

Exploring Barriers to Education for Traveller Children in Primary and Secondary Education.

Dr Patricia McGrath, Adult Continuing Education (ACE) University College Cork.

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Abstract

This paper presents the findings of a qualitative research study carried out in collaboration with Travellers of North Cork, aimed at exploring the barriers to education for Traveller children attending schools in the North Cork region. Travellers have experienced disadvantages in all aspects of their lives for generations, including inequity in education. Although various government policies and strategies have been developed over many decades, educational outcomes for members of the Traveller Community have not seen significant improvement. This study explores the barriers to education for Traveller children from their parents' perspectives, while also gaining insights from educators in the region. The findings highlight that children are still being discriminated against as scarce resources such as NEPS Psychological Assessments are 'used wisely', suggesting schools have low expectations of Traveller children, as resources are allocated to children who are expected to benefit more into the future. While children in some schools are subjected to discrimination, other schools are models of good practice and have created inclusive environments supporting children and parents, acknowledging and celebrating Traveller culture in school. To improve educational experience and increase progression rates to Further and Higher education, this research makes several recommendations for better outcomes.