

Institution: Buckinghamshire New University
Unit of Assessment: Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy
Title of case study: The Cambridge Project: Empowering Gypsy/Traveller communities through collaborative participation action research
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>The body of research commences with the UK's first published assessment of accommodation and other (health, education etc) needs of Gypsies and Travellers (G/T) in accordance with the 2004 Housing Act. The research had a direct influence on Government policy making process, impacting the development of new data sets, statutory guidance on the content of assessments and demonstrating the viability of innovative collaborative research methodologies with nomadic/sedentary Gypsy-Traveller populations. The Fundamental Rights Agency and INVOLVE subsequently cited the research as 'best practice' for research focussing on 'hard to reach' communities.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The body of research which underpins this case study is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The UK's first Gypsy/Traveller accommodation assessment (GTAA) completed 2006 on behalf of Cambridge County Council and four other local authorities who formed part of the commissioning consortium. Home (Anglia Ruskin) & Greenfields (Bucks). Greenfields was responsible for devising the service user participatory action methodology in the 'Cambridge Project', oversaw community interviewer management, and led on the design /coordination of distribution of the survey and qualitative elements of the study (focus groups etc.). Home (co-author) and team led on the quantitative assessment of need and planning aspects; Home also participated in quality control and analysis of data. • A series of other GTAAs undertaken with Home (North and East Surrey: 2006; Dorset: 2005-6) utilising identical methods and leading to the employment of a part-time research assistant working on data analysis at Bucks, as well as collaborative inter-university partnerships around the delivery of GTAAs with De Montfort University (e.g. East Kent, 2007; Somerset, 2010) in which Greenfields led on training methods and the West of England GTAA (Greenfields et al, 2007). • An in-depth qualitative study, "<i>Roads to Success</i>", of the employment needs, practices and barriers impacting on Gypsy/Travellers' access to employment, with particular reference to gender practices and accommodation type (Ryder & Greenfields/Irish Traveller Movement, 2010). This study, hosted by the Irish Traveller Movement (for whom the first named author was then policy officer), was funded by the Big Lottery foundation and the funding application was co-authored by Greenfields and Ryder/Irish Traveller Movement. The study drew upon findings from GTAAs around unemployment and experiences of racist discrimination in work settings. It utilised interviewers who had previously worked on GTAAs and replicated the Cambridge Project format in terms of participatory action research methods. The employment study (and also the West of England GTAA above) was extensively cited in the <i>2012 Progress report by the Ministerial working group on tackling inequalities experienced by Gypsies and Travellers</i>. Findings from the study underpinned ministerial commitments which have fed into the requirements to deliver a UK National Roma Integration Strategy under EU regulations. This particular project was noted by the Director of the EC Equality Directorate as being 'informative' and 'potentially inspiring' for new European approaches to delivering economic inclusion projects.

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- Emergent evidence from the West of England GTAA (2007), and the site delivery study by Greenfields with Lowe in 2012 which updated that research, included data on the health status of Gypsies/Travellers seeking accommodation. This led to the commissioning of two follow-up studies in the locality on the barriers to health care of these communities (including the UK's first examination of health needs of residents of canal boats) (Greenfields with Lowe 2013: Bath and North East Somerset and North Somerset Health Needs Assessments) and local clinical commissioning groups' engagement with delivering training to health professionals based on the findings.

Secondary analysis of the collected body of research on housed Gypsies/Travellers emergent from the above studies, and the inclusion of targeted focus groups with housed Gypsy/Traveller youth, has led to the publication of a text (2013, submitted to the REF) by Smith and Greenfields on the experiences of housed Gypsies and Travellers, focusing on routes into housing, community cohesion, changing gender roles, and identity formation of young housed Travellers. This text is the first UK study to examine the wide-ranging impacts (including on mental health) on these communities of rapid sedentarisation resulting from policy enactments on site delivery.

3. References to the research

- Smith D & Greenfields M (2013) *Gypsies and Travellers in housing: The decline of nomadism* Bristol: Policy Press
- Greenfields, M & Ryder A (2012) 'Combining Policy, Practice and Community in Action Research' in *Gypsies and Travellers Empowerment and Inclusion in British Society*, Richardson, J & Ryder, A eds. Bristol: Policy Press
- Cemlyn S, Greenfields M, Burnett, S, Matthews, Z & Whitwell, C (2009) *Review of inequalities experienced by Gypsy and Traveller communities London: Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC)* available at: <http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publicationsandresources/Pages/InequalitiesGypsyandTraveller.aspx>
- Greenfields M (2008) Accommodation needs of Gypsies/Travellers: new approaches to policy in England, *Social Policy & Society*, 7(1), 73-89
- Greenfields M & Home R (2007) Assessing Gypsies and Travellers needs: partnership working and 'The Cambridge Project', *Romani Studies*, 16(2), 105-131

4. Details of the impact

The 'Cambridge Project' (2006) was the first research to include Gypsies/Travellers (G/T) as interviewers, identifying their own community's service delivery needs. The methods utilised were incorporated into Communities and Local Government guidance on undertaking assessments, and increased political engagement with local authorities via community fora, as well as resulting in enhanced employment for trained interviewers (2). Wide-spread take-up of the model followed; e.g. Greenfields delivered training on participatory action research methods to community interviewers working with Plymouth University on the Devon GTAA in 2008 and to community groups in Leeds (LeedsGATE who utilised the methodology and adapted a survey tool for health and accommodation studies in their local area (2). This led to a series of inter-related studies and training programmes headed by Greenfields (e.g. West of England GTAA 2007; site identification studies in North Somerset in 2011-12). Increased familiarity with such methods, and the development of a national core of accredited community interviewers from the Gypsy/Traveller population, led to the adaptation of the methods and survey tool to map employment patterns (Ryder & Greenfields, 2010), residence in housing enclaves (Greenfields and Smith, 2010; Smith and Greenfields, 2013), and impact of community development programmes (Greenfields with Kay,

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2011) on the G/T population (1).

The use of trained peer interviewers from G/T communities has been seen as a methodological innovation in working with nomadic or 'hidden' populations, leading for the first time to increased knowledge of the size and distinctive needs of these hitherto 'invisible' housed populations who experience racialised discrimination and retain traditional cultural practices (including attitudes to health and frequent use of 'traditional' treatments), whilst in public discourse being seen as deracinated by virtue of losing their status as 'travellers', a metonym associated more with a lifestyle than the ethnic status of those groups (Gypsies, Roma and Irish/Scottish Travellers) recognised and protected under the Race Relations Acts.

As a result of the above studies Greenfields has become an advisor on three Department of Health *Health Inclusion* projects pertaining to the wellbeing of Gypsy/Traveller populations, impacts of accommodation on physical and mental health, and the need for specialist training of health professionals/awareness of the implications of housing on mental health (5). Smith & Greenfields (2013) findings on women's mental health and experiences of racism in social housing are reported to be 'significant' by the teams working on the Inclusion Health studies.

The project was the first in Britain to include a mixture of Gypsy and Irish Traveller interviewers as co-workers (despite historical tensions between the ethnic groups), as well as teaming non-literate interviewers with individuals who could read and write. Interviewers ranged in age from late teens to mid 60s and comprised both genders as well as individuals with physical disabilities/impairments. The research has been credited as impacting on the employability of those selected as interviewers (1, 3), increasing cohesion/ inter-community political engagement amongst Gypsies and Travellers and changing attitudes towards the use of 'non-traditional' interviewers/staff by local authorities (4).

The research had a direct influence on the process of Government policy making, with the findings feeding into previously unquantifiable 'impressions' on the extent of accommodation need, degree of coerced movement into housing amongst formerly nomadic individuals and resultant preference for sites, and mismatch in needs and service access amongst Gypsy and Traveller communities (4,5). Government recommendations on how such assessments should be carried out were influenced by the positive reviews of the innovative research methodology utilised in this study. Subsequently the lessons learnt from this project were fed into good practice guidance amongst a range of professionals working with the communities in question (e.g. Royal Town and Planning Institute guidance to planners), and incorporated into revised Communities and Local Government guidance on how all such assessments should be undertaken.

The methodological impact on skills development of Gypsy/Traveller community members of using participatory action research methods was profound. Previously widely considered to be a 'hard to reach' community, Gypsy/Traveller populations themselves frequently complained that they were not consulted on matters of key concern to their well-being and accommodation needs, and that they were excluded from all aspects of service planning. Use of the methods pioneered in this study and the subsequent body of work by Greenfields and associates utilising the 'Cambridge methodology' has increased local political engagement amongst Gypsies and Travellers, enhanced community cohesion through shared narrative building and agreement over site provision and need with local authorities, and has led to the development of a mechanism for challenging unreasonable refusal of site delivery/planning applications. Gypsy/Traveller policy agencies and activists (e.g. the Gypsy Council; The Traveller Movement and Leeds GATE) advise that agencies and individuals have successfully appealed against assessments of needs which fail to use participatory research methods or do not enable the 'voice' of Gypsy/Traveller community members to be taken into account (2).

The Fundamental Rights Agency and INVOLVE cited the research as 'best practice' for research with 'hard to reach' communities, and the programme has been widely replicated across the UK in

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both accommodation and health/employment needs assessments (6, 7, 8). As a result of the success of this model Greenfields has been commissioned to develop training in working with 'hard to reach' groups with a diverse range of communities– including refugee and asylum seeking women - and has delivered training on the 'Cambridge Model' internationally (Israel, South Africa, Hungary and Romania) where the processes can be adapted to work with migrants, asylum seekers, Roma and marginalised ethnic populations (9).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Chief Executive Officer, The Traveller Movement
2. Director, Leeds GATE
3. Chair, The Gypsy Council
4. Research Manager – Consultation & Business Development, Cambridgeshire County Council
5. Lead on Inclusion Health, Health Inequalities Department, Department of Health
6. Blackburn, H.; Hanley, B. & Staley K. (2010) *Turning the Pyramid Upside Down – examples of public involvement in social care research* Eastleigh: INVOLVE
http://www.invo.org.uk/pdfs/6822_INVOLVE_SCCS_brochure_WEB.pdf (see pp: 8-17 and subsequently in the report and case study on the INVOLVE website as best practice in engaging service users).
7. 'Cambridgeshire Project' recognised as Best Practice example (only example selected from the UK) of engaging marginalised communities in accommodation policy and practice **European Fundamental Rights Agency** (2009) "*Housing conditions of Roma and Travellers in the European Union*" Vienna: FRA available at http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/606-090210-ROMA_Housing_Case-studies-UK.pdf and FRA/Reis (undated) presentation made to the EU Roma Decade of Inclusion "working group on good practice in improving the access of Roma to housing in rural and urban areas
http://www.romadecade.org/cms/upload/file/9423_file25_wq6_michail-beis-%255Bcompatibility-mode%255D.pdf
8. Staniewicz T (2009) *United Kingdom RAXEN National Focal Point Thematic Study Housing Conditions of Roma and Travellers* Warwick: CRED/University of Warwick
http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/596-RAXEN-Roma-Housing-UK_en.pdf (see p66-70 in particular for a discussion on the impact/best practice involved in this study and minor references elsewhere)
9. The article on the experience of developing the initial methodology (Greenfields, M & Home, R (2006) '[Assessing Gypsies and Travellers needs: Partnership working and 'The Cambridge Project'](#)' *Romani Studies*, 16(2) 105-131) has been cited in 19 journal articles/ reports according to Google Scholar, including two Mediterranean and Southern Hemisphere papers on community development.