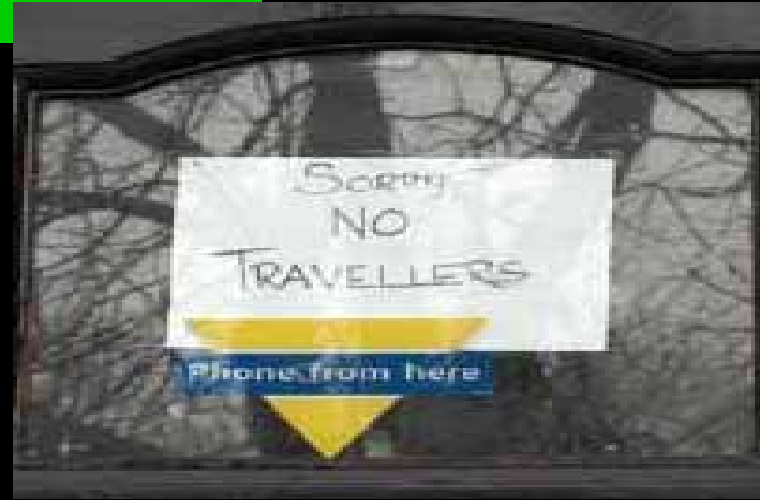


Engaging with Traveller communities



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Objectives:

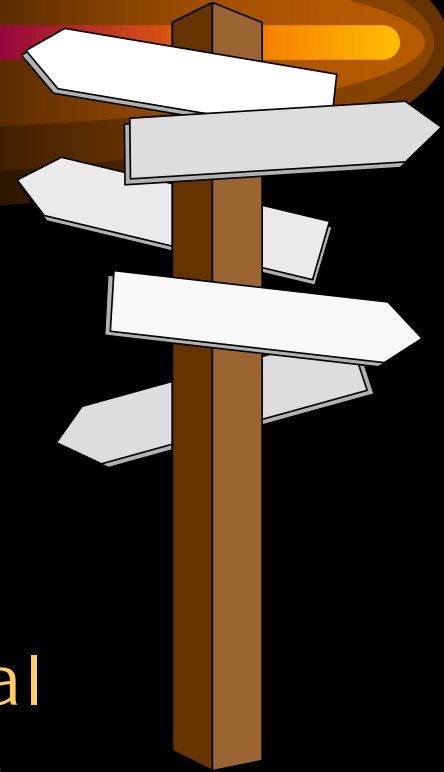


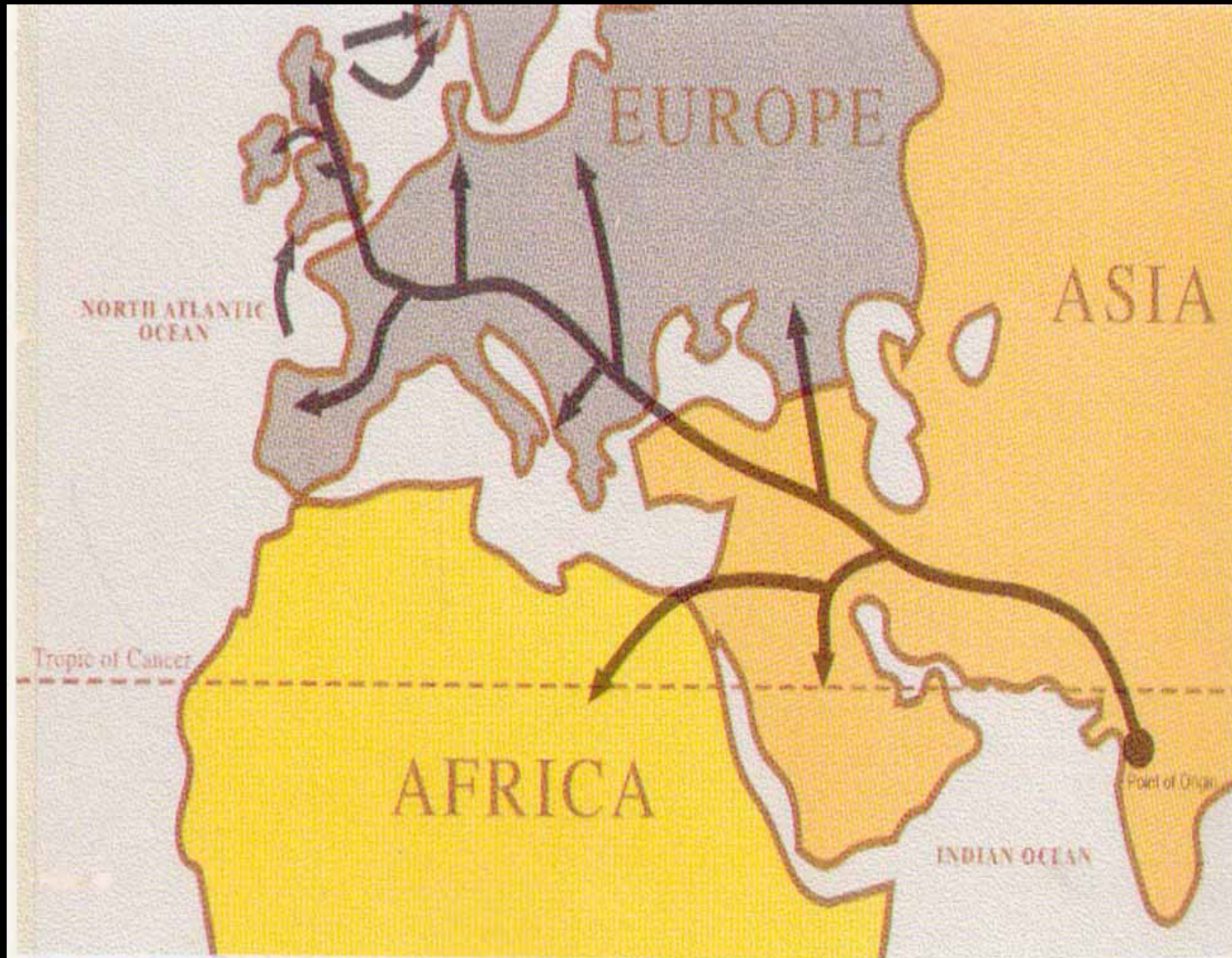
- To have a basic understanding of Traveller culture and history
- To explore ways of engaging with Traveller communities

Who are Travellers

- Gypsy Travellers (Romanies)
- Irish Travellers
- Eastern European Roma
- Showmen and Circus families

Gypsy/Roma and Irish Travellers are recognised racial groups protected by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000







Origins

- About 1,000 years ago Gypsy/Roma left what is now Pakistan and travelled west along the Silk Roads. They were:
- horse-dealers and breeders
- blacksmiths, coppersmiths, goldsmiths silversmiths and tinsmiths
- entertainers
- traders in various goods
- In Britain they met and intermarried with Tinkers who had been coming from Ireland throughout recorded history
- Now celebrate their culture often through attending horse fairs across the UK

Gypsy/Roma living circumstances

- Originally lived in bender tents travelling with waggons pulled by horses
- Vardos of different styles evolved in the 19th Century and used by better off
- Caravans (trailers) became popular when motorised transport replaced horses
- Lack of legal stopping places has forced the vast majority of Gypsy/Roma into housing







Irish Travellers – The Pavee

- Formerly known as Tinkers (from 'tinceard' - Gammon tinsmith)
- Nomadic in this country since before recorded history
- Recorded on PLASC as Traveller of Irish Heritage
- Own language, culture, history and traditions
- Majority Catholic - some converts to Light and Life Church
- Marry from within own group
- Strict sexual mores
- Living circumstances vary: housing, trailer or highly mobile

*Protected by the Race Relations
(Amendment) Act 2000*

Ways of engaging with the Traveller community



- Understanding an oral culture
- Family life
- Things to consider

Language of the Travellers

- English Gypsies speak Anglo Romani/
Romanes/Poggerdi Jib
- The language hangs on an English grammar
- Purely oral tradition although linguists have recorded it
- Speakers often prefer to keep the language secret
- Irish Travellers speak Gammon or Shelta
- This is very secretive and hardly ever shared
- Most Traveller groups have an understanding of some elements of other nomadic groups language

Key Elements in Oral Cultures

- Close family ties/reliance on each other
- Own behaviour codes
- Live in the present
- Spoken word highly valued - own language
- Love of quick wittedness/outspokenness
- Strong memories for stories and extended family knowledge
- Justice resolved within family

Gypsy/Roma/Irish Traveller Family Life



- Family is central to Traveller life
- Family is educator and socialising agent
- Women focus on running the household, raising children and attending to husbands.
- Husbands work with male relatives and take responsibility for the family.
- There are still strict rules on cleanliness, modesty and faithfulness

Things to consider

- Travellers are likely to have a lot of mistrust of the settled or 'gorger' community
- Not all Traveller communities are identical and things vary slightly across the UK
- There should be professionals in every council whose expertise you can call upon i.e; Traveller education services
- Reading and writing is often an issue so things should be done orally whenever is possible
- Understand that many Travellers have experienced racism
- Always try and consult with the community on things that may be of interest to them, particularly through leaders

Conclusion

- Traveller groups are essentially bi-lingual and thus their culture is oral based
- Gender roles are clearly defined
- There is a lot of mistrust and relationships can take a long time to build
- Use your local TES for assistance
- Timekeeping isn't necessarily important
- Build links with community leaders
- Consultation is extremely important and beneficial

Kushti Bok – Good luck



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