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KEY ISSUES AFFECTING TRAVELLER CHILDREN'S EDUCATION: FINDINGS FROM THE NICCY RESEARCH 2004

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Outline

- Background to the research: remit, research themes and methods
- Key priorities in education
- Key issues to emerge from professionals, children and young people from the Travelling community

Remit of the Research

- To identify areas where children's rights were ignored or underplayed when measured against the UNCRC and other human rights documents
- To inform the Commissioner in determining his priorities for office

Research Themes

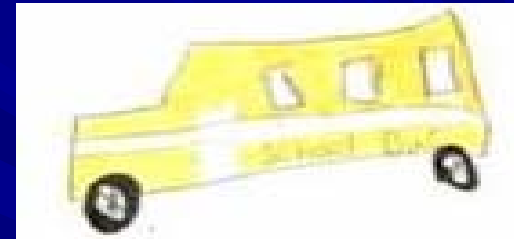
- Implementation of the UNCRC
- Family life and alternative care
- Health, welfare and material deprivation
- Education
- Play and leisure
- Criminal justice and policing

Data Collection

- Participatory research with over 1,067 children in 27 schools across N.I
- Focus group discussions with vulnerable groups of children & young people (n=107)
- Interviews and focus groups with over 350 professionals
- Review of existing research, legal & policy documentation
- Statistical analysis

Priorities in Education

- Participation in decision-making
- Education for Traveller children
- Bullying
- Special Educational Needs
- Children educated outside school
- Religious segregation and the impact of the conflict



UNCRC & Traveller Children

- 1995 & 2002 – Committee on the Rights of the Child expressed grave concern about the unequal enjoyment of various rights.
- UNCRC Arts. 28, 29, 2, 20 – Right to effective education; non-discrimination; respect for the child's cultural identity

Right to Effective Education

- Inadequate statistics:
 - Admissions & selection;
 - Suspensions & exclusions;
 - Attendance & achievement;
 - Segregated vs. integrated.
- Access to mainstream schools:
 - Admissions criteria;
 - Difficulties of integrating;
 - Structure of school day & school culture.
- Continuity and sustainability of educational provision
- Racially-motivated bullying (discrimination)
- Lack of respect for child's cultural identity

Non-discrimination

“There’s a girl inside our school and when I play with her [another girl] tells me, she comes and she says “why are you playing with Travellers? She’s a Knacker, you’re not a Traveller, you’re a boffer [settler]” ... she doesn’t want me and her to play together and she just keeps coming over and is pushing us and all this. We end up having to fight back with her and we get shouted at and she tells her side and we don’t get to tell our side”
(Girl, aged 11)



Respect for Child's Cultural Identity

- Response from teachers if report bullying:
"They shout at you" (Boy, aged 8)
- Discriminatory language/actions of teachers:
"You can come by taxi, bus or horse and cart for all I care, just get here on time"
(Girl, aged 14, quotation used with permission of YouthAction:NI)

Can we have a site for
travellers in

* * * * *

I am 9 years old

We are good



Traveller Children Priorities

- *“Build lots of brand new big houses, like big large ones, with big gardens”* (Boy, aged 12)
- *“Make a site for travellers near here, round here”* (Girl, aged 12)
- *“More teachers to teach us”* (Girl, aged 11)
- *“I’d like to be a hairdresser quicker”* (Girl, aged 12)
- *“For people to be nicer to ye”* (Girl, aged 10)
- *“To help all the homeless people on the street and give them money and all that”*
(Boy, aged 10)