

I AM ROMA

EVALUATION REPORT

December 2012

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report represents an external summative evaluation of the I am Roma programme. The evaluation was conducted by Trademark and incorporated a range of methods including desk research and interviews with key informants and programme observation. It considers the background to the programme, the context within which it was developed and describes what the programmes aims and objectives were and how these were operationalised. The aim of this report is to describe all these stages before moving on to considering its achievements to date and to make recommendations that will enable the programme to develop an appropriate long term development plan.

In terms of achievements to date all those interviewed were extremely pleased with the concrete achievements of the programme and were genuinely hopeful of building upon them in the future. The programme had more than achieved its objectives and had met any challenges head-on and had dealt with them in creative and innovative ways.

The following report is sub-divided into four main sections followed by Appendices. A brief outline of each section follows:

Section 1. Background and Context

In this section of the report we consider the background and context of the I am Roma programme with a focus on health, housing, education and current regional policies and actions.

Section 2. Evaluation Approach and Methodology

The section reiterates the key questions outlined in the evaluation terms of reference, which are to undertake an evaluation of the project processes and outcomes in order to determine the impact of the project and the extent to which the objectives have been achieved. The aim of the evaluation is also to fundamentally assess the success of the project and map out its future direction. The programmes own comprehensive monitoring system has produced a number of internal reports indicating progress to objectives which has proved invaluable in the process.

Section 3. Key Findings

As part of the evaluation 10 interviews were undertaken with staff and stakeholders in order to gain some insight into the stages of programme implementation and its impact. This section gives an overview of some of the thoughts and feelings of the staff and stakeholders combined with a review of the documentary evidence produced by staff and partners. In order to keep an analytical focus rather than a detailed descriptive one, we have given exemplars of the programme's good practice where appropriate.

The strategic work of the programme has been an obviously successful area of programme activity with evidence of both policy impact and active networks and partnerships between all sectors. It has achieved a number of policy and impact on institutional cultures and practices. There has also been significant thinking in terms of preparation of sustainability and mainstreaming strategies for the programme as a whole and for the issues it carries.

The I am Roma Programme's involvement in advocacy has been an emerging feature of the programme and has been key in creating for the programme a reputation as an 'expert body'. It has carried this expertise into all its networks and has established itself as a programme that can deliver.

The I Am Roma Programme has more than met its targets and indeed has shown an added value in being available as a strategic resource to those institutions who are attempting to tackle the issues.

Section 4 Conclusions and recommendations

In reviewing the findings of the evaluation a number of key issues were highlighted. These are issues which the research team believe should be considered by any future proposals for the development of the programme:

The programme:

1. Should continue to focus its efforts on policy level interventions.
2. Should continue develop an engagement strategy at departmental, national and international levels.
3. Should continue its strategic support of and partnership working with advocate NGO's and the public sector
4. Should focus on a mainstreaming strategy to ensure the continuation of the awareness training in appropriate institutions.
5. Should continue to actively promote the strategic and operational significance of interagency working
6. Should seek to engage in local economic development through promoting social economy projects as a means of maximising the potential of additional skills for the local economy.

SECTION 2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In this section of the report we consider the background and context of the I am Roma programme including placing the work of the programme in an international, regional and local context. We will also give a brief description of key outputs during the reporting period based upon the programme's own internal monitoring framework.

With the appearance of increasingly large scale migrations new generations are exposed to significantly greater diversity than that which characterised the everyday life of their grandparents. It is in response to these changing dynamics that we see an ever increasing focus on demands for protection of minorities and indeed migrants. The movement of people for economic reasons is increasingly recognised as a crucial part of the global economy and represents the reality of increasing number of people's lives. These dynamics present challenges to those interested in the struggle for a fair and equitable society where no-one is excluded from society on the basis of their national or ethnic origin or the colour of their skin.

The legacy of the Northern Ireland conflict has made the integration of ethnic minority communities more complex. Northern Ireland and Belfast in particular, remains a society divided by religious and political differences and the integration of the indigenous communities continues to be a priority.

The Roma are a relatively new community to the Belfast area, with the majority of families arriving post 2007. There are approximately 1000 members of the Roma community living in Belfast made up of 130-150 families. The majority of Roma in Belfast are Romanian and as such they are A2 nationals. Most of the Roma community reside in the Holylands and Lower Ormeau areas of South Belfast but as they are transient in nature the exact resident numbers are difficult to determine.¹

The Holylands which was once a residential neighbourhood has become a "student area" over the last twenty years with the majority of houses privately rented. The area is also religiously mixed. The changing nature of the area, from a residential to a student zone has in itself created a lot of tension in recent years between the

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remaining residents and the transient student populations. A strong infrastructure of residents groups has evolved because of this tension. These groups have established a good connection to a range of NGO's who are working specifically with ethnic minority communities, for example, the Roundtable and Bryson Intercultural. Both of these NGO's also work closely with the Roma community.

The Lower Ormeau is a mainly Catholic/Nationalist/Republican area that was particularly affected by the conflict in Northern Ireland. It is also one of the most deprived districts in Northern Ireland. The housing stock is made up of private homes, private rental and public sector housing. There is a strong community infrastructure in the Lower Ormeau with several community facilities that are utilised by the Roma.

Integration with local communities

Integration with local communities has been fraught with tension since Roma started migrating to Belfast since 2007.

In June 2009, more than 100 Roma living in shared accommodation in another part of south Belfast became the victims of racist attacks and were forced to leave their homes (and eventually return to Romania). The intimidation of Roma did not cease after the attacks of 2009. Despite much work spearheaded by organisations like the Roundtable and the Bryson Intercultural, (supported by other public sector organisations, community and residents groups), sporadic yet regular incidences of violence against the Roma community continue.

A tension monitoring group (TMG) meets monthly to try and prevent/ resolve some of the issues with Roma and to coordinate responses. This is a multi-agency group facilitated by Belfast City Council that has police, city council, education, health, housing and community representation.

More recently the TMG has focussed on addressing internal tensions that are starting to emerge within the Roma community itself. These internal tensions have resulted in some Roma families returning to Romania due to intimidation.

Housing

As A2 nationals, Romanian Roma are not entitled to public sector housing and therefore they are forced to rent from private landlords. South Belfast is the most expensive district for rental accommodation in Northern Ireland. The majority of tenants report that they pay rent directly to landlords and not through letting agencies and this does lead to exploitation in many instances.

Overcrowding is commonplace and with this comes the associated health, safety and sanitation issues. Officials from the Fire Service, Housing Executive and City Council try to ensure landlords meet the requirements under legislation for Homes of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs)

Employment

Roma immigrants from Romania have restricted social and labour rights. As A2 nationals, Roma may come to Northern Ireland to look for work if they hold a valid passport or national identity card. Prospective employers are required to get a letter of approval from the UK Border Agency, while the individual must be approved for an Accession Worker Card, unless they are exempt. (should you say who is exempt)

Once an individual has worked legally in the UK for twelve months, 'without interruption', they have full free movement rights and will no longer be required to be authorised to work. Freedom of movement also applies to individuals who are self-employed, students or the financially self-sufficient.

Workers are entitled to the minimum wage, holidays and to work in safe conditions.

A report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2011) "Forced labour in Northern Ireland; Exploiting Vulnerability" identified that for many Roma in Northern Ireland there are a few sectors of employment that they can enter, and these are largely limited to car washing, catering, newspaper/magazine selling and flower selling. Within the various sectors similar issues and themes were evident.

- low pay received for working long hours
- Lack of understanding of employment rights
- Bullying and threats at work (especially women)

- lack of security in employment
- lack of proper terms and conditions contracts etc

Health

The health of the Roma population is poor. Roma tend to live in overcrowded housing, with limited incomes, poor diets and other circumstances that leave adults and children prone to poor health generally. As EU A2 nationals, Romanian Roma are entitled to emergency treatment for example, through Emergency Departments at hospitals while other entitlements to primary care services depend on establishing 'ordinary residence'. Any Roma can seek to register with a General Practitioner (GP) who must in turn then, have the application processed by the Business Services Organisation (BSO) an arm of the Health and Social Care Board.

Education

There is a statutory obligation in Northern Ireland for parents to ensure their children attend school from 4 years until 16 years of age. The Northern Ireland education system provides free education for all children of compulsory school age (4-16) as well as for those who choose to stay on until age 18. Nursery schools provide for children aged 3 and 4, primary schools for children between the ages of 4 and 11, and secondary (including grammar) schools for children between the ages of 11 and 16/18. An unreported number of Roma children do not attend school and are not traceable. Belfast Education and Library Board estimate that there are 120 + Romanian Roma school aged children in Belfast.

Bryson Intercultural organise a "preparation for school project" for children entering primary school. (a few lines about what it does) Those Roma children that attend primary school utilise one school in South Belfast and one school in West Belfast. This former school caters for a large number of pupils from ethnic minorities and the latter caters for Irish Travellers. Bryson Intercultural also provide an after schools programme.

The Belfast Education and Library Board provide one Romanian speaking Education Welfare Officer. Education welfare officers work with schools, pupils and families to resolve issues of poor attendance.

Current actions and policies

It would be fair to say that there has been a lack of political leadership on the Roma issue. Most political parties adopt populist approaches and display a reluctance to challenge anti-Roma attitudes emerging from within their own indigenous support bases or in media speculation.

Following the racist attacks of 2009 a Roma Task Force was established by the Office of First and Deputy first Ministers of Northern Ireland (OFMDFM). This taskforce has yet to report.

There has been little work done at a Governmental level to raise and promote awareness of Roma rights in Northern Ireland and Immigration policy remains a reserved matter i.e. solely the preserve of the Westminster Government.

This has resulted in work with the Northern Ireland Roma community taking place in political and policy vacuum, spearheaded by a series of Non-Governmental Organisations and statutory agencies with little resource or support.

The greatest tangible benefit of the I am Roma Project has been the improved co-ordination of work with the Roma through the Local Action Group.

The Belfast LAG felt that the greatest challenges in working with and for the Roma community were the absence of any meaningful relationships with that community and the historic fear and mistrust that Roma have for statutory organisations.

Established models of building trust and relationships (that were successful in our own peace process) were utilised by the LAG and they continue to pay dividends. While at the developmental phase of the process the LAG believed that any media coverage of the I Am Roma programme could be detrimental to the overall objective of social inclusion. Publicity was sought for the later stages of the programme; however the mainstream media did not carry the positive stories related to the Roma.

The programme was developed following consultation with all the key stakeholders including the Roma and their representatives and is utilising a community development approach to campaigning.

3. METHODOLOGY

In 2012 the I am Roma project appointed Trademark to conduct an evaluation of the programme. Trademark was established in late 2001 by a committed group of activists from the community/voluntary, public, and trade union sectors. We are an ethically based not-for-profit organisation which works towards social justice in which the principles of social justice, equality and pluralism are actively pursued.

Trademark engages with a number of constituencies across the public/private and community/voluntary sectors delivering training, research, and evaluation on a range of related themes including human rights, peace and reconciliation, equality and good relations. Below we will detail the methods and approach we have adopted in conducting the evaluation.

The overall aim of the evaluation is to ascertain the impact of the programme on the Roma community who have participated and upon the institutions and NGO's who have partnered the programme and to make recommendations on an appropriate way forward for the project. The broad objectives of the programme are:

- To raise awareness of Roma language, culture and traditions and challenge perceptions and stereotyping of Roma in Belfast within the public, statutory, voluntary and community organisations working with Roma communities.
- To begin to build the capacity of staff in public, voluntary and community organisations to engage with the Roma community in Belfast
- To lay the foundation for economic stability and independence through the establishment of a social economy programme for Roma women.
- To promote the integration of Roma youth with local communities through single identity and intercultural programmes.

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework designed to capture the impact of the programme is underpinned by a range of fundamental principles underlying the:

- Participants in the programme are participants in the M&E framework, not subjects of it, consultation will occur at all stage to judge the suitability of proposed methods and indicators of success

- Peer researchers can be useful in engaging with minority communities, working alongside the M&E team to gather, interpret and present data, we recommend these be considered where possible within the framework
- A project management approach will ensure timescales are adhered to, communication between all parties is clear and any deviation from the proposed plans are agreed by all parties
- Monitoring data will be collated using two key sources – participant records to monitor attendance levels and session records will detail the types of activities undertaken at each event and outputs of each session; responsibility for gathering this information will lie with session facilitators who will return it to Roma Liaison Officer OR by BHSC Community Development Unit to collate.

In devising the evaluation framework for the programme we have largely followed the reporting structure established by the programme which allows for continuity and access. We felt this approach allows for a clearer and more analytical approach to the evaluation and prevents repetition, confusion and ensures clarity of the purpose and aims of the evaluation.

Methodology

To address each of these tasks the Trademark team employed a series of research methods:

- A review of programme files including the original application for funding, monitoring; comprehensive internal project report by staff;
- Interviews with programme staff, stakeholders and partners;
- Programme observation by Trademark staff

Desk Research

We have reviewed programme files including the funding application and reports to the funding body to assess evidence of extent and impact of the activities of the programme. We have reviewed in detail the research produced over the period and its impact. We have also used the internal Project Report as a guide to the evaluation. All of these have informed our understanding of the programme and have assisted in creating a framework for the evaluation.

Consultation with stakeholders and staff

10 semi-structured interviews² were conducted as part of the interim evaluation with stakeholders. The majority of interviews were conducted face-to-face with one interview being conducted by telephone. I am Roma staff were interviewed using a semi-structured interview schedule to ascertain their views on the programme and its development. We also maintained regular contact with programme staff during the evaluation to discuss emerging issues and to clarify any outstanding issues raised during the evaluation process.

SECTION 4 KEY FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Our approach to conducting evaluation is based upon a strong ethical base which ensures that empowerment and trust building are at the forefront of the planning process. We have attempted from the start to conduct a robust and fair evaluation. As this is a summative evaluation we have not been engaged in a longitudinal and progressive conversation, however we hope that over the period of the evaluation process we have been able to allow the process to become a conversation between people about the programme rather than a formalistic series of interviews between organisations.

In this section we will begin providing an overview of the key challenges relating to the project, this will then followed by a reflection on the various strands of the programme and the learning and outcomes based on the views of staff, participants and stakeholders.

All of the evidence shows that there was a strong consensus amongst participants and partners that the objectives of this programme. However this was a consensus that emerged in a slightly different form than that initially expected by the funders:

The approach we took to the project was very different to other projects – the requirement was to develop a campaign to address the social exclusion of

² See appendix 1 for copy of interview questions

Roma community so we had to seek clarification from the funders because our approach was not going to be a media campaign (after what happened in 2009) we need to use a community development approach, so we had to explain that the context of the Roma community was different here so the approach had to be different. (Project Co-ordinator)

The agreed objectives were about building the capacity and confidence of the Roma community whilst giving them greater knowledge of and opportunities for integration. However it was also about raising awareness within the Roma community about rights and responsibilities and introducing local community and statutory agencies to Roma culture through challenging stereotypes and improving communication:

It was about creating and building relationships across cultures, it was two way...(Project Worker)

Interagency work and building strategic relations across relevant partners was also clearly understood as a key objective:

The objective of the programme was to bring together all of the agencies to have a better approach to working with the Roma community as opposed to people working independently and not getting anywhere...(Statutory partner)

The most salient characteristic of the programme were the predictable challenges of long term engagement with the Roma community due to the communities extreme levels of exclusion, historically and culturally. There was a recognition from the outset that the community would evidence a wariness of state apparatus and that overcoming this perception would take time and significant effort:

they have strong suspicions of authority which is right but we have spent a long time cultivating long term relationships and building trust...(Statutory partner)

There were also predictable challenges in engagement from statutory agencies:

there was difficulty in engaging statutory agencies – some were keen, some less so...(Project Worker)

nobody was listening and they didn't want to get involved it was the usual bureaucracy and feeding it up the chain of command – very reactionary as opposed to pro-active...(Project Worker)

It was highlighted that there were clear legislative restrictions about what kinds of services and help could be rendered but also that some statutory agencies were happy to be flexible:

Legislative difficulties around health but the Trust stepped up to the plate – we had to be creative around some issues...(Statutory partner)

For those from statutory agencies one of the key challenges was raising awareness amongst front-line staff through appropriate training, support and development including challenging negative and lazy stereotypes. It was also important to interact with the Roma community in ways that facilitated communication and understanding:

For example staff are now aware of the high proportion of illiteracy in the Roma community. Therefore we were able to develop pictorial information to communicate more effectively with the Roma community...(Statutory Partner)

Some felt that the key issue for the partnership was the strong and enthusiastic leadership offered by the programme:

Everybody sitting about and talking about the issues with no-one taking leadership, this had a more structured vision...(Statutory Partner)

The project showed leadership in terms of bringing all the good pieces together for a shared purpose – if there is no leadership it can all go pear shaped very quickly...(Project worker)

The centrality of the project worker to its success was mentioned by most of the interviewees. Clearly the skills of management, coordination, linguistic and cultural understanding were important in bringing the objectives to life:

She did a lot of extra work and that is why the project has been so successful...(Statutory Partner)

*She was able to act as a bridge between cultures and between agencies....
...(Statutory Partner)*

Of the many cultural challenges the patriarchal nature of Roma society proved challenging and whilst gatekeepers were useful some felt more work could be done in how these dynamics might be overcome or at least mitigated:

There are gender issues as men are the decision makers in the family – further study needs to happen on how to tackle this...though the issues are not very different to ours – just more visible.. ...(Statutory Partner)

There are massive equality issues within this community and we need to adapt services to meet their needs but without reinforcing negative dynamics...(Statutory Partner)

*The female youth were hard to engage with because of the family dependency on girls to help with caring and domestic responsibilities
...(Steering Group Member)*

Those working directly with the community recognised that the multiple levels of exclusion needed innovative and organic responses that meant proper outreach work had to be engaged:

due to the level of literacy there was no point getting letter translated into Romanian – I needed to go to their doors, speak to the mum or dad tell them where and when to go...(Project Worker)

Knocking on doors as opposed to thinking that they will come to you is the only way to properly follow up – you need to meet the families face to face...(Project Worker)

In the next section we will focus in on the various strands of the programme with a reflection on the meeting of programme outputs followed by a reflection on key successes.

4.2 PROGRAMME CONTENT

Social Economy Project

Roma women are one of the most vulnerable groups in European society facing everyday multiple and intersectional discrimination. A key factor in enhancing Roma women's emancipation is of course economic empowerment and indeed economic independence. This aspect of the programme recognized and confronted the challenges and barriers that prevent Roma women taking part effectively in economic life but did so in a way which was culturally sensitive by focusing on social economy. Talking about access to labour markets and employment is unrealistic for most of these women when faced with linguistic and cultural barriers along with institutional racism. This pilot three month programme with up to twenty Roma focused instead on existing skills and aimed to utilise creative arts through developing a small scale social economy project in order to enhance the economic independence of Roma women. Those involved were particularly impressed with the levels of attendance on the programme:

From my experience of working with the Roma community in Belfast, commitment and attendance to a programme based on regular sessions was always a challenge. Having said that the attendance was 100% except for cases of sickness of the women or children...(Project Worker)

Statutory agencies saw the very real benefits of the social economy strand:

The feedback from the social economy project has been excellent. The need and desire to be involved and willingness to engage despite the harassment and discrimination Roma women face was quite surprising – but demonstrates the good relationships that have been built through the project between the Roma community and local communities...(Statutory partner)

Seeing the women's confidence and self-esteem build and also their aspirations – this usually doesn't happen as their immediate needs are so great...(Statutory partner)

its impact on the Roma women in terms of empowerment, capacity building; when they were awarded their certificates in front of their own community clapping and cheering it was really wonderful...(Project co-ordinator)

The participants themselves were enthusiastic about the programme and were keen for it to continue and it was clear that the participants and facilitators felt that a social economy strand within inclusion and empowerment programmes would prove very useful:

We would like to participate in other programmes like this one, but longer programmes...(Participant)

It is too bad that we are at the end of the project, it was such a great idea; to work together and make friends; I enjoyed every bit of it...(Participant)

As with every new thing that you learn, the more you work on it, the more you get experience and confidence the better you do it...(Participant)

We would love it if we could find a producer or someone who is willing to invest in our work, so that we could have long-term work...(Participant)

7 Days of Summer

The seven days of summer programme brought together people from a range of communities in South Belfast to engage in a number of innovative activities from Fitzroy youth, City Church youth and Roma youth with a broad objective of giving an opportunity to young people to form relationships.

A '7-day kids klub' recruited 80 children from local communities comprising children from the lower Ormeau, City church and Roma community. There was a street clean up in the Holyland and a community BBQ at which 400 local people were in attendance. Those involved in the organisation of the events were pleased with the initial impact of the activities :

Young people were mobilized to impact community and young people felt a part of something bigger than themselves...

Once again they were also realistic about the long term effects of the activities:

There was perhaps a lack of clarity in the vision – what was the main aim?! Was this just a youth thing? ... (Project Worker)

There was limited resident support... (Project Worker)

It was recognised that these initial activities hold opportunities for continued work and that cementing and deepening the relationships holds great potential for the future.

There are great opportunities for further community work – especially on the practical level! (Project Worker)

Youth Programme

Two youth programmes comprising upwards of forty young people were held and included a photographic exhibition, the production of a DVD and an innovative and participative 'Flash mob'.

There were some very real positive achievements within the programme most importantly of course an improvement in relationships between the Roma and indigenous children was evident within the parameters of their contact. Contact of

this kind is generally recognised as the practice designed to remove hostility between conflicting groups and increase tolerance between them³. A number of stakeholders saw the immediate benefits of this strand of work but were realistic about its long term impact.

it's important to recognise that it doesn't have to be brilliant and that the Roma kids and local kids do not have to be best friends – small steps are ok...(Project worker)

The local community a year ago would have been hostile – but the same levels of hostility wouldn't be there now – lots of myths are being broken down and the Roma have adjusted their behaviour also...(Steering Group Member)

Others recognised that superficial and infrequent contact will only have short term positive impact and must be accompanied by longer term programmes and interactions that involve counter-stereotypic interventions.

The work has to be continuous and mainstreamed if integration and challenging negative stereotypes is going to work...(Project worker)

This work is predicated on the maintenance of relationships as the Roma are a transient population and we need to be consistent.. We need to have a legacy if we are to continue with the project giving them a sense of belonging and continue to support them...(Project Worker)

The public performance was also highlighted as a particularly means to increase the sense of achievement and sense of pride for the young people and their parents. Though short term in nature, an unavoidable characteristic of pilot programmes of course, some felt that :

³ Abu-Nimer, M (1999). *Dialogue, Conflict Resolution, and Change: Arab-Jewish Encounters in Israel*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
Hewstone, M and Brown, R (1986). *Contact and Conflict in Intergroup Encounters*. Oxford: Blackwell.

overall a successful project with obvious improvements in the dynamics of inter-peer relationships, communication and confidence building. The flexible methodologies allowed the project to be adapted in accordance with the groups needs and expectations...(Project Worker)

A project worker was also keen to learn from the experience and was aware that in future contact programmes a more culturally sensitive approach to improve commitment and female participation was needed alongside the involvement of the young people from the early stages of planning to ensure a sense of ownership of the project.

Capacity Building with the Roma: Orientation and Know your rights training for A2 nationals

The Know you Rights and Orientation in Belfast sessions were carried out simultaneously. Ninety two members of the Roma community attended at least two sessions at which the participants were given basic information about the EU legislation for A2 countries local cultural norms, expectations and responsibilities for the newcomers in Belfast. The feedback from these sessions suggested that they were well received and that participants found the information beneficial

Health & Well-being

Evaluation of Pilot Health Visiting Clinic for Romanian Roma families 2012

BHSCT are the lead partner in the Project whose “participation in this project reflects a commitment to tackle health inequalities and is wholly in keeping with our statutory obligations under section 75 on the NI Act.”⁴ As part of this commitment staff from BHSCT undertook a small health needs assessment of 100 of the Roma community in Belfast and it was clear that child health and access to appropriate services was a major issue for Roma. A pilot Health Visiting Clinic in Shaftesbury Recreation

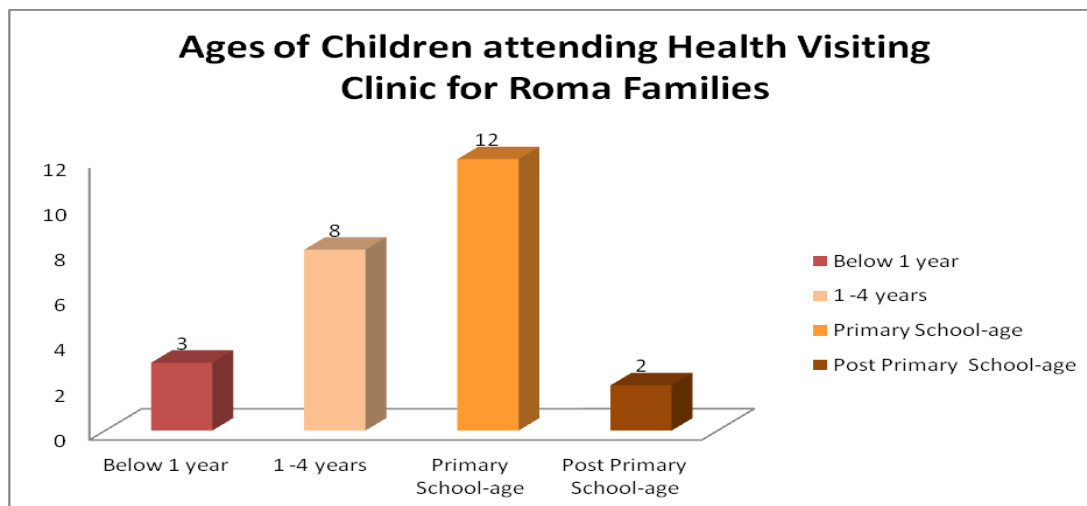
⁴ Evaluation of Pilot Health Visiting Clinic for Romanian Roma families 2012

Centre on the Lower Ormeau Road was established and staffed by an identified Health Visitor at an appropriate time with assistance from partners

Because they aren't registered with a GP, nobody knows they are here and if they aren't at school, they aren't being seen by the school nurse, so there is a whole community of young children falling through the net...(Project Worker)

The clinic gathered the following information regarding the age profiles of those in attendance and total number of 25 children attended the clinic over a ten week period. Of these children only 4 were previously known to health visiting and 10 were not attending school.

Children attending



A range of conclusions and recommendations specific to the clinic were made:

- The venue was appropriate and accessible
- The significance of the relationships built up between the Health Visitor and the community should not be underestimated and the same Health Visitor should remain.
- The support of the RRCANI was crucial in ensuring good attendances at the clinic .

- Given the on-going support of the RRCANI consideration should be given to an outreach programme.
- The number of school aged children not attending school leaves a gap in services for these children which needs addressed.
- The number of children who attended the clinics that were unknown to Health or Social Services was of particular concern and could have serious child protection implications.

It is clear from the internal report and interviews that the clinics were highly successful and provided appropriate health care to young children who would otherwise have remained largely invisible.

Through the Health visiting clinics there has been massive learning for the Trust in terms of Roma health needs; not only do we now have some really brilliant advocates for Roma, but a change in attitude of health visiting

Capacity Building (Local Action Group)

Awareness raising workshops on Roma culture & basic language lessons

In total four workshops were carried out in the life cycle of the project with 50 Staff from health, education, council, police and churches.in attendance.

As part of the evaluation of the awareness raising sessions we have reviewed the session evaluation forms. The outcomes of this process are outlined below.

The evaluation forms asked the participants to evaluate the content and delivery on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1-strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree. Participants were asked to rate on this scale the following:

- Session met expectations in understanding of The Roma
- Appropriateness of content

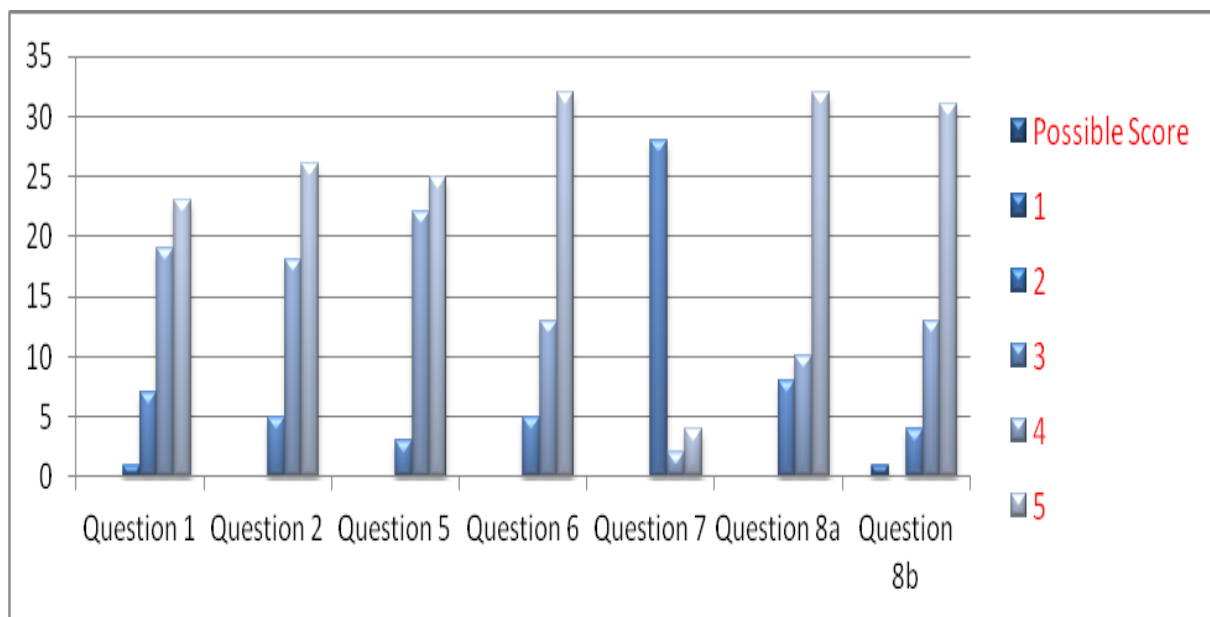
- Workshop methodology
- Workshop facilitation

Participants were then asked to outline which parts of the session were of most benefit to them and to also add comments on how they thought the session may be improved. Through our analysis of the workshop evaluations the following was recorded:

Analysis of Roma Culture awareness raising workshops

For copies of the questions see appendix 2

	Question 1	Question 2	Question 5	Question 6	Question 7	Question 8a	Question 8b
Possible Score	Out of 50	Out of 50	Out of 50	Out of 50	Out of 34	Out of 50	Out of 50
1							1
2	1						
3	7	5	3	5	28	8	4
4	19	18	22	13	2	10	13
5	23	26	25	32	4	32	31



Expectations of the Workshop Being Met:

While the majority of participants felt that the workshop did meet their expectations with regards to deepening their understanding of the Roma, a small minority felt that the workshop was too short and lacked 'enough detail'. Given the time constraints of the project and work commitments of the participants, we would not view this as a direct criticism, as it may demonstrate a need for further workshops. Other

comments included that the workshop *'did not challenge me'*. Given the different levels of experience of the participants working with the Roma community, more experienced staff may not have been challenged by the workshop. This would also add weight to further more in depth workshops being developed in the future.

Appropriateness of Content:

While the majority of participants felt that the content was accessible and pitched at the right level a few participants commented that they would have *'liked more specific facts'*. This could be interpreted as a need for more in depth specific workshops and not a reflection in a general workshop providing an introductory overview of Roma history and culture. Indeed many comments included remarks such as *'excellent content that was well presented'*.

Workshop Methodology and Facilitation

While the overall majority of participants felt that the methodology and facilitation were either very good or excellent, a small minority of participants commented that they would have liked *'more group work and exchange of ideas'*. This again points to the potential for follow-up workshops after the introductory overview.

Further Roma Workshops

Participants were asked to comment as to whether another Roma workshop was to be organised, what should the focus be. Answers varied from *'Roma life and cultural traditions'*, *'Roma health issues, and how we can assist them as professionals'*, to *'community structures and dealing with overcrowding, and rubbish in a positive manner'*. This clearly reflects the different priorities for participants taking part in the training in terms of working with the Roma community.

Small Worlds Events

The aim of this event was to highlight how small the world really is by exploring various cultures and traditions from around the globe. The event was held in St Marys Primary School in Belfast, a school with 140 pupils from many different ethnic backgrounds and nationalities including children from the Irish Traveller, the

Philippino , the Roma, Bulgarian and the NI community. Using I-Pads the children were asked to use them to record images of their culture, from their own prospective. They were then coached by a facilitator to discuss their various cultures and traditions over the course of a week and record them as ‘imovies’ under the title “I Am...”.

The recordings were then presented as a DVD and shown to the entire school community, parents and community groups. Their images were also used as the design for a mosaic, completed by the children, to remain permanently in the school playground as a symbol of cooperation, mutual respect ,understanding and cultural celebration.

Interagency study visit

Members of the LAG went on a study visit to Newcastle upon Tyne, an area that has witnessed one of England's largest rises in migrant population. including approximately 3000 Roma mostly from the Czech Republic and Slovakia.⁵ The purposes of the visit were to share learning and develop potential for joint working between the two cities in the future. The study trip was welcomed by those who participated:

The good practice visit to Newcastle Upon Tyne was good for generating ideas around what could be done and how they dealt with issues. They were better organised than us but on reflection we weren't that bad...(Participant)

Learning visit to Newcastle was a good opportunity to get away and talk about different things and building relationships, I think it strengthened the group...(Participant)

⁵ Sandra McCarry (Senior Manager Community Development, Belfast Health & Social Care Trust); Stephen Long (Worker BHSCT) I am Roma Project; Denise Wright Director Roundtable on Racism ; Margaret Donaghy Director Bryson Intercultural ; Gerard Rice (Manager Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group); Nicholae Nicholae (Chair Romanian Roma Community Association); Natalie McNally (Community Officer PSNI, Police) ; Jack McDonald (Community Officer PSNI, Police)

The Newcastle study visit was good as they were looking at the City in 20 years and saying how will the kids contribute to that city and planning with that in mind – that's what we need to here in Belfast. (Participant)

The detail of the learnings from the study trip are articulated in a report available (...)
Below is a brief summary:

- The majority of Roma in Newcastle were A8 nationals and as such they are entitled to many of the services that the A2 nationals (Romanian) Roma in NI do not have access to.
- The challenges Newcastle faced in the 1990s are the same challenges now faced by NI.
- The Council has developed a strategic response to Roma which is steered by the EU guidelines on the ten basic principles for Roma inclusion.⁶
- Recognition that the 'Multiple Gateways' approach is the best way to develop relationships within the Roma community.
- Significant support is offered in education though some of these services have been cut due to withdrawal of government funding.
- Newcastle has 15 streets and 350 houses as part of the selective licensing scheme which ensure a range of measures- smoke alarms, sensors, fire extinguishers and ensure there is no overcrowding.
- Employment and access to benefits remain significant issues in both cities.
- Through AARCH community cohesion training an early warning system has been established which can identify issues before they arise.
- The council has a proactive approach to dealing with media in promoting community cohesion
- Health improvement service for Ethnic minority communities provided by the NHS Newcastle Hospital Trust with bilingual workers.
- Community development approaches to improving health and wellbeing.
- There is demonstrable information sharing protocols across the sector.

⁶http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/Resources/Documents/2011_10_Common_Basic_Principles_Roma_Inclusion.pdf

Study visits can be controversial at times due to lack of intersectionality and an absence of practical and appropriate learning. That isn't the case here as there was complete agreement that the content was appropriate and that it has provided possibilities for future joined up work between the two cities. The relationship building that occurred between the partners was also significant in creating a partnership approach that helped strengthen the project overall.

Associated publicity

A range of publicity materials were produced as part of the programme including:

- 3000 language & welcome cards for frontline staff.
- 1 leaflet for Romanian Roma Community Association NI
- 1 DVD on youth integration project
- 1 DVD on welcoming Roma to Belfast and explaining rights and responsibilities
- 1 leaflet for frontline staff raising awareness of Roma history, culture and tradition(2000 Copies)
- Photographic exhibition on "I am Roma" programme
- Posters on celebration of Roma event
- Product from social economy project
- Mapping report on Roma in Belfast

Of all the resources produced there was universal agreement that the language cards were extremely important

The welcome cards were excellent – really useful cards...(Project worker)

The language cards were the most successful we ordered 1,000 and had to put another order in demand was so great...(Statutory partner)

The simplest things are usually the most effective – the welcome cards have been really successful for example about 10 months ago we distributed the welcome cards to medical staff within the Trust – at the last training session

a senior nurse pulled his out of his wallet and said he has been using them with Roma children (project co-ordinator)

Steering Group

As highlighted previously the steering group proved to be an important and involved part of the programme:

They were effective and really solution focussed...(Project worker)

the group was very effective – everyone met regularly and were updated with progress and challenges of the project...they provided ideas, advice, signposting and support...(Project Worker)

The Partnership was innovative and a model of good practice. 2-3 years ago we tried this and it just went round in circles and didn't do anything. The project gave the work kudos, formality and resource and we got a lot of early wins and were able to incentivise involvement. I think it was successful as we had a shared vision and everyone was bought into the objectives of the project and people were clear about their roles and responsibilities. There was trust among partners and practical visible outputs (Programme co-ordinator)

A number highlighted the effectiveness of the steering group and the very real inter agency working that occurred

agencies sharing information to benefit the project and deal with specific issues and then....(Statutory partner)

We could not have delivered our services as effectively without the project....(Statutory partner)

In fact the most effective inter agency group I have ever been involved with- people are genuinely interested in creative problem solving....(Statutory partner)

Projects which attempt to encourage traditionally separate agencies to work together in order to counter social exclusion and to develop appropriate public services can be difficult. Programmes such as this one, that are built on the assumption that meeting the needs of the group are more important than the convenience of providers can at times find institutional resistance. This programme has been successful in creating 'joined-up' welfare services based on cross-professional collaboration aimed at creating connections between the Roma community and the mainstream of social participation.

4.3 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND LEARNINGS

Those spoken to believed that the programme had met its broad targets in terms of raising awareness of the Roma culture within the local community and those parts of the statutory agency with whom they interacted.

Raising awareness of culture and tradition of the Roma community and challenging myths and reassuring staff that real engagement is possible...(Statutory Partner)

Exploring the history and persecution of the Roma communities around the world has significant impact on views...(Statutory Partner)

The project was the first recognition that local community and practitioners need to be educated about Roma culture as opposed to the Roma just being educated about the local community...(Project Worker)

Clearly more work can be done locally and within institutional partners given greater resources and time but as a pilot it was recognised that the programmes ability to work across agencies, sectors and contexts was extremely useful:

if you want to make a difference you must work at different levels...(Project Worker)

The inter agency working was a clear achievement recognised by all

Working in partnership and being able to have so many things happening at the same time which raised awareness and made the Roma more visible in the community...(Project Worker)

At the beginning there was a feeling of isolation but working together with community groups and stats can bring very good results and make big differences in people's lives...(Project Worker)

I've learned more about collaboration and the need to have the right people and partnerships...(Statutory Partner)

There were also unexpected results, one being the emergence of a degree of unity within the Roma community itself and an important developing relations between the Roma and the PSNI:

this project helped resolve some of the tensions in the Roma community by coming together and working for the same purpose...(Project Worker)

The reaction to the project from the Roma has been fantastic and we have been welcomed into their community. The internal tensions have gone in the community (Project co-ordinator)

I think the engagement with the PSNI and the Roma is now different, this project allowed us to build relationships so now some of the Roma have experiences of the PSNI which are not just about law enforcement e.g. some of the younger kids and the women have stopped with me to have a chat and say hello...(Statutory Partner)

4.4 LONG TERM LEARNING AND POLICY IMPACT

In terms of good practice all those spoken too highlighted that considering the size of the project and the challenging nature of its objectives it was clearly a model of good practice:

These things show that if you take the time to understand the issues, adapt your practice and resource appropriately you can engage effectively with communities...(Statutory Partner)

The whole I am Roma project is a model of good practice – 1st of its kind in with end results...(Project Worker)

This project has brought Roma up front and centre in terms of their health needs and healthcare; they are now on the agenda of all the health agencies; PHA, Dept. Health and the Trust (project co-ordinator)

inter agency working, grass roots community intervention and anti-racism...(Project Worker)

People will engage if they are allowed the opportunity. Integration and engagement are possible when we do things differently as one size does not fit all...(Statutory Partner)

The institutional partners felt that that the learnings from the programme were not insignificant;

Lots of our staff come into contact with the Roma community due to various service delivery and the training highlighted cultural sensitivities which are no longer viewed as barriers to service delivery ...that expertise was provided by the I am Roma project. This would have been extremely difficult if the resource of the project was not there. The resource was excellent and helped

us deliver our services and address issues much more effectively...(Statutory Partner)

We learned a lot - we always knew that these issues were there but they were continually brushed under the carpet – so Trust is on a big learning curve having to deal with these issues now – we have an evidence base now also...(Project Worker)

Others, whilst complementary were realistic about the impact of a small pilot programme on the internal policies and cultures of large institutions:

In terms of the projects impact on the wider policy impact i would say it is minimal – due to lack of political support with regards to addressing any of the issues of the Roma community in organisations yes but not at departmental level... (Programme co-ordinator)

There are few people in my organisation that deal with the Roma so there may be progress but it is too soon to say...(Statutory Partner)

It was felt that there will be little overt major change to policy in the next few years but that through practical inter agency collaboration, new working practices can emerge that effect institutional cultures and ways of doing business them make them more responsive and accessible to excluded groups. A number also mentioned the importance of an evidenced based Roma Inclusion strategy:

Nobody is rushing to do things before 2014 but clearly we need a local inclusion strategy that is explicit but not exclusive to put services in place for the Roma...(Statutory Partner)

we have enough evidence to be a critical friend to policy makers – if you don't do this xyz will happen and the whole concept of spend to save...(Statutory Partner)

The work needs co-ordinated and we need political will and leadership...we need a Roma inclusion strategy in Stormont– we need something that is localised with coordinated services...(Project Worker)

For some, the good practice was particularly evident in inter cultural learning:

How the Roma community deal with bereavement and their coping mechanism, it is different , I learned lots...I also learned actually how to work and be with people who are very different...(Statutory Partner)

I have a lot more understanding and respect for the Roma culture now and how they do things...(Project Worker)

Before my involvement I may have believed some of the myths about the Roma but I found the whole project a truly humbling experience and have been welcomed into their community (Project co-ordinator)

In addressing what might come next the issue of male participation and equality was mentioned by a number of interviewees:

We need to do some future work with the men as they are trapped in the middle of all of this and there is a presumption that they will provide for their families...(Statutory Partner)

We need to be creating opportunities for men to gain employment (Steering Group Member)

Others were keen to point out that a lot had been achieved with a relatively small financial input and that there was a danger that the very real learnings and contacts could be lost:

I am Roma has created a momentum which must be kept up...there was a limited budget and limited time frame but it needs to continue or all this will be lost....(Project Worker)

We have done so much work that has made such a difference with a very small amount of money that there is clearly a need for this project to be further funded (project co-ordinator)

It was evident that if the lessons from this process are to be maintained then so must be the relationships built up over the length of the project, particularly because of the transient nature of the population. This also requires that those providing the services and those on the ground need to be responsive and pro-active. It was evident from discussions that the project had also developed as an important bridge between that statutory agencies and the Roma community:

We knew what we thought were the issues and now we have the evidence – we can't fully articulate the needs of the Roma community but we can try and speak a little for them as no-one in the community wants to speak about the issues...(Project Worker)

The I am Roma Programme was designed as a unique and innovative response to the challenges laid down by the movement of people's across and into the European Union countries. Although only a pilot programme it has evidenced a comprehensive and holistic approach for developing and disseminating new ways of delivering integrated services for Roma and their families. Through the development of strategic partnerships it can continue to combat discrimination and inequality experienced by the Roma Community seeking access to the labour market and public services by building the capacity of local and regional institutions to make informed and equality-proofed policy decisions.

SECTION 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In reviewing the findings of the evaluation a number of key issues were highlighted. These are issues which the research team believe should be considered by any future proposals for the development of the programme:

The programme:

1. Should continue to focus its efforts on policy level interventions.
2. Should continue develop an engagement strategy at departmental, national and international levels.
3. Should continue its strategic support of and partnership working with advocate NGO's and the public sector
4. Should focus on a mainstreaming strategy to ensure the continuation of the awareness training in appropriate institutions.
5. Should continue to actively promote the strategic and operational significance of interagency working
6. Should seek to engage in local economic development through promoting social economy projects as a means of maximising the potential of additional skills for the local economy.

Further the evaluation has a number of specific conclusions and related recommendations:

Conclusions	Recommendations
<p>There is a lack of political will to address the issues faced by Roma and this has led to a policy vacuum.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That in the absence of an integration/inclusion strategy for Roma resources should be found to support the co-ordination role of the LAG • That partners use influence with the NI Executive to produce a strategy for Roma.
<p>That building trust with the Roma community is of paramount importance. A cohort of well trusted and motivated individuals (working in the statutory and NGO sectors) has emerged through the work of the I am Roma project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the experience and trust that emerged through the Project continues to be utilised to address issues faced by Roma. • That the social economy programmes targeting Roma women and the youth integration projects are supported to continue.
<p>That adopting a community development approach to working with the Roma was the right decision. This approach allowed for capacity to be built within that community and facilitated the Roma themselves in challenging negative stereotypes, discrimination and myth busting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That Roma and their advocates continue to challenge myths and tackle negative stereotypes of Roma through a structured education and awareness raising programme in local communities and statutory agencies.

<p>The Major challenges faced by the Roma community in Belfast are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to healthcare• Education• Overcrowding• Exploitation• Cohesion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• That service providers continue to meet and co-ordinate delivery of services to the Roma community in a culturally sensitive manner.• That service providers continue to plan for 2014 when A2 national will have full EU rights to ensure their services meet the needs of the Roma communities• That Roma specific services e.g. health visiting clinic be continued beyond the I am Roma Project
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APPENDIX 1

List of Partners

Belfast Health & Social Care Trust: (Lead Partners): Community Development Team and Health & Social Inequalities Department.

Belfast City Council: Good Relations Unit; working for a stable, tolerant, fair and inclusive society, where individuality is respected and diversity is celebrated, in an inclusive manner.

Belfast Education and Library Board: Educational Welfare Service; providing support to parents, children and young people who have been referred because of concerns with their school attendance.

Bryson Intercultural: dedicated to building good relations between the Roma community and the host community, by supporting the development of cross-agency working groups

Lower Ormeau Residents Action Group (LORAG): Community Development; Playgroup / After Schools; Youth Work; Sport / Recreation.

Northern Ireland Council on Ethnic Minorities (NICEM): carries out capacity building work, anti-racism training, policy work and campaigning on racial equality issues.

Northern Ireland Strategic Migration Partnership (NISMP): providing a regional voice on migration issues to Westminster.

Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI): engage with individuals and groups to prevent racist incidents and to make those responsible accountable to the law.

Public Health Agency (PHA): To tackle the underlying causes of poor health and reduce health inequalities through partnership working.

Romanian Roma Community Association: New organisation addressing the needs of the Romanian Roma in Belfast.

Roundtable: challenging racism and racist practices through awareness campaigns, public meetings and conferences

Trademark: A not for profit organisation working for social justice, equality and pluralism.

APPENDIX 2



The Roma: Between Myth and Reality

EVALUATION FORM

This questionnaire relates to the content and delivery of the Roma Cultural Awareness workshop. Please take a few minutes to answer the questions below.

1. To what extent did the workshop meet your expectations in deepening your understanding of The Roma?

(Please circle where 1=not at all 5=completely)

1 2 3 4 5

Please add comments:

2. How appropriate did you find the content of the workshop? For example, was the content accessible and pitched at the right level?

(Please circle where 1=not appropriate at all 5=very appropriate)

1 2 3 4 5

Please add comments:

3. Which part of the workshop did you find most interesting and why?

4. Which part of the workshop would you change and how?

5. Please indicate your assessment of the workshop methodology (introductions, activities, presentation, discussions and world cafe)

(Please circle where 1=poor 5=excellent)

1 2 3 4 5

How would you improve the workshop methodology?

6. Please indicate your assessment of the workshop facilitation

(Please circle where 1=poor 5=excellent)

1 2 3 4 5

Please state any comments you have on the facilitation below.

7. Which of the statements below summarises your thoughts on the workshop?

- I feel much more informed on The Roma and better equipped to address the stereotypes and myths often circulated about this community. []
- I have pretty much the same level of knowledge about The Roma as I had before the workshop. []
- While the workshop was informative it could have explored other issues about The Roma not covered on the day. []

8. Venue and Refreshments

Please rank the **venue** in terms of comfort and accessibility

(Please circle where 1=poor 5=excellent)

1 2 3 4 5

Please rank the **food and refreshments**

(Please circle where 1=poor 5=excellent)

1

2

3

4

5

9. If we organise other workshops on the Roma what should be the focus of the content?

What aspect of The Roma would you like to explore in another workshop?

10. Do you have any other suggestions which may improve similar events in the future?
