

Travellers in Sport

2010

Athletics integration programme

Offaly Sports Partnership supported the delivery of an athletics integration programme for Migrants and Travellers in 2010.

Approximately 180 children in each of the two schools attended by Travellers in Tullamore (and who also have high immigrant populations) participated. Trained Traveller and Migrant tutors provided support in the delivery of this programme and helped children in other communities.

In total, 360 Traveller and migrant children were supported to participate to their optimum in sporting disciplines.

Scoil Bhríde, Tullamore (for example) which has the highest population of Travellers and migrants in the county, participated in and won the Offaly inter schools SPORTSHALL Athletics Championships following a programme intervention. A number of the participants have now joined the local athletic club as a result.

While there has been some transfer of children into mainstream clubs, this generally remains a problem and the number of migrants for example participating in the mainstream is not proportional to the overall size of the community. Offaly Sports Partnership made a strong case to the Office of the Minister for Integration in this regard and is to receive support for 2011 to start to address this issue.

2009

A Traveller in Sport Coordinator was recruited to manage a programme of work placement for trainees that completed the accredited training programme in 2008.

Funding was received from Sport Ireland towards two targeted actions to be led out by the trainees. Delivery of these actions was however dependent on support from the Community Services Programme of the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs being received which was not the case. Despite this setback, Sport Ireland funding was reallocated to a number of integration actions targeting Travellers and other ethnic minorities in 2010, and trainees from the Traveller in Sport programme from 2008 were encouraged to deliver on these actions.

2008

Two sport and physical activity programmes were delivered for Travellers in 2008: -

1. *Physical Activity Tutor Training*

Support was secured from the Traveller Health Unit of the Health Services Executive, Tullamore Wider Options and the Offaly Vocational Education Committee to deliver a physical activity tutor training programme for members of the Travelling community in Offaly.

Seven trainees completed the programme and it is hoped that all tutors will be employed on a part time basis over three years to deliver sport and physical activity programmes to the wider community of Travellers in the county through a Pobal funded Community Services Programme.

A technical support grant to develop a three year business plan was secured from Pobal, and this business plan was submitted in October 2008.

2. *Boccia for Traveller Women*

With support from Birr and Tullamore Traveller Training Centres, a three month boccia programme for 36 women from the Travelling community was delivered. Following the success of the programme, queries have been received from the centres in relation to the continued roll out of this programme. Offaly Sports Partnership has advised each centre that while the programme has been completed for 2008, it is envisaged that members of the Traveller Tutor Training Project (at 1 above) will continue to deliver the programme in centres and sites countywide.