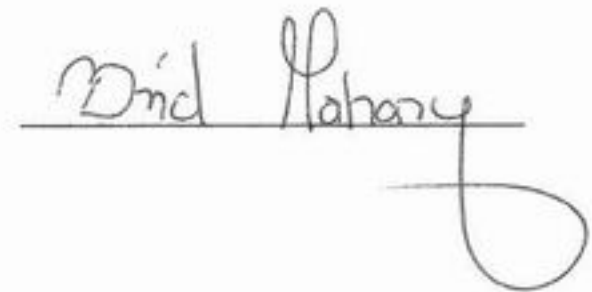
Telephone 061-418912
Fax 061-418912

26th July, 1996.

Dear reader,

Please find enclosed a copy of our latest edition of Traveller Words. We hope you enjoy reading it. If you wish to discuss any of the articles or would like a workshop from us we would be happy to facilitate you. If you know anybody who would like to be on our mailing list please forward their name and address to us.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Dina Mahony", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is positioned to the right of the typed name "Dina Mahony".