

Wicklow Travellers Group Strategic Plan 2020-2024



Vision

Our vision is for an equal society in which the culture, ethnicity and human rights of Travellers are valued and celebrated.

Mission

Inspired by our quest for social justice and equality, we, Travellers and settled people, work as partners in Co. Wicklow in order to:

- achieve human rights, equality of participation and outcomes, respect and inclusion for Travellers
- achieve awareness, recognition and celebration of Travellers' unique identity, culture and ethnicity
- empower Travellers in Co. Wicklow to enhance their quality of life



Community Development Approach

WTG sets out to embed the culture, work and ethos of WTG in a community development approach.

Travellers and settled people will work in partnership and sensitivity in order to:

- empower Travellers to reach their full potential and to participate in all aspects of society
- achieve fulfilment of Travellers' social, economic and human rights
- to work to maintain autonomous Traveller organisations in order to enhance existing collective capacity and to develop Traveller Fora and Traveller Youth Fora
- to provide support and information to Travellers through drop-in and outreach so as to increase uptake of local mainstream and other community based services

CEART

Centre for Ethnicity and Resourcing of Travellers

The work of WTG is co-ordinated and often uses our purpose built centre.

WTG provides, maintains and develops a resource centre (CEART) that:

- houses the development activities of the organisation
- is a place of safety, solidarity, friendship, help and support, learning and problem solving
- reflects the culture and heritage of Wicklow Travellers
- promotes a sense of identity, dignity and pride in Traveller heritage

A Note on Organisational Development

The elected Board of Directors of WTG will strive to:

- regularly review and develop the structures, policies and corporate governance procedures of the organization to ensure openness and transparency.
- build the sense of ownership of the organization among Travellers and to increase levels of participation by Travellers at both staff and board of management levels.
- encourage and enhance teamwork and cooperation within the organization and to ensure a facilitative and empowering style of management, which builds on the organization's ethos, prevails at all times.
- work for sustainability of the organization that preserves and enhances the values of the Wicklow Travellers Group.

A Note on Administration and Audited Accounts

WTG administration includes the paying of staff salaries and office bills; facilitating Collector General of Taxes payments; managing the project accounts and funds; and assisting the coordinator with periodic returns to NTP, HSE, East Coast Regional Drug and Alcohol Task Force, Tusla and other funders on an ongoing basis. The administrators also keep our company details up-to date with the C.R.O. The administrators keep our employee records current. An audit at the end of the year is conducted by an independent auditor to confirm that the administration of grants is carried out in a correct, honest and efficient manner and that all grants received are applied to their intended project.

Many of Strategic goals below have administration actions to support the actions undertaken under each strategic goal

Thematic Areas of Work

Thematic areas derived from the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (NTRIS) document

1. Culture, Identity and the Traveller Community
2. Education and Employment
3. Anti-discrimination, Equality and Gender Equality
4. Accommodation
5. Children and Young People
6. Public Services
7. Health

1 Cultural Identity and the Traveller Community

Strategic Goal 1.1

WTG will promote the distinct culture, identity and heritage of the Traveller community in Wicklow.

Strategic Goal 1.2

WTG will develop Wicklow initiatives which promote personal empowerment, positive actions & collective confidence/pride in Traveller identity & history

Strategic Goal 1.3

WTG/NTP will develop participatory processes and tools by which the community are represented in participatory democratic structures at local / county level to achieve change and influence local decision.

Strategic Goal 1.4

WTG will continue to develop and sustain a strong, democratic, accountable and effective local Traveller organisation with good governance

Strategic Goal 1.5

WTG has a statement of WTG's understanding of and practice of community work which will inform the implementation of the programme of work.

Strategic Goal 1.6

WTG will continue to develop interventions in Wicklow to address issues of concern or of trauma that impacts on the Traveller Community in a geographical area leading a multi-sectoral approach where appropriate.

2 Education and Employment

Strategic Goal 2.1

WTG will promote increased Traveller participation and outcomes from education at all levels.

Strategic Goal 2.2

WTG will develop with other Traveller organisations participatory research tools to identify education and training interests of the community at a local level which inform local actions

Strategic Goal 2.3

WTG will promote interculturalism with education providers and collaborate with education providers to develop effective anti-bullying, non-discriminatory practice (including enrolment procedures with schools)

Strategic Goal 2.4

WTG will design, deliver or participate in locally-based community and adult education programmes with relevant bodies i.e. Solas, ETB, Local Development Companies to meet the interests of Traveller men and women and to seek accreditation where appropriate

Strategic Goal 2.5

WTG will promote access to early years' services in our local area such as ECCE, CCS and Affordable Childcare. This includes collaborating with childcare committees to promote inclusion and diversity training for early years' providers.

Strategic Goal 2.6

WTG will promote the inclusion, respect, and protection of the cultural identity of young Travellers across Youth and Arts Service providers in the local area.

Strategic Goal 2.7

WTG will provide information and support for members of the Traveller community on existing employment and training services locally.

Strategic Goal 2.8

WTG will establish relationships with INTREO, SICAP and Local Enterprise Offices to create the conditions for the inclusion of Travellers to access relevant support, training and opportunities including the Traveller economy

Strategic Goal 2.9

WTG will develop local transformative community education actions which bring people together to analyse and challenge inequality & exclusion

Strategic Goal 2.10

WTG will develop the capacity of the Voluntary Board of Directors to meet all the current legislative requirements including maintaining transparency and openness on decision making and planning

3 Anti-discrimination, Equality and Gender Equality

Strategic Goal 3.1

WTG will address incidents of individual and institutional racism and discrimination through targeted interventions.

Strategic Goal. 3.2

WTG will work collectively with national organisations to eradicate racism and address the current limitations of hate speech legislation in Ireland (Incitement to Hated Act 1989).

Strategic Goal. 3.3

WTG will promote interculturalism, human rights, equality and inclusion in the Wicklow area in solidarity with community and voluntary organisations and within local democratic structures.

Strategic Goal. 3.4

WTG and national Traveller Groups will develop culturally appropriate supports to address equality issues locally on the 9 grounds of equality legislation including LGBT inclusion

Strategic Goal. 3.5

Multiple disadvantages affecting the lives of Traveller women will be addressed through WTG and in solidarity with women's organisations including the N.T.W.F

Strategic Goal. 3.6

WTG will facilitate Traveller women to come together to create the conditions for empowerment, action, organisation, participation and influence.

Strategic Goal. 3.7

WTG will support the development of community leadership and gender equality with men and women from the Traveller community.

4 Accommodation

Strategic Goal. 4.1

WTG will work to influence our local authority to provide accessible, culturally appropriate accommodation based on the needs of the local Traveller community

Strategic Goal. 4.2

WTG will promote a human rights approach to meet the collective needs of the Traveller community.

Strategic Goal. 4.3

WTG will seek to advocate and support self-advocacy for families in crisis and document emerging issues that impact on the community (such as homelessness).

Strategic Goal. 4.4

WTG will work to address Traveller accommodation issues and policy at local, regional and national levels through networking and collective action.

Strategic Goal. 4.5

WTG will support families living in conditions which impact negatively on their health and wellbeing and take positive action using a community work approach to address the accommodation issue(s)

Strategic Goal 4.6

WTG will raise awareness of the necessity of decent living conditions for Travellers as the bedrock for all other strategies to improve outcomes for Travellers.

5 Children and Young People

Strategic Goal.5.1

WTG will create the conditions for the interests, rights, views and opinions of Traveller children and young people to be included in policy, planning, services and research e.g. C.Y.P.S.C.

Strategic Goal. 5.2

WTG will promote appropriate, culturally sensitive and early intervention supports should be available to enable children to live in a safe and secure environment.

Strategic Goal. 5.3

WTG will work with TUSLA and other relevant organisations to develop initiatives to empower families and to inform families about available resources (e.g. Meitheal).

Strategic Goal. 5.4

Traveller (and Roma) children will have the opportunity to participate in culturally appropriate youth work programmes that meet their needs including Sports, Arts and

Culture – WTG will engage with young Travellers in a range of personal development, skills development activities, non-formal education opportunities and programmes, that meet their needs and are appropriate to diverse age groups

Strategic Goal. 5.5

WTG will continue to provide supports for homework, after -schools, early years, tuition, career guidance, community awareness of drugs and youth work in collaboration with schools, drugs task forces and other youth service providers.

Strategic Goal. 5.6

The ten common basic principles on Roma Inclusion (that includes Travellers) will underpin work with children and young people and will be promoted by WTG with all agencies having responsibility for children and young people.

From the 10 Principle list WTG work has included:

- Principle 1 Constructive, pragmatic and non-discriminatory policies
- Principle 2 Explicit but not exclusive targeting
- Principle 3 Inter-cultural approach
- Principle 5 Awareness of the gender dimension
- Principle 8 Involvement of regional and local authorities
- Principle 9 Involvement of civil society
- Principle 10 Active participation of the Roma/Travellers

Strategic Goal. 5.7

WTG will seek to maintain up to date demographic data on children and young people in their area to ensure planning is based on real needs (e.g. population profiles)

Strategic Goal. 5.8

WTG will ensure compliance with all legislation/policies in relation to working with children and young people including Garda vetting, governance code and data protection guidelines.

6 Public Services

Strategic Goal. 6.1

WTG will participate in the design and delivery of services which impact on the Traveller community.

Strategic Goal. 6.2

WTG will design and deliver anti-racism, Traveller culture awareness and cultural competency training to public services when requested in line with section 42 (Positive Duty) of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014

Strategic Goal. 6.3

WTG will promote the use of an ethnic identifier across services to monitor and evaluate the access and participation of the Traveller community to statutory agencies and services locally.

Strategic Goal. 6.4

WTG will promote the ten common principles on Roma inclusion with Local Authorities and statutory agencies in each area.

7 Health

Strategic Goal. 7.1

WTG will assist the Traveller community to have increased access, opportunities, participation rates and outcomes from the Health care system

Strategic Goal.7.2

WTG will highlight Health inequalities experienced by the Traveller community so that they should be reduced

Examples from WTG's 2019 Work Plan

Strategic Goal. 7.3

WTG shall promote that Health Services should be delivered in a way that is culturally appropriate, inclusive & non-discriminatory

Strategic Goal 7.4

WTG will facilitate Travellers to develop a healthy lifestyle. (In addition to physical health, focusing on suicide, mental health and addiction issues among Travellers)

A Note on Irish Travellers

Travellers are a minority ethnic group, indigenous to the island of Ireland. Travellers have a shared history, language, religion, traditions and culture. Nomadism and Family are integral parts of Traveller culture. The distinctive Traveller identity and culture, based on a nomadic tradition, sets Travellers apart from the sedentary population or 'settled people'. Travellers have their own language (called Shelta, Gammon, or Cant.) although now it is in decline. To be recognised as a Traveller you must be born into the Traveller community. Travellers live in varied types of accommodation:-houses, caravans, apartments, group halting sites and by the roadside. Irish Travellers also live in USA, Britain and Australia. There are approximately 40,000 Travellers living in Ireland.

Throughout Irish history, the Traveller community has been markedly separated from the general Irish population, resulting in widespread stereotyping and discrimination.

The Government of Ireland, on 1st March 2017, formally recognised Travellers as a distinct ethnic group. This recognition of Traveller ethnicity is central to achieving equality for Travellers. It strengthens the relationship of respect and inclusion of Travellers in Ireland.

*Source Documents towards this Strategic Plan:
NTRIS document June 2017
NTP Framework, Reporting templates
WTG's current Strategic Plan ; Ten basic principles*