

Literature Review

- Findings from education, medicine, anthropology & linguistics periodicals
- Search included materials relating to other nomadic populations incl. Roma
- Themes: social inclusion; culture; literacy; family; relationships with service providers

Document Analysis

- Strategic plans & policies from libraries representing the 31 local authorities in ROI
- Examined for any inclusion of Irish Traveller community
- Internet search for blog posts/news coverage re: library events incl. Travellers

Interviews

- Semi-structured
- Questions based on themes generated from literature review
- 5 Irish Travellers, 3 female & 2 male, all in the 18-65 age bracket
- 2 settled individuals working with Traveller organisations
- 1 public library professional

The Project

- March-August 2022
- ♦ Qualitative
- Thematic analysis

Information science/ Information needs

- The way people behave around, use, and store information
- Information-seeking behaviour: how people behave when faced with an information need
- IN and ISB differ based on socio-economic background; "small-world" and "information poor" theories (Chatman, 1985; 1999)







Top: National Library of Ireland, 1954

Bottom: Whelan, 1958

Mincéirí: Ireland's indigenous ethnic minority

- Culture distinctive from settled Irish majority incl. a focus on orality, nomadism, Cant, traditional trades, families
- State building on traditional Traveller campgrounds began in the 1930s; conflicts over land usage continue today
- 1960s Commission on Itinerancy
- 2017 ethnic minority status
- Material deprivation, poor health outcomes, low educational attainment
- The last "respectable" form of racism (Francis, 2013, p. 73) and "the single biggest human rights challenge" in the EU (Holland, 2021).



Participant recruitment

- Community described as "hard to reach" (Cavaliero, 2020; Greenfields, 2017); distrust of outsiders felt by many due to the trauma of abuses at the hands of public/state bodies (Thompson, 2022; Cavaliero, 2020; Yin-Har Lau & Ridge, 2011)
- Traveller support & resource organisations
- Twitter
- Low literacy levels problematised the use of written information & consent forms – consideration in ethics application

Main Findings

Misperceptions

Lack of awareness of most of the services offered, e.g. access to tech, events, courses, community space – perception of libraries tied to education

Initial lack of trust of any kind of public/state institution. Lack of Traveller representation in staff/programming contributes to distrust.

Many Travellers may feel that they will be discriminated against in the library

Culture

Preservation of traditional culture a huge area of concern – language, traditional stories and histories, crafts

No participants report inclusion of materials representing or relating to Irish Travellers

This representation is strongly desired not just for its own sake, but so settled people can learn about Travellers, that they will be disciminated against less

Literacies

Term has come to encompass digital, health, media, finance, and workplace literacies (NALA, 2020); Travellers suffer disadvantage in relation to all of these (digital divide; low employment & lower life expectancy)

Right to Read, Healthy Ireland at Your Library, Work Matters (DRCD, 2019) – lack of info/marketing is a barrier to uptake

Interview findings show anecdotally that many Travellers who do use libraries use them for digital technologies If [Travellers] walk into a space and feel very uncomfortable they won't ever go back, you won't get a second chance, they might not remember what your name was but they'll remember how you made them feel

[If more Travellers worked in libraries] it begins to break down that barrier or inbuilt mindset that those services are not for us as a people

We now feel so welcome, we use the library way more since

I'm not sure that Travellers could trust the

service to trust them

There wasn't much

there that you'd go

and look at, no

about our

community

archives of stuff

We're trying to bridge gaps between the community...the more they learn the more they understand

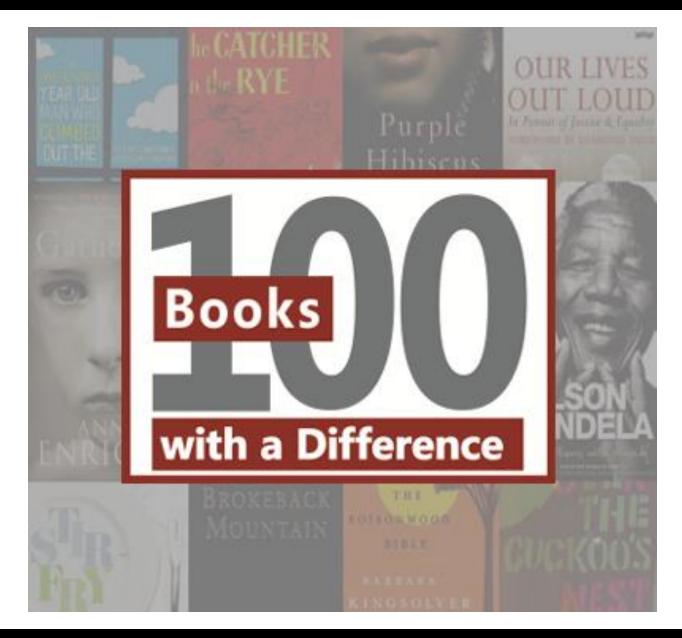
Tamara.Malone@ncirl.ie

This is Maggie May....



And this is her day...





Left: Burke, 2023 Right: Cavan County Council's Library Service, 2013





How can I bring this work to NCI Library?

- Assistive Technology room; C-Pen; Low-distraction desks
- UDL; Plain English
- Library Academic Support Centre
- Institution-wide initiatives: HEAR, Discover University, ELI, CELL, International Dept.

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