MOBILE FAMILY LITERACY

Investigating family literacy programmes for mobile communities and their potential to meet the needs of mobile family settings.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document reports the outcomes of the Mobile Family Literacy Project (STEP 2015), which investigated the potential for literacy programmes to meet the needs of mobile communities[i] in Scotland. Adopting participatory methods, consultation and collaborative design with families and stakeholders, the project sought to identify structures and approaches for effective programme delivery.

Children from mobile communities are known to achieve some of the lowest levels of attainment in literacy. The low attainment can be attributed to a range of factors such as financial deprivation, low levels of parental literacy, interrupted education, and, sometimes, low family aspirations for academic attainment. Where parents do take a positive interest in their children's educational achievement, they can often feel unable to provide academic support due to unfamiliarity with formal education, or a lack of ability and confidence in their own literacy.

Studies have demonstrated that shared family literacy activity can impact positively on literacy levels for both parents and children. It can also have far-reaching effects, including increased engagement with schools and other services such as health and housing.

Working in collaboration with two different mobile communities across Scotland, Gypsy/Travellers and European Roma, over an eight-month period, pilot programmes were designed and implemented by parents and practitioners around family literacy.

Research Outcome 1: Community voice – listening to identify mobile cultures' needs

Working directly with families, STEP was able to increase knowledge and understanding about the barriers to engagement and participation experienced by specific mobile communities. Families identified the following eight factors contributing to poor and non-engagement in education programmes and services: language barriers, low literacy, mobility, practical issues, negative attitudes toward education, fear of the unfamiliar, cultural difference, limited knowledge of services and learning opportunities.

Motivation for participating in programmes and services varied between communities. However, the following three motivational factors appeared to resonate with many participants: parents' desire to develop their own education and language, to be more involved in school culture, and to increase knowledge of how children benefit from learning.

Research outcome 2: 'A Framework for Effective Programme Delivery'

By working with a range of different participants, it became clear that there were four necessary and interconnected stages to engaging mobile families in learning programmes. These were identified as: Engage, Consult, Co-produce and Sustain. Guided by these stages, a Framework for Effective Programme Delivery (see appendix 2) was developed in partnership with parents to be used as a template for designing and implementing future literacy programmes for mobile communities. The framework has been implemented effectively with a range of new communities beyond the initial pilot.

Research Outcome 3: Strengthening partnerships

The programmes acted as a catalyst for positive relationship building between practitioners and parents, and between families and wider community in the following ways:

- parents gained practical experience of being involved in education.

- parents felt they had a voice to express ambitions and concerns about their children's education as well as their own literacy development.

- positive relationship building between parents resulted in improved community cohesion. Many parents now act as mentors for other parents through their involvement in supervising trips, organising events and supporting the school by providing information at important events such as parents' evenings.

- improved communication methods between parents and schools taking into account literacy and language barriers – the parents have developed multilingual information leaflets and are currently working on a school information app in partnership with designers for mobile platforms.

- Parents have an understanding of the valuable roles they can play such as identifying what their families' educational needs are and acting on it. Currently, they are co-producing resources and activities to support their children's learning at home and while travelling.

- Partnerships have been formed to exploit all available resources in local communities including adult literacy programmes, library resources, local charities and staff from statutory and non-statutory education providers.

Recommendations for effective programme delivery

Based on the lessons learned from the project, recommendations for the effective delivery of learning programmes with mobile communities are as follows:

- The success of services rests on programmes being driven by communities.

- Dialogue with partners needs to be genuine and sustained to encourage long term 'buy in'.

- Effective delivery requires inclusive and innovative consultation methods.

- Community participation requires shared understanding of the benefits.

- There is a need for a detailed research study to understand the 'imagined educational futures' of travelling communities.

THIS [LITERACY PROGRAMME] MAKES ME WONDER WHETHER
WE SHOULD BE SENDING THE KIDS TO SCHOOL….

KATHY, PARENT PARTICIPANT, STEP 2015

INTRODUCTION

Many families from mobile communities have poor literacy (Franks and Ureche 2007; Jordan and Padfield 2003; Lloyd and Stead 2002) and children and young people from these communities are known to have some of the lowest levels of literacy and educational attainment (Bhopal, 2004; Cambridgeshire County Council, 2011; Cemlyn et al 2009; National Literacy Trust 2011; Wilkin et al. 2010). Many mobile communities may also have English as an additional language, which can impede effective communication with services.

In the most recent Scottish census analysis, approximately 8% of Gypsy/Travellers do not read or write, have poor English proficiency, and approximately 1% were described as having no English skills (Scottish Government 2014). English based mobile communities estimated that between 70 and 80% of adults within their group could not read or write (McCaffery, 2009) and records show that literacy in this population is well below any other minority group in the UK (Parry et al. 2004).

Low levels of literacy and language can have significant impact on daily life. For instance, without adequate literacy and language support, families may be unable to access or understand information required in everyday situations and may find written texts significantly challenging (McCaffery 2009). Lack of literacy can therefore create barriers to accessing various services and results in tentative engagement with health care, education settings and the wider community (Condon 2014; Levinson 2007; Sime et al 2014).

Many families do express strong support for literacy development and want their children to acquire the basic literacy skills afforded by primary education (Bhopal 2004; Jordan 2000; Lloyd & Stead 2001; Myers et al. 2010). Some parents and young people from mobile communities acknowledge the changing economy and so young people may follow career paths into the professions (McCaffery 2009), increasing the need to gain a good education and acquire proficient literacy skills.

Despite these changing attitudes and practices, where mobile parents recognise the importance of literacy development and do take a positive interest in their children's educational achievement, they can often feel unable to provide academic support or Home Education due to lack of ability and confidence in their own literacy. This leads to discontinuities in children's education and greater gaps in learning during periods of mobility.

Shared family literacy activity has been shown to mitigate some of these issues and can impact positively on literacy levels for both parents and children (e.g. Boyce et al. 2010; Carpentieri et al. 2011; Hannon et al. 2006; Hirst e al. 2010; Rose 2013). Family literacy activities can have far-reaching effects, including increased engagement with schools and other services such as health and housing. Evidence also suggests that children and young people from mobile communities who have parental support, are more likely to remain in school and make progress and achieve higher levels of attainment (Wilkin et al. 2010).

Given the private nature of many mobile communities' lives, it can be difficult to gain understanding of how families might engage with programmes to support literacy.

These issues reinforce the need for interventions and initiatives which can help mobile families attain tools for learning and enable them to develop literacy and support their children's learning.

THE RESEARCH

This research sought to understand how family literacy initiatives might benefit mobile families in Scotland by (i) identifying factors which influence participation with educational programmes, and (ii) co-producing pilot literacy programmes with mobile families. The objective of these two areas of inquiry was to identify effective processes for participation and learning which would then inform a framework for programme delivery and serve as a template for future initiatives. For this reason, extensive consultation was carried out with two different mobile communities, Gypsy/Travellers and European Roma, and other stakeholders - and the structure and content of each pilot literacy programme was designed

in collaboration with mobile families from that particular setting. Discussion with families was encouraged through a range of informal methods, such as over coffee and cake decorating, the resulting ideas were used to guide and structure the design of pilot programmes and activities including the creation of iPad e-stories, arts and crafts, and shared reading and rhyming sessions.

METHODOLOGY

This research adopted a qualitative methodology which draws on the perspective of insiders from the mobile communities. By giving voice to the participants (Lapan et al. 2012), the researcher can be flexible and adapt to participants' specific interests, needs and levels of engagement (Rogers and Evans 2008). The research design reflected anticipated low written literacy and communication levels and placed emphasis on oral and visual forms of participation and expression.

Implementation of the pilot programmes sought the input of a wide community of stakeholders including parents, practitioners and local services. Programmes aimed to be relevant and meaningful to the specific communities and responded to different family needs and preferences. For this reason, the structure and content of each pilot programme was designed in collaboration with the participants of that particular community. Adopting a flexible and family-led approach meant that, for instance, parents could suggest ways in which activities could be culturally and contextually relevant and this, in turn, maximised engagement and attendance[ii].

Group discussions were based around the key themes of the project such as motivation to learn, educational experiences, delivery mechanisms, and the relevance of content. Throughout, it was felt important to ensure that programmes produced transferable resources, skills and family activities so that learning and development could extend to the home and beyond programme duration.

Collaborative planning sessions included families, practitioners and agencies and included: Head Teachers (HT), English as Additional Language teachers (EAL), Additional Support Needs staff (ASN), class teachers from target schools, Speech and Language Therapists, Adult Literacy Services, and the Head of EAL and Educational Support services for the local authority. The sessions provided insight into existing local knowledge about families and cultures, including:

- Practical factors to address in order for parents to attend and access a programme

- Approaches for engaging families and ensuring democratic involvement

- Previous barriers experienced by families with regard to engagement in programmes

- Parent motivations to extend and develop their literacy.

At the earliest stage, it was decided that practitioners such as the English as Additional Language (EAL) teachers or Traveller Education staff from the local school or local authority would lead the sessions as they were already familiar to the families. Interpreters attended sessions in site 1 to facilitate discussion where English was not the families' first language.

Data collection methods included a range of digital and creative visual methods. Discussion and responses were fostered through a range of modes such as informal consultation and focus groups, which were then used to guide and structure the design of pilot activities.

Researchers and project leaders at each site collected a wide range of data through field notes, research journals, digital photographs and video. These methods recorded aspects of programme implementation, activities and consultation with families and practitioners.

The researcher kept a research journal throughout the entire project providing verbatim quotes from parents, progress, challenges and a systematic account of the research process.

Responses and discussion from focus groups and meetings with families and practitioners were transcribed. Digital photographs were taken of various activities and research contexts. Participants were involved in data collection - many took photographs of activities and creative outputs.

Findings were used to guide collaborative design of pilot programmes catering to specific family needs.

THE PILOT PROGRAMMES

The pilot programmes involved Gypsy/Travellers and European Roma communities and ran in three different locations across Scotland: Glasgow (Roma group), and Fife and Highlands (Gypsy/Travellers groups). The sample was recruited using relationships STEP had built through the Traveller Education Network (TENET) with local schools and Traveller sites in Scotland. These contacts were used to reach families from mobile communities who wished to take part in the research.

SETTING 1 – CUTHBERTSON PRIMARY SCHOOL, GOVANHILL, GLASGOW

This family literacy pilot programme was based at Cuthbertson Primary school in Govanhill, Glasgow. Over 10 different languages are spoken by enrolled families in the school. Many children arrive at the school with no English.

All children from participating families were attending the primary school, with some children attending the nursery, and others soon to be transitioning to the local Secondary school, Shawlands Academy.

The school sent personal invitations to known mobile families, in this instance, European Roma, in their native language, informing them of the programme providing 'activities to support children's learning at home', and to attend an introductory information session. The introductory session was attended by Slovakian women who all suggested that the first sessions were to be mothers only – with children and extended family members attending later sessions. Participants had very basic English. Their experiences of education varied -

many had only attended primary school - one possessed higher qualifications from secondary school.

The mothers designed and chose the content of the sessions beginning with practical activities such as baking and cooking while thinking about strategies to develop language (activity sequences, stories, recipes, research). Activities were extended to create more literacy focused sessions such as English language lessons. Each session included a range of resources (iPads, integrating their own phones in activities, laptops, bilingual textbooks, smart boards) and refreshments, with collaborative and family-led planning at the centre of the approach.

Programme facilitators included an EAL teacher and a Slovakian translator. The pilot programme ran for 16 sessions (14 x 1.5 hours, 2 x full day sessions) then developed into a permanent family learning programme hosted by the school and EAL teacher. The structure of sessions was a flexible drop-in format allowing mothers to arrive when they were free and leave if they had appointments. A pool of seven mothers came regularly. The highest turnout was 19 participants.

SETTING 2 – TARVIT MILL TRAVELLER PERSONS' SITE, FIFE

Tarvit Mill Travelling Persons' site is a local authority site with pitches for 20 Gypsy/Traveller families. Educational provision within an on-site portacabin exists for teenagers, homework sessions, short-term preparation and assessment for school and nursery experiences. Families who choose to enrol their children in school have a choice of three small rural schools or the larger establishment in the nearest town. However, there are families on site who have not enrolled in formal education for a variety of reasons. Most families have low literacy levels and tentative engagement with education settings. All the families value education for their children – but not necessarily within mainstream settings. Although all

families had access to digital technology and the internet via their phones – none used this technology to support learning.

The pilot programme was facilitated by a Traveller teacher familiar to the families. Families were approached on site by the Traveller teacher and asked verbally if they would like to take part. Programme activities were held in morning and afternoon sessions within the on-site portacabin.

Programme activities were initially based on pre-planned art and craft activities, then were extended to language activities informed by discussions with the participants about what stories could be told with pieces of work and characters they had created. iPads were explored as a new means for mobile families to develop reading, writing and shared learning opportunities. iPads were also available to photograph people and journeys around the site. Various writing apps were explained to the learners who then explored their possibilities of showing sequences of pictures to tell a story. The simple sequences developed into audio stories and finally, with teaching support, by adding text to make books which could be shared with others.

SETTING 3 – LONGMAN TRAVELLER SITE 'NURSERY' AND MERKINCH PRIMARY SCHOOL

This pilot programme was a based on an established partnership between Longman Traveller Site and Merkinch Primary School. Teachers from Merkinch led the programme sessions which aimed to cater to the needs of the Gypsy/Traveller parents and encourage involvement to supporting nursery and primary aged children from this particular Traveller Site. Many parents had low literacy levels and were not confident in their ability to support their children's learning or language development. Parents were verbally asked if they would like to be involved.

The pilot programme was structured as a 5-week block of 30 min sessions.

The sessions took the main points from the Shared Reading information folder. Each week, one adult would work with parents, and the other person would work with the children. Shared literacy activities included using environmental print, reading with your child, and rhyme.

Bookstart Bookbug materials were used to support the activities. The children were able to use the books and rhymes, bring them back each week, and then take them home again at the end of group sessions.

ETHICS

The research proposal was approved by the University of Edinburgh Ethics Committee and Scottish Government Ethics Committee. The research has been undertaken in accordance with the British Educational Research Association's (BERA) Revised ethical guidelines for educational research (2011).

Significant attention was paid to ensure that approaches were inclusive and participative, and that data was gathered and managed in a sensitive and ethical manner. The research design reflected anticipated low written literacy such as emphasis on oral and visual forms of participation and expression. Support for participants with English as an additional language was provided in the form of interpreters from the city council's EAL service who facilitated any communication and group activities with Roma communities, and an EAL teacher familiar to Roma families with awareness of their language levels and appropriate support strategies.

Consent was sought from relevant local authorities, schools and families. The participation of families was voluntary. Families were made aware that they could choose their level of participation in the activities and that they could opt out at any point. Researchers were sensitive to any verbal or behavioural signs of dissent throughout. Researchers had extensive experience conducting research with families, educators, and participants with English as an additional language.

Pseudonyms are used throughout this report.

RESEARCH OUTCOMES

Working directly with families, STEP was able to increase knowledge and understanding of the barriers to engagement and participation faced by different mobile communities, and factors which motivate mobile families to seek opportunities for learning and development.

BARRIERS TO ENGAGEMENT WITH EXISTING PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES

Language

Parents, for whom English was not their native language, faced frequent obstacles to engaging or accessing services due to language barriers and inability to communicate their concerns.

> 'THE MOST BENEFICIAL THING WOULD BE LEARNING ENGLISH. LEARNING THE LANGUAGE WOULD REALLY CHANGE OUR LIVES. IT'S SO MUCH EASIER FOR OUR HUSBANDS. THEY'RE AT WORK AND ARE IMMERSED IN ENGLISH... SO LEARN QUICKLY. WHEN WE'RE AT HOME ALL DAY... IT'S DIFFICULT TO PICK IT UP.'
>
> SERENA, PARENT PARTICIPANT (TRANSLATED) STEP 2015

Women, in particular, are highly vulnerable to exclusion due to their low education and English language levels. Where, children and husbands have reasonable exposure to the wider community, women described their opportunities as limited through maternal responsibilities and low literacy – resulting in social isolation. Women also felt apprehensive about seeking language learning courses because of their low language levels which made researching and approaching services intimidating without the presence of a translator.

Their confidence was low due to language proficiency and therefore did not approach school staff with concerns, and did not participate in school life including school trips, events and parents evenings.

> 'WITH THE MOTHERS, ESPECIALLY AT THE BEGINNING, YOU COULDN'T JUST SAY: "DO YOU WANT ENGLISH LESSONS?" THERE'S FEAR ABOUT WHAT THEY WOULD HAVE TO DO AND IF THEY COULD MANAGE. THEY'D BE WORRIED ABOUT IT BEING TOO DIFFICULT OR THAT THEY HAD POOR GRAMMAR.'
>
> EAL TEACHER, STEP 2015

Literacy

Many parents were concerned about their reading and writing ability even when sessions were designed to address literacy issues. They felt embarrassment in front of other parents, teachers and particularly their children – if they were involved. Poor literacy also prevented them finding out about other literacy support services in the area meaning that many of the women relied on 'word of mouth' communication. Some also felt apprehensive about taking first steps to join groups as they were worried about registration processes due to limited literacy.

Mobility

Due to long periods of travelling and unpredictable patterns of mobility, mobile families faced challenges to accessing programmes and services. These issues also made it difficult to ensure sustained engagement and attendance

Practical factors

Time and location affected access because of transport issues, family commitments, responsibilities for dependents, and locating unfamiliar contexts in or outwith the immediate community.

Culture

Cultural factors can affect engagement as families may value traditional gender roles where responsibilities make it difficult to participate in activities outwith the family. Poor and non-engagement can also be attributed to the lack of cultural relevance of programme structure and content.

Unfamiliarity with services

Trepidation in/with the unfamiliar meant that parents were apprehensive about attempting or attending new things.

Negative experiences and views of formal education

Negative attitudes may mean that there is no incentive or desire for parents to be part of school initiatives nor make education a priority over employment. Local services noted that, despite their best efforts to show how, for example, improved literacy and numeracy can increase employability, many families could not see the link between education and job opportunities. Gypsy/Traveller families did not necessarily see the need for formal education in mobile family lives and job pathways.

Drawing on her extensive work with Roma communities, the Slovak translator from the Glasgow pilot programme shared some insight into families' experiences of the education system in their native countries- and the ways in which this has shaped their perceptions.

'THERE IS AN AVERSION TO THE EDUCATION SYSTEM. IT'S PERCEIVED AS DIFFICULT, AUTHORITATIVE, AND SOMETHING ASSOCIATED WITH NEGATIVITY. FOR THE ROMA COMMUNITY, SCHOOLING HAS ALWAYS BEEN A CHALLENGE. MANY PARENTS WILL NOT HAVE BEEN TO SCHOOL SO HAVE LIMITED LITERACY. HISTORICALLY, THEY HAVE EXPERIENCED PREJUDICE, EXCLUSIONS FROM SOCIETY - WHICH INCLUDES EDUCATION. THIS MEANS THAT THERE MAY BE A DEEP-SEATED FEAR OF EDUCATION AND LEARNING. SO THERE'S A CERTAIN ATTITUDE TOWARD SCHOOL AND LEARNING, THERE ARE PERCEIVED CHALLENGES BECAUSE OF THE NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES.'

IRINA, TRANSLATOR, STEP 2015

Awareness

Families may have little awareness of available services due to being new to the community, being apprehensive about participating in community activities, or lacking the resources, such as the internet and digital literacy, to investigate what is available in an effective way.

'FAMILIES MIGHT NOT BE USING SERVICES AND SUPPORT AVAILABLE IN THE COMMUNITY BECAUSE THEY MAY NOT KNOW ABOUT THEM. THEY MIGHT KNOW VERY LITTLE ABOUT THE COMMUNITY. THERE MAY BE SOME APPREHENSION ABOUT LEAVING THEIR HOME OR IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT. FOR SOME FAMILIES, IF THEY HAVE TO GO THREE BLOCKS DOWN THE ROAD- IT'S TOO MUCH…..EVEN IF SERVICES HAVE BILINGUAL WORKERS, THEY MIGHT NOT BE SLOVAK SPEAKING…AND SOME FAMILIES MAY ONLY SPEAK ROMA'.

IRINA, TRANSLATOR, STEP 2015

MOTIVATIONS FOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Parental involvement

Parents were keen to have more involvement with the school and wider community. They wanted the ability to improve access and communication with local services that can provide social, economic, medical or educational support.

Taking part in the programme was a way for parents to engage with the school in a positive and informal way. Many of the mothers now supervisor school trips and events and staff commented that they have seen improved engagement and communication between the parents and the school - all vital components for strengthening home-school partnerships to support children's learning.

Children's learning

Parents were keen to ensure and support their children's learning and overall wellbeing. Some mothers asked for support for their children's literacy individually, while other parents voiced their concerns about language support during parents' evenings. They wanted to help their children with homework and have resources such as worksheets or activities to support literacy and learning at home and while travelling. Parents also wanted the ability to address their concerns about immediate learning needs.

Slovakian families saw school attendance and learning as important and all wanted their children to continue on to attending the local Secondary school (some mothers already had older children in Secondary school). They wanted the best for their children, for them to learn, for them to gain qualifications and get good jobs.

"WE'RE GOING BACK TO SLOVAKIA TO SEE MY FAMILY. WE'RE ONLY GOING AWAY FOR THE SCHOOL SUMMER HOLIDAYS BUT I HAD TO REASSURE MY CHILDREN THAT AND WE'D <u>DEFINITELY</u> BE BACK IN TIME FOR SCHOOL! THEY LIVE FOR SCHOOL! LAST WEEK, I WENT TO SEE THE HIGH SCHOOL WHICH ELA (OLDEST DAUGHTER) WILL BE GOING TO AFTER SUMMER. I'VE NEVER SEEN SUCH A BIG SCHOOL! ELA'S VERY EXCITED. I'M EXCITED TOO. IT'S VERY IMPORTANT FOR MY CHILDREN TO CONTINUE IN EDUCATION. I LIKE BEING PROUD OF THEM."

ANNA, PARENT PARTICIPANT (TRANSLATED) STEP 2015

Parents' education and development

Attitudes toward formal education varied across different mobile communities. The education system was viewed negatively or with scepticism by families who have experienced a history of discrimination and social exclusion. For example, the Slovakian families were slowly realising that the Scottish education system was different from that which they had previously experienced. They described how they had to become accustomed to schools and teachers being inviting and wanting the best for their children.

The majority of parents had little to no experience of formal education. Some of the Slovakian mothers had experience of primary school and a couple had been to secondary schooling and gained Higher level qualifications. Nevertheless, all the Slovakian families saw education as important and that attending school and gaining qualifications was the key to future success and something to be viewed with pride.

Parents were motivated to learn when given the opportunity in informal contexts, and could appreciate the need for education in a changing world of work. Through the programmes, mothers learned new skills, joint family activities and produced resources such as a bilingual recipe book and vocabulary workbooks. They gained confidence in their own skills and ability to support their child's literacy.

I LOOK FORWARD TO COMING EVERY FRIDAY…IT'S SO FUN AND I FEEL COMMITTED…I FEEL HONOURED TO BE AMONGST ENGLISH SPEAKING LADIES. I FEEL I'M ALWAYS LEARNING '

MAGDA, PARENT PARTICIPANT (TRANSLATED) STEP 2015

The overarching finding revealed by community voices reinforced the prevailing 'pull' factors (unfamiliarity with formal education, inappropriate communication) and 'push' factors (the need for literacy to compete in the jobs market and to take advantage of public services),

which significantly affect mobile communities' participation in education - pointing to the need for targeted interventions through partnership working.

'THE MOTHERS ARE FREQUENTLY IN SITUATIONS WHERE THEY ARE EXPOSED TO NEW VOCABULARY AND PHRASES; SO IT'S ACTUALLY THE THEORY AND THE FORMAL TUTORING THEY DESIRE. THESE FAMILY LITERACY SESSIONS PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO REINFORCE THEIR LEARNING- CONFIRM THAT THEY HAVE THE CORRECT MEANING OF VOCABULARY THEY HEARD OR TO LEARN APPROPRIATE RESPONSES OR PHRASES FOR A CERTAIN SITUATION THEY FACE. THEY CAN WORK WITH BILINGUAL TEXTBOOKS AND DICTIONARIES SO THEY CAN LEARN CORRECT VOCABULARY AND LANGUAGE USE. THEY CAN WRITE THE WORDS AND PHRASES IN THEIR NOTEBOOKS WHICH PROVIDES A REFERENCE POINT IN THEIR EVERYDAY ROUTINES- A RESOURCE WHICH THEY CAN USE AND PRACTICE WITH AT HOME- ADD NEW WORDS AND PHRASES- THEN RETURN TO CLASS WITH ANY QUERIES'.

IRINA, TRANSLATOR, STEP 2015

A FRAMEWORK FOR EFFECTIVE PROGRAMME DELIVERY: LESSONS LEARNED FROM WORKING WITH MOBILE FAMILIES

By working with a range of different participants form mobile cultures, it became clear that there were four necessary and interconnected stages for the meaningful participation of mobile families in learning programmes. The stages were identified as:

1. Engage
2. Consult
3. Co-produce
4. Sustain

Guided by these stages, a Framework for Effective Programme Delivery (appendix 2) was developed in partnership with parents to be used as a template for designing and implementing future literacy programmes for mobile communities.

Each of the stages aim to maximise involvement by addressing the barriers mobile families faced which were identified in Outcome 1. The framework and examples of its application to the project can be found in appendix 2.

When implementing the framework, it is important to maintain the key components across sites while also demonstrating flexibility within each component in order to accommodate the specific needs and motivations of different educational settings and mobile communities.

ENGAGE

There is a variety of complex reasons for mobile families' poor or non-engagement with services- many clearly identified and described by families (outcome 1). It is therefore important to adopt an individualised approach to initial contact and mitigate against these.

'THE [FAMILY LITERACY PILOT] ACTIVITIES REALLY GET THE MOTHERS ENGAGED. IT'S ALL ABOUT ENGAGEMENT...GETTING THEM FAMILIAR WITH EVEN THE SCHOOL BUILDING… THE CONCEPT OF MOVING AROUND THE SCHOOL FREELY … GETTING TO KNOW THE STAFF - REALISING THAT IT'S NOT A SCARY PLACE WHICH IS ONLY ABOUT AUTHORITY AND RULES'.

MS HENDERSON, DEPUTY HEAD OF UPPER SCHOOL, STEP 2015

Holding an informal introductory event can be useful where families have the opportunity to find out more information in a relaxed environment and see videos or photos of previous programmes.

Practical barriers to accessing and engaging in programme should be addressed. This may include inviting families in person or identifying specific family requirements (e.g. crèche) to participate in programmes with families.

'THE FACT THAT'S IT'S IN THE SCHOOL, IT'S NEAR HOME AND OUR CHILDREN CAN COME HERE AND MEET US. THERE'S NO BETTER PLACE THAN THE SCHOOL.'

SERENA, PARENT PARTICIPANT (TRANSLATED) STEP 2015

With families, identify best or preferred forms of communication. Share information with families possibly isolated from the community. For instance, post multilingual flyers on school noticeboards and other locations in the wider community, visit families on-site or use mediators such as Education Services to engage populations. Address transport issues by providing information about possible forms of travel. Ensure a time and context which is suitable for target families (e.g. Are sessions held close to home or on a Traveller site?), being mindful of factors which may influence this (e.g. cultural practices, traditional family roles, attitudes toward places/spaces).

Find out what makes families feel comfortable. This may include creating a relaxed ethos with refreshments, bringing other family members, having no strict start or end times, or using familiar facilitators who may be members of the mobile community.

Engaging families in programmes requires being mindful of challenges specific mobile communities may face to participation and engagement such as English as an additional language and low literacy levels. Address these potential barriers by, for example, having translator present. The Slovakian mothers in the Glasgow programme felt that by having a translator, they could hold a conversation and express more complex ideas or concerns regarding their own literacy or their children's learning. Language and low literacy levels can also be addressed by providing information in pictorial forms, giving families the opportunity

to take information home and read in their own time, or for facilitators to read aloud or explain information.

Services and facilitators must also show understanding and awareness of culture. This is important for families so as to preserve and respect cultural values and principles as well as recognise and integrate traditions into programme content and delivery.

CONSULT

Collaborative multiagency approach

Multiagency partnerships can provide a rich pool of data on account of the relationships and experiences local services and professionals have with target families. The project demonstrated that collaborating and sharing knowledge with all stakeholders through meetings, events, and networks allows pre-emptive identification and mitigation of barriers to engagement, communication and ongoing participation. For example, STEP worked closely with Glasgow City Council EAL department and local services such as library and feeder schools. In Fife, strong partnerships were built with the site manager who had knowledge about mobile families' movements and had formed relationships- knowing family members on an individual basis.

Meaningful dialogue with families

It is important to find out what family motivations are and what prior experiences, knowledge and skills they possess so as to build and extend these.

These issues were identified and addressed through listening and pro-active approaches and by providing opportunities for parents to express interest and concerns about their children's education.

Respect and valuing opinions

Relationships should be nurtured and sustained so that partnerships are built on trust, respect and ongoing development of understanding about the other. For example, working *directly* with children from mobile families in one-to-one situations, provides opportunity for children's voices to be heard and allows children to start to develop a working relationship with another adult. This may be a new concept if learning occurs in the home with other family members only.

Working directly with mobile parents offers insight into their expectations, motivations and what would work for them, as well as building trusting relationships with facilitators.

Creative participation

Creative approaches and activities should be relevant to mobile communities' learning styles (e.g. focusing on the oral and visual). Creative approaches allow for more effective participation in consultation where there may be limited literacy or language barriers.

Practical creative activities can be an effective way to build rapport and share views through naturally arising conversation- eliminating the need for more formal methods such as interviews.

CO-PRODUCE

Participant-led design

Programme structure and content should be sought from parents via consultation sessions. A flexible and participant-led approach ensures meaningful involvement and needs-based design - which in turn will ensure sustained engagement and attendance. Address barriers to

meaningful participation faced by mobile families (language, unknown facilitators, trust, formalities, location) and establish shared and varied roles i.e. activity leaders, learners, contributors.

Working with parents/carers and children

It was important to work with parents and children individually as well as engaging in joint family activities to provide a range of opportunities for literacy development. Parents had opportunities to learn skills in order to help their children with learning and literacy such as English lessons to improve their own literacy and ability to support their children and new activities to extend to the home context).

Working with the children allowed children to start to develop a working relationship with another adult. Working with parents allowed practitioners to gain insight into the early literacy they were already doing with their children so time could be spent on how to extend and support this. This time also provided opportunities to meet parents before families started school or build stronger relationships with parents whose children were already attending the school.

Responsive programmes

Formative feedback, evaluation and monitoring are required so that programme delivery remains relevant and effective based on participants' experiences and personal accounts of what works.

Content

The aim of this project was to provide practitioners and families the space to co-produce the literacy programme as members of inclusive partnerships. We therefore worked with staff and parents to plan and engage in a range of activities using different literacy materials and

provide a range of opportunities for literacy development. The list of activities collaboratively developed with mobile families and implemented across pilot programmes can be found in appendix 1.

Ensure cultural and personal relevance of content by having families suggest or design activities which they engage in and extend - or new ones they would like to try. With families, source or produce culturally appropriate resources.

Familiar and informal methods

Mobile families enjoyed the fun and familiar aspect of activities and working together to enhance learning. For instance, the family focussed art and craft or cookery sessions removed any need for the mothers to identify their personal levels of literacy. Engaging in familiar activities first, provided a relaxed approach to interacting and becoming comfortable in the surroundings. The mothers slowly became more confident in their own abilities which could then be extended with the introduction of more literacy focused activities. Parents also became more motivated to try new things, visit unfamiliar places, and voice their preferences for the design of future sessions and activities.

Cultural relevance of material

It is important for content to acknowledge cultural preferences and traditions such as using culturally relevant resources, and using practical and oral based activities which can then be developed into more text-based tasks. For instance, parents were very responsive to the resources in the English language sessions where bilingual dictionaries and workbooks with pictorial representations were used - while cooking sessions drew on cultural traditions and existing skills.

At the Traveller site in Fife, family sessions focussed on audio-visual e-stories. Within an oral culture the telling of stories was well rehearsed and so the recording of audio offered by iPad story apps was very effective.

Personal relevance of material

Content must be relevant to mobile family needs and be applied to their everyday contexts. For instance, the Slovakian mothers who requested more structured English lessons appreciated the fact that facilitators asked them what vocabulary and phrases would benefit them (e.g. topics around school, shopping, going to the Doctor's or the bank). Parent's designing the content of these lessons meant that it was most relevant and useful to their everyday routines.

"I HEAR LOTS OF ENGLISH WHEN I AM OUT DOING THINGS IN TOWN BUT I DON'T KNOW IF IT IS PROPER ENGLISH OR MAYBE COLLOQUIAL EXPRESSIONS. SO I DON'T WANT TO REPEAT IT. I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW THE RIGHT WORDS AND PHRASES WHICH I CAN USE ANYWHERE- AT THE BANK OR WHEN I AM SPEAKING WITH TEACHER"

TINA, PARENT PARTICIPANT (TRANSLATED) STEP 2015

SUSTAIN

Transferable skills

Ensure that the skills acquired can extend to the home and beyond programme duration. Families should gain ideas for joint activities (e.g. appendix 1) to develop literacy, and should be confident with implementing literacy activities at home independently.

Parents as partners: Ownership, awareness and empowerment

It was important that the resources were made by families for families in order to ensure cultural relevance and usefulness. Providing or co-producing resources that can be taken

home means that mobile families can continue with literacy development in periods of mobility and where there is only sporadic engagement with schools, other services, facilities or the internet.

Ensure families are aware of services in the community that can further support with literacy - and are informed of the opportunities available to them to develop learning. Programmes should build participants' confidence in pursuing and engaging in other opportunities for literacy development such as taking their children to libraries, galleries, or attending adult learning classes.

It is important for participants to have ownership of their own learning and feel empowered. For example, mobile families decided what types of activities and resources would best support their literacy development. The literacy-based resources made by families involved the design and production of four culturally relevant resources for developing family literacy: Travel e-journal; Multilingual recipe book; English vocabulary workbooks; and 'How to' guides for parents and children to engage in family literacy activities.

Sustained engagement

It is important to ensure benefits for participants are transparent to sustain engagement in programmes. This can be achieved by providing and creating tangible outputs directly benefiting family members, discussing expectations and how to meet these, and ensuring content and structure remain relevant.

For Gypsy/Traveller families, the role of mediator is important when levels of confidence to deal with important issues, written information or participation in school are low. A familiar individual who is sensitive to the culture and traditions of mobile communities is a vital link for accessing and communicating with these families. For example, the Traveller Education teacher in the Fife programme worked closely with the Site Manager to support trust and relationship building with families on the Traveller Site. This kind of partnership is particularly important when working with communities with unpredictable patterns of mobility.

Sustain communication especially over any breaks in programme, when families miss sessions, or when families are travelling. For example, it was important for the school in the Glasgow programme to reach out to families after school holidays to make sure parents knew that the group was continuing as before, in the same place and same time. This also meant that new families to the community would find out about the existing group and wish to participate.

'WE HAD A FAMILY CLUB A FEW YEARS AGO WHERE WE DID SIMILAR THINGS TO THESE SESSIONS; BUT IT NEVER TOOK OFF. THE DIFFERENCE THIS TIME IS THAT ALL THE ACTIVITIES, AND AT WHAT POINT WE DO THEM, HOW WE STRUCTURE THEM, IS THAT THE MOTHERS CAME UP WITH IT THEMSELVES - THEY MADE THE DECISIONS ABOUT WHAT WE DO. THE WHOLE POINT OF THESE SESSIONS IS THAT IT'S FOR THEM.'

EAL TEACHER, STEP 2015

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

The programme has acted as a catalyst for positive relationship building between practitioners and parents, and between families and wider community.

Many of the Slovak mothers from the Glasgow programme are now involved in the life of the school - for example they will visit classrooms, attend parents' evenings, and supervise school trips and events. Staff have commented that they have seen improved engagement and communication between the parents and the school - all vital components for strengthening home-school partnerships to support children's learning.

Where Gypsy/Traveller parents had previously been unsure of their children attending school and their ability to support this, having built positive relationships with practitioners through the programmes, and grown familiar with school settings, several children are now attending the local primary and secondary schools.

Although families were initially reluctant to engage with other services (nursery, library, language courses), as the programmes developed, and they became more familiar with staff, they felt confident to pursue other routes.

'I SEE A CHANGE IN THE PARENTS AND THE SCHOOL. THE MUMS ARE MORE INVOLVED AND MORE CONFIDENT. THEY'RE GETTING INVOLVED IN SCHOOL TRIPS AND EVENTS. THERE'S A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT ETHOS IN SCHOOL. IT'S VERY POSITIVE'.

MS WILSON, HEAD TEACHER, STEP 2015

'I'M LUCKY BECAUSE MY HUSBAND IS VERY SUPPORTIVE OF THE SCHOOL. HE'S KEEN FOR ME TO COME TO THINGS THAT ARE HOSTED BY THE SCHOOL...TO BE A PART OF IT.

I KNOW IT MEANS A LOT TO MY CHILDREN.

MAGDA, PARENT PARTICIPANT (TRANSLATED), STEP 2015

CONCLUSIONS

The development and piloting of family literacy programmes has had immediate and long-term benefits for all those involved.

The overarching findings revealed by community voices reinforced the prevailing 'pull' factors (unfamiliarity with formal education, inappropriate communication) and 'push' factors (the need for literacy to compete in the jobs market and to take advantage of public services),

STEP 2015

which significantly affect mobile communities' participation in education - pointing to the need for targeted interventions through partnership working.

Mobile families were willing to engage with family education programmes, particularly when initial barriers were shared and accepted.

Parents took great pride in being able to get involved in their children's education and express their interest and concerns. Often they needed initial support to do this.

Mobile parents were particularly keen to learn strategies to allow them to support their children's learning at home. Digital media was embraced as useful for intergenerational learning.

Parents gained confidence in their own skills and ability to support their children's literacy.

Partnerships were formed where new and positive relationships developed between school staff and mobile parents as a consequence of the programme. It improved parents' communication with schools and wider community, and supported trust building between parents and teachers.

Informal engagement allowed parents to express their interest and concerns about their children's education and their own literacy development

Families identified and co-produced resources for programme delivery and to support literacy activities in the home context.

The programme provides a template for future programmes with families in the form or a 'Framework for Effective Programme Delivery (appendix 2)'.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the lessons learned from the Mobile Family Literacy Project, recommendations for the effective delivery of learning programmes with mobile communities centre around the core concept that the success of services rests on programmes being driven by communities.

EFFECTIVE DELIVERY REQUIRES INCLUSIVE CONSULTATION METHODS

– In each location the pivotal success factor was a targeted approach as universal services often failed to make connections

– When there is involvement from multiple partners there is a need for shared identification of needs, which can be voiced through a common language. Families have a sophisticated understanding of their own needs.

– Intergenerational consultation is more successful when creative and multimodal methods are used, particularly where literacy and language levels are low

– Dialogue with partners needs to be maintained to encourage long term 'buy in'

– The proposed approach, and the research knowledge which underpins it, should be shared with all partners to encourage democratic practices

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION REQUIRES EFFECTIVE COLLABORATIVE PRACTICES

– Planning and design of projects should be an inclusive, collaborative process drawing on the knowledge of all partners and based on the cultural interests and needs of the family participants

– Creative activities are most effective for initial engagement and have the greatest potential in leading to increased engagement with literacy.

- A forum enabling partners to share values and personal aspirations for the project improves outcomes.

- Flexibility in project design allowing the approach to be responsive and evolve

THE NEED FOR MUTUALLY-AGREED INTERVENTIONS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- Families need to feel that they have agency
- New skills and approaches introduced through familiar, cultural activities support literacy development
- Interventions are most effective when they surprise and disrupt existing practices and ask questions within a safe environment
- Interventions are sustainable when they are absorbed into universal services through ongoing planning processes

THE NEED FOR RESEARCH TO UNDERSTAND THE 'IMAGINED EDUCATIONAL FUTURES' OF MOBILE COMMUNITIES

- There is a need for a detailed research study to understand the 'imagined educational futures' of travelling communities
- Mobile communities have limited opportunities to express their expectations and needs regarding learning and education pathways
- Initiatives need to explore the ways in education pathways can be made relevant to mobile family lives and job destinations.

NEXT STEPS FOR STEP'S PILOT PROGRAMMES

Programme facilitators have been in meetings with local schools, service providers, practitioners and school leaders to increase awareness across local authorities of the potential positive impact of family literacy initiatives for mobile families.

Participants from the pilot programmes expressed their desire to be involved in the dissemination of pilot outcomes and organise events to increase future engagement in family literacy programmes. This will take the form of leading activities at public engagement events and training events hosted and led by STEP.

A national seminar will be held in March 2016 at the Edinburgh University to disseminate the positive outcomes of the Mobile Family Literacy Project. This will be an opportunity for all those working with mobile communities across a variety of Scottish local authorities to hear about the how similar programmes can be implemented in their areas and for their specific groups of mobile communities.

A family engagement event will be held for parents, practitioners and children from all local schools in Spring 2016. The purpose of this event will be threefold:

1. Led by mothers from the family literacy programme (Glasgow group), this will be a forum for families to find out about the programme, hear first-hand accounts from fellow parents about their positive experiences and benefits of the family literacy sessions, and how they can be involved

2. To disseminate the literacy resources produced by families during the programme (e.g. Bilingual recipe book) and try out the activities which will be set up at different stations during the family event

3. To encourage wider participation from families in the target school as well as other schools in the area with pupils from mobile communities.

TRAVELLER SITE, FIFE

The Head Teacher from the local primary school was welcomed to the site and activities and stories from the pilot literacy programme were shared with him. He extended an invitation to share the work with the nursery class in school.

A joint bid was made to Education Scotland – Access to Education fund to provide a library of educational table top games which could be used in class and on the Traveller site – and more importantly could be borrowed by young people and families - eliminating the issue of storage and the cost involved in trying out a wide selection of games for families based on Traveller sites with limited space. The bid was successful and PEGS (Playing Educational Games @ Springfield) was launched on Friday 13th March 2015. Invitations to regular games events run by parents are extended to families on the site whether they are enrolled in school or not. The local school's lending library of educational table-top games now supports mobile families' opportunities to extend learning and literacy development to the home.

PRIMARY SCHOOL, GLASGOW

Due to the success of the family literacy pilot programme in Glasgow, the programme has now developed into a permanent family group run by the school and EAL teacher, now named by parents as the 'Craft Club'. The Head Teacher, staff and mothers expressed their need and desire for the group to continue on account of its many positive benefits to the families, school and wider community.

The positive relationships built between the school and families through the programme have improved communication and home-school links, empowered parents to voice interest and concerns, and encouraged active involvement in the school and their children's learning.

'[FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMMES] HAVE HELPED MOVE TOWARD BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS - FORMING MORE INFORMAL AND TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP WITH MOTHERS…THE FACT THAT THE MOTHERS ARE BECOMING MORE COMFORTABLE, MEETING REGULARLY HERE IN THE SCHOOL, BEING MORE INVOLVED, CHATTING AND ENGAGING IN ACTIVITIES THAT ARE INFORMAL AND UNRELATED TO SCHOOL.

THIS RELAXED CONTEXT ENCOURAGES PARENTS TO FEEL FREE TO ASK QUESTIONS WHICH THEY MAY NOT FEEL COMFORTABLE OR CONFIDENT IN ASKING OR EVEN APPROACHING THE TEACHER ABOUT.

I HOPE THE SESSIONS WILL ENCOURAGE PARENTS TO SEEK ADVICE AND SUPPORT FOR THEIR CHILDREN… THE SCHOOL HAS RESOURCES AND WE CAN OFFER SUPPORT IF THEY NEED IT'.

EAL TEACHER, STEP 2015

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APPENDIX 1: CREATIVE ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT LITERACY

Mobile communities identified what is needed to support literacy activities in the home context and while travelling. Families co-produced and managed activities during the pilot programmes, and transferred these to the home context and shared them with other family members. The following is a list of activities co-produced with families and implemented across settings throughout the pilot programmes.

SHARING BOOKS

Facilitators demonstrated how to share books with children (e.g. tracking the words with your finger, showing where to start reading) and how these were valuable opportunities for vocabulary building. The 'hieroglyphics slide' was deemed insightful as it showed mothers how children see text before they can read. Mothers found the session very useful and commented how they started to use these techniques and resources with their children when reading or doing homework.

IPAD E-STORIES

iPads were used to create e-stories featuring a character made by families. The characters were taken on journeys, which were captured using photographic and audio commentary apps on the iPads. The iPad technology used in the storytelling sessions worked well and was enjoyed by all age groups.

STORY SACKS FOR MULTIMODAL LITERACY SUPPORT

The EAL facilitator demonstrated how parents could support their children's literacy development by using 'Story sacks': sacks filled with a variety of resources such as storybooks, puppets, games, and DVDs with stories and activities. Using the contents, parents and children could engage in joint reading activities then extend their learning and

literacy through other modes. This also helped parents take positive steps toward ensuring learning continuity between the school and home contexts.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT

Facilitators shared the importance of environmental print and how to exploit this when out in the car, cooking or using a book. The mothers realised that they were actually doing some of this already and probably had not given it enough credit. They were encouraged that speaking with, and using the world around them is beneficial to literacy development and learning to read.

VOCABULARY BUILDING THROUGH FIELD TRIPS

Field trips were an opportunity for mothers to apply new words and phrases learned in previous sessions to real contexts with their children. This not only reinforced learning but extended literacy. Family trips were opportunities for joint literacy activities where parents learned from children and children were supported by parents and siblings, and with the presence of facilitators, the use of environmental print could be scaffolded. The mothers were also involved in the planning of the field trips. They used written print such as flyers and online information to research times, places and routes – providing opportunities for vocabulary building and learning new literacy skills. By supporting families engage in things in the community, parents can feel more confident and capable in organising family outings to increase literacy development and engagement with local services.

ARTS & CRAFTS

Art and craft activities were used to improving literacy within and through the family. Seasonal workshops included designing and creating Christmas decorations, making puppets, constructing salt-dough people, and jewellery making. Participants discussed ways in which stories could be told with pieces of work and characters they had created. Families enjoyed

the fun aspect of the activities, working together to enhance learning, and removed any need for the mothers to identify their personal levels of literacy. These activities were easily extended into home settings.

BAKING, CAKE DECORATING & COOKING TRADITIONAL DISHES

A variety of sessions were set around familiar practical activities chosen by the mothers and included baking, cooking and cake decorating. These sessions offered an energetic and creative forum for shared dialogue, use environmental print, extend vocabulary, and share cultural traditions. Parents were able to take away ideas and implement joint literacy activities with children in the home context. The co-production of a bilingual cookbook meant that the families had a culturally relevant resource to use at home with children.

RHYME

The session on rhyme worked with families to highlight the importance of hearing and saying rhyming sounds and words. Discussing nonsense rhymes was encouraged and the ways in which this was useful as it means that the skills are being continually developed and practiced in informal ways. The link between reading and spelling was explained and mothers were able to contextualise this during the sessions by referring to children's homework.

Designing learning programmes in partnership with mobile families STEP 2015

1 Engage

- ✓ Reach out - draw on other community initiatives for initial contact.
- ✓ Visit sites and use Traveller educators (TENET) to broker relations.
- ✓ Do research and show awareness of Travellers' cultural values and traditions.
- ✓ Address practical barriers to engagement such as transport, childcare or translators.
- ✓ Build trust – be transparent with information, demonstrate democratic relationships and discuss long

2 Consult

- ✓ Provide opportunities for families to share motivations, prior experiences, knowledge and skills, and discuss how to build on them.
- ✓ If trust has been established, draw on the expertise of other professionals, such as health, early years or local businesses.
- ✓ Use accessible and creative forms of communication e.g. oral and visual methods can build rapport.
- ✓ Demonstrate that all views are taken on board.

3 Co-produce

- ✓ Use participant-led approaches - invite people to take different roles.
- ✓ Adopt needs-based design - families should decide what is relevant and how it should be delivered.
- ✓ Consider cultural and personal input that is engaging, useful and transferable.
- ✓ Work with familiar facilitators, particularly those known to communities.
- ✓ Adopt a responsive programme structure - welcome new families, and adapt content as confidence and skills develop.

4 Sustain

- ✓ Empower participants - embed leadership roles at early stages.
- ✓ Focus on transferable skills that will be useful in the home learning environment.
- ✓ Produce tangible resources that can be shared and are useful when travelling.
- ✓ Ensure transparency so that families can see the benefit of participation for themselves and other family members.
- ✓ Broker relationships and form networks with wider community to sustain projects and offer new learning

How the framework was applied in practice STEP 2015

1 Engage

One school created personalised invitations to a family session. The invitations were translated into families' native languages. They were sent by post as the school was mindful that families may not have access to the internet.

Another programme was held in a Gypsy/Traveller site portacabin for convenience. The Education Officer visited the caravans individually and told families about the sessions.

2 Consult

All of the sessions began with creative and familiar activities such as cake decorating. This allowed natural conversation to flow, provided opportunities for parents to share views on learning needs, and enabled facilitators to consult with participants about their interests and expectations.

To feel most at ease when sharing views and experiences, two of the groups decided they only wanted women to attend.

3 Co-produce

Families planned programmes that would have cultural and personal relevance. For example, some mothers were keen to learn English - solving many daily challenges. They were keen that words and phrases taught met their own routines such as liaising with schools and using public transport.

Parents wanted some sessions to be split into two, providing opportunities to learn on their own before being joined by children.

4 Sustain

Participants created things that they could share with their families at home such as a recipe book, craft objects and e-stories. Participants' confidence grew throughout the project, as skills developed and opinions were valued.

They took ownership of programmes - running groups, organising cultural trips, and seeking new learning opportunities in the school and local community.

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[i] In this document, the terms 'mobile communities' and 'mobile cultures' are used as umbrella terms for the different groups of mobile communities in Scotland including Gypsy/Travellers, Showmen or Show families, and Roma families. The term Traveller is also accepted by the different groups who at their core have shared commonalties of unpredictable mobility patterns. It is also important to emphasise the heterogeneity of mobile communities, each of whom is defined by different histories, cultures and lifestyles. The communities also have varying levels of mobility, engagement with formal education and perceptions of, and access to, schooling and the curriculum.

[ii] Attendance varied greatly depending on levels of mobility. For example, Roma families were settled therefore, other than when they had external commitments (doctors' appointments, changes in work shifts), attended the majority of programme sessions over a longer period of time. In contrast, some Gypsy/Traveller families attended for a short period then, without notice, left the Traveller Site, therefore the sustainability of a programme is more challenging in light of frequent and unpredictable periods of mobility. These insights into the varied patterns of mobility reinforce the importance of flexible and adaptable programme delivery.