

STEP aims to:

- Support development of a diverse & flexible range of educational opportunities through Curriculum for Excellence for Scotland's Travelling people - Gypsies/Travellers, Showmen, New Travellers, more recently European Roma and Travellers visiting Scotland from the rest of the UK
- Listen to and represent Travelling families' views about education and their children's educational needs
- Enable educators, and other professionals and agencies, to respect Scotland's Travelling communities, to know their diverse histories, cultures and traditions, and their contemporary cultural practices and living circumstances
- Promote and support diversity in education and practitioners positive engagement with racism, harassment and bullying
- Promote and support the Traveller Education Network (TENET)



and GIRFEC approaches to delivering education, accommodation, health, other key social services and governmental initiatives.

STEP works towards these aims by:

- Providing information, advice & support (where possible) to professionals engaged in enabling Scotland's Travelling families to access education
- Monitoring, reviewing & supporting families' access to education and appropriate additional support for learning
- Carrying out a programme of tasks based on engagement with educators and families, in negotiation with the Scottish Government
- Highlighting & responding to educational issues relating to Scotland's Travelling families in proposed legislation, policy documents & other reports
- Communicating with colleagues across the UK, & internationally through a range of professional, research and Knowledge Exchange and transfers activities.

STEP people:

Pauline Padfield: Director of STEP Tel: 0131 651 6440 Email Pauline.Padfield@ed.ac.uk

Jean Oliver: Senior Secretary Tel: 0131 651 6444 Email: jean.oliver@ed.ac.uk

Mary Hendry: Associate Director of STEP Contact Jean Oliver

Gillian Cameron: Seconded teacher, Fife Tel: 0131 651 6428 Email: gillian.cameron@fife.gov.uk

Mariangela Palladino: Research Associate Tel: 0131 651 6428

Email: mariangela.palladino@ed.ac.uk

Gillean McClusky: Associate Director - Research; Tel: 0131 651 6637

Email: gillean.mccluskey@ed.ac.uk

Contact: All work part-time; we will get back to you as soon as we are able.

STEP (Room 2.05), Charteris Land, The Moray House School of Education, The University of Edinburgh, Holyrood Road, Edinburgh, EH8 8AQ, Tel: 0131 651 6444; Email:

step@education.ed.ac.uk; Website - www.scottishtravellered.net

SCOTTISH TRAVELLER EDUCATION PROGRAMME (STEP)

Promoting equality in education for Scotland's Travelling Communities

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The Moray House School of Education.
Institute for Education, Teaching and Leadership



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STEP's remit covers Scotland's Travelling Communities: who have diverse histories, cultures and family based life-styles. Officially, Scotland's Travelling communities are made up of four main communities - **not - one homogeneous community**. Having a Traveller identity is not dependent on living a mobile life-style, but on having a sense of belonging to a Travelling family. Generally, a Traveller's sense of identity is strongly felt and highly valued.

Gypsies/Travellers: The 'I' recognises that people making up Scotland's indigenous ethnic minority self-define in different ways; some prefer being called a Gypsy Traveller, while others prefer being called a Scottish Traveller. Scottish Gypsies'/Travellers' recent recognition as having "ethnic origins" strengthens their protection in terms of the 1976 Race Relations Act. Many Scottish Gypsy/Traveller people speak a form of non-standard Scots called 'cant' which includes Gaelic, Old Scots and words that have much in common with *Romanes*.

Commonly known as Occupational Travellers other communities with distinctive cultural identities, histories and travelling lifestyles self-define as business/cultural communities. Scottish Showmen or travelling show and fairground families form the largest of these communities, and are mainly based in Glasgow. Other communities include circus and bargee families (not generally to be found in Scotland). Importantly, these communities don't claim minority ethnic status.

New Travellers organise around political and philosophical issues e.g. ecological issues. Families may borrow from traditional Travelling cultures e.g. living in tents or trailers, but don't claim ethnic minority status. Very few families are known about in Scotland.

Changing times: Roma - since European Community expansion, Romani people, collectively called Roma have come to Scotland from one of the new EU member states (the A8 and A2 countries). Roma also do not make up a homogeneous community, e.g. Romanian and Slovakian Roma have distinctive histories, cultural identities and languages. Importantly, families identify themselves first in national terms and then as Roma e.g. Slovak Roma or Romanian Roma. Roma have different ways of speaking *Romanes*, but as some words are similar, Romani people may be able to understand one another.

Sensitivity to the cultural, historical and sometimes linguistic diversity among Scotland's Travelling communities helps educators (along with other policy and professional and public service providers) understand their impact on a family's willingness and capacity to access educational services designed to meet the needs of the general population. However, mobility in and of itself creates challenges for educators, e.g. interruptions to learning is an experience shared by many learners across Scotland.

STEP promotes and supports TENET: an association of Scottish education authority staff, including designated teachers, development and community workers and educational support officers, who work with Travelling families to encourage and enable access to education and other local authority services. Members' outreach & interagency working promotes access to the curriculum and supports Traveller families and the schools they attend. TENET members meet three times a year to share good practice and ameliorate the professional isolation that many experience in their local contexts. STEP organised CPD sessions, delivered by colleagues from *respectme* and LTScotland addressing bullying and Curriculum for Excellence in relation to Traveller learners. **Contact details;** members contact details are regularly updated on the TENET page of the STEP website or call STEP for contact details.

STEP website <http://www.scottishtravellered.net>. Currently under review, STEP's website receives worldwide 'hits' and 'returns visits' and is highly rated by a popular and well-researched publication, *The Travellers' Times*, <http://www.travellerstimes.org.uk/>. See also The National Association of Teachers of Travellers and Other Professionals + <http://www.natt.org.uk/>, for a wealth of resources, while tailored to the English Curriculum these resources can be modified appropriately for Curriculum for Excellence.

ICT supported distance learning: STEP continues to support self-identified education authority colleagues, designated teachers and ICT support services, by organizing and facilitating a dialogue about their experiences to identifying ways forward for delivering additional support for learning for Gypsy/Traveller learners not attending school regularly. Importantly, this type of provision aims to 'keep the door open' to Curriculum for Excellence and other equality opportunities; it is not and should not be viewed as alternative/segregated provision, rather as additional support that takes account of the impact of cultural and family concerns about mainstream education.

Teachers of Gypsy/Traveller learners in four authorities across Scotland have begun piloting ICT supported distance learning for secondary-aged Gypsy/Travellers not regularly attending school; for reasons of family mobility or due to reluctance to attend school. The Scottish Government funded a post here at STEP to promote and support such developments. Each pilot relied on its Education Authority's support e.g. in designating staff with time to work on setting up the infrastructure to support anytime anywhere access to learning.

An evaluation of each pilot's progress so far has identified teachers and learners enthusiasm for use of ICT in enhancing learning (as with any other peer group), but also some significant challenges in delivering face-to-face/paper based learning (current financial constraints have impacted education authorities' capacity to provide support for learning in out of school settings), which underpins a learner's additional learning out with actual contact time. By addressing practitioners' concerns the model can be adjusted and have relevance as a means of meeting additional support needs for any child or young person not regularly attending school. For further details contact Mariangela Palladino, Tel: 0131 651 6428 or Email:

mariangela.palladino@ed.ac.uk

STEP national resources: launched at **STEP Conference 30th September**, the *National Guidance for Education Authorities, schools and support services* and *My Learning at a Glance* will add to leaflets *Keeping in Touch* and *Strategies for Inclusion*, which take into account current legislation, policy and practice. Our main target audiences are education officers, teachers and Traveller families. Designed to develop good practice in supporting and tracking mobile learners, these resources are particularly helpful for Travellers passing through or living in education authorities with less well developed out of school services. The SG and HM Inspectors encourage professionals to support families' use of the *My Learning at a Glance* as it provides initial curricular transfer information. An *Initial Rapid Assessment Guide* designed to support teachers working in outwith school settings is available, with plans to digitalise. A Traveller child would be assessed in the same way as any children on arriving at a school. **Contact** STEP for your copies or download from website.

Enquire for young people: <http://www.enquire.org.uk/yp/> Travelling children and young people may have additional support needs. Enquire is designed to help families find support for learning. It is also fun. Travellers can get safely into blogging about getting the most out of their education.