



The Importance of Ethnic Monitoring within the CIB framework

A submission by National Traveller MABS

November 2014

Introduction

Ireland has always had a diverse population. However in recent times the number of different ethnic groups that have made Ireland their home has grown considerably. Since 2011, over 50,000 people have become Irish citizens. Ireland is now comprised of many different ethnic groups including Irelands indigenous Travellers. As such Ireland is a diverse and multi-ethnic society and our services should reflect this diversity.

The service delivery partners of the Citizen Information Board (CIB) target particularly vulnerable groups in society. The CIB is committed to a policy of quality customer service. Its commitment to equality and diversity as well as access is highlighted in its Customer Charter. National Traveller MABS recognises this commitment and believes that by introducing an effective ethnic monitoring process among service delivery partners, the CIB has an opportunity to become a model of good practice in ensuring that all services are equality focussed, accessible and meet the needs of all ethnic groups.

National Traveller MABS is aware that monitoring the usage of any service can be made more complex when there are multiple users with multiple identities using the service as is the case with the CIB service delivery partners. Acknowledging this diversity of users, National Traveller MABS sets out in this paper to look specifically at the case of diversity within the parameters of ethnicity.

In this paper National Traveller MABS sets out the need for an ethnic monitoring tool within the CIB framework of service providers. Firstly we define ethnicity and ethnic monitoring. We then identify why ethnic monitoring is needed and why it is important. We address concerns about monitoring and then finally outline a relatively simple process that could sensitively gather and effectively use the data collected.

What is Ethnicity?

Ethnicity is a complex construct, is multi-faceted and cannot be understood as a static concept. Belonging to an ethnic group has to be seen as a personal identity, rather than an objective fact (Makkonen 2007). While other people may view an individual as having a distinct ethnic identity, the individual's view of their own identity takes priority. Therefore self-identification is a usual practice in collecting ethnic data as opposed to being classified by others (Aspinall 1997).

While an ethnic group is sometimes perceived as a minority within a larger community, everyone belongs to an ethnic group or groups, for example indigenous settled Irish people are an ethnic group.

What is Ethnic Monitoring

Ethnic monitoring is the process used to collect, store, and analyse and use data about the ethnic identity of service users. It is the proactive gathering and use of data to ensure that services being offered can reasonably accommodate the specific needs of users from different ethnic groups and that services do not discriminate against those groups. Effective ethnic monitoring will:

- Ensure a knowledge of the potential client base for the service and the ethnic diversity of that client base
- Highlight possible inequalities in the take up of the service and in the outcomes from the service.
- Investigate the underlying causes and take action to address any inequalities, disadvantages or discrimination identified and make reasonable accommodation of the individual service users.
- Report on the engagement of the service with different ethnic groups.

For example, in service delivery, monitoring will inform a service provider which groups are accessing their service and if the service is satisfactory for the users specific needs. This data can then be used to examine the target groups who are not being reached and strategies can be put in place to address the gaps in service provision.

Why is Ethnic Monitoring Important

It is acknowledged that people from minority ethnic backgrounds may be at risk of poverty and social exclusion. Asylum seekers and refugees are particularly vulnerable in this regard, while awareness is increasing around the socially excluded situation of migrant workers, many of whom may be living almost invisibly within communities. Travellers are an especially disadvantaged group within Irish society, while the poor conditions in which growing numbers of the Roma community are living are also of concern. Members of all these groups, as well as of those people living in new and established minority ethnic communities in Ireland, may also experience racism and discrimination, which in turn leads to increasing social isolation. These circumstances, coupled with language and cultural barriers, may further compromise their financial well-being.

The introduction of the equality legislation provides for a human rights and equality framework that prohibits discrimination on a number of grounds including race which is defined to include ethnic identity. In compliance with this legislation there is a duty on public bodies such as the Citizens Information Board to ensure that services are accessible, equipped and culturally sensitive to meet the needs of all. There is a duty not to

discriminate on the 9 grounds and as case law suggests¹ this includes taking accommodation of diverse needs specific to minority ethnic groups.

Legislation in 2014 to establish the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) includes a public sector duty to have due regard to equality and human rights. This puts an onus on public services to develop systems that demonstrate effectively that the services they provide give regard to equality and human rights.

In summary ethnic monitoring is vital to ensure

1. **Better Service:** Ethnic monitoring is a mechanism to respond as effectively as possible to the specific needs of a range of ethnic groups. The service provider can examine the uptake of services by different groups. Resources can then be allocated accordingly to ensure access and inclusion for all.
2. **Better Personal Experience:** Ethnic monitoring provides benefits on a personal level to the user of the services. It enables an individual's needs, circumstances and experience to be assessed and addressed appropriately. If a person's ethnic background is known the service can identify and respond to the specific needs that person may require. These specific needs relate to culture and identity and to personal experiences of racism and discrimination in the wider society.
3. **Benefits Communities:** Ethnic monitoring enables the service provider to identify trends and issues that are emerging in relation to specific minority ethnic groups and enables the services to adapt and respond to the emerging needs of these communities.
4. **Compliance:** Ethnic monitoring enables services to be compliant with equality legislation and to respect the public sector duty to have due regard to equality and human rights. It provides data that can examine the policies and practices of service providers.

Ensuring the effective collection and appropriate use of data

The benefits of ethnic monitoring will be only realised where there is an effective and robust process for collecting, analysing and making use of the data in relation to ethnic groups.

Good processes, coupled with an effective management of this data, are key ingredients in implementation of ethnic monitoring.

¹ EED048 Campbell Catering LTD V's Aderonke Rasaq (2004) 15. E.L.R 310

Concerns and addressing such concerns

Service providers and users of the service may have concerns about ethnic monitoring which could include-

- Service users may feel that being asked for membership of an ethnic group may expose them to discrimination
- Service users may feel they have to choose an ethnic group to belong to or it will be chosen for them.
- Staff may feel it is intrusive to ask about ethnicity

Therefore it is critical that the rationale for gathering the data and how it will be used must be clearly set out in a policy document and held up by comprehensive training of all staff.

An ethnic monitoring policy must identify why this information is being collected and how the information collected will be used to improve services. The policy will need to consider:

- Confidentiality
- Anonymity
- Data protection legislation
- Guarantee that data will only be used for the purpose it is collected.

Training of all staff must be provided and service users must be assured that any data collected is anonymised and information only used to improved services and influence improvement in social policy.

Effective Policy and Procedures

The process of gathering the data will be the most significant tool in managing the concerns of staff and of service users.

- An effective ethnic monitoring process must be underpinned by up to date policies on **Ethnic monitoring, Confidentiality** and **Data collection** and clear **communication** of such policies.
- The **positive outcome** of such data collection on the service and policy improvements in favour of ethnic groups should be communicated by the service to show how the information gathered leads to better decisions being made at a national level
- Clear communication as to what is **required** of staff and management must be provided in detailed training.
- Assurances must be given that the service user is **anonymized** within the process.

Extracting the data

Currently the main measurement of ethnicity in Ireland is through the Irish Census, which provides only limited "pre-given" categories of what it terms ethnicity (see Appendix 1). The type of information required by the CIB to fulfil its statutory remit needs to go beyond the limited format of the Irish Census question on what it terms ethnicity.

The CSO assumption, that ethnicity is based on colour or nationality, as indicated in the Census, is not correct. Choices such as 'White Irish' and 'Black and Black Irish' identify a skin colour and not an ethnic group. The Census allows for the categorisation of "White people" as "Irish", "Traveller" or "Any other White background". Similarly a Black person can only be "African" or "Any other Black background". The Census results of 2006 indicate that 72,303 of those who filled the census form did not respond to the question on ethnicity. Whether this was a result of confusion, or in protest at the format of the question it is further evidence that such a method of information gathering will not extract the necessary data needed by service users to ensure inclusion for all.

CIB service partners must identify the necessary information to meet the needs of society. According to Cadogan, "Irishness" is undergoing continuous revision. With world migration the Irish citizen has changed dramatically and being Irish or residing in Ireland does not define your ethnicity. It is precisely because of the new demographics of Ireland that we need to ensure inclusion for all by the implementation of a non-segregating ethnic monitoring process.

Both the EU and the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) recommend that, unless a contrary justification exists, ethnic identification should be based on "self-identification by the individual concerned" (European Commission, 2006: 40).

The Canadian Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS) of 2002, is an example of how ethnic/cultural data may be collected in a manner which acknowledges a changing social landscape (see Appendix 2). Within Ireland, the FAI has attempted to implement an inclusive ethnic monitoring process by expanding on the choices given in the Census question, although unlike the EDS in appendix 2, the FAI is still largely identifying ethnicity by colour (see Appendix 3).

Ethnic monitoring requires a process of interaction between the "asker" and the "user" that extends beyond a limited set of questions. The process of monitoring who uses the service and what needs they have must include:

- Mandatory training of all staff.
- Ensuring that service users have a clear understanding of the purpose of monitoring.
- Developing a short form that, when completed by either the service user or the staff member, provides key information about the ethnicity of those coming into or contacting the service. This should be voluntary and by self-definition. A simple

blank space on the form after the question on ethnicity will suffice once there is an explanation why the questions is being asked.

- Website queries should allow for a pop up box explaining the reason why the user is requested to provide details on ethnicity.
- Developing an information card which advises the staff member as to what ethnic group means (as opposed to nationality or legal status) and include examples of different ethnic groups.
- Ensuring the staff member works with the service user to identify their needs as a member of a specific ethnic group using pre designed open questions.
- Undertaking baseline work on the presence of different ethnic groups in the catchment area so there is a mechanism to measure trends against this baseline.
- Accommodating difference should extend to contact with any statutory services the client is referred to with their permission and with due regard to the data protection laws.
- Developing an internal reporting mechanism that specifies how the data will be used to track service uptake and respond to the emerging needs of the service users. An external report such as the annual report that anonymizes the data and reflects the take up of the services should be made public.

Summary

National Traveller MABS, in this submission, has argued for the need to introduce ethnic monitoring within the CIB Framework.

As ethnic monitoring is defined in this paper, it is the effective gathering and appropriate use of the data that makes it an effective tool. Crucially it is discussed how ethnic monitoring will only be successful if the data is gathered sensitively and professionally and is used in a way that improves access to and use of the service for all.

The implementation of an effective ethnic monitoring process within all CIB service delivery partners will ensure a process of self-assessment that can be held up to other service providers as a model of best practice in the area of equality and inclusion.

National Traveller MABS trusts that the CIB will consider this submission and consider its inclusion in the CIB Strategy 2015-2017.

For further discussion on this issue please email Nuala_nighabhann@mabs.ie

Appendix 1

Irish Census question on Ethnicity

14 What is your ethnic or cultural background?
Choose ONE section from A to D, then ✓ the appropriate box.

A White

1 Irish

2 Irish Traveller

3 Any other White background

B Black or Black Irish

4 African

5 Any other Black background

C Asian or Asian Irish

6 Chinese

7 Any other Asian background

D Other, including mixed background

8 Other, write in description

Appendix 2

Extract from paper by Marian Cadogan - Volume 3 | Issue 1 Spring 2008 - *Fixity and Whiteness in the Ethnicity Question of Irish Census 2006* - -University College Cork

The Canadian Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS) of 2002 sought to understand how people's backgrounds affected their participation in the social, economic and cultural life of Canada, as well as information on how Canadians 'interpret and report' ethnicity (Statistics Canada 2003a: 5). The survey elicited the ethnic or cultural origins of respondents' ancestors as well as their own current, subjective sense of ethnic or cultural affiliation. Respondents were advised that ethnic or cultural ancestry refers to 'roots' or cultural background and is not to be confused with citizenship or nationality (Statistics Canada, 2002). The interviewer provided no suggestions or examples, eliciting instead a "'top-of-head' response from the respondent, without influencing the respondent in any way as to how they should answer the ethnicity question" (Statistics Canada 2003a: fn1: 7). Up to 8 responses were accepted for ancestral background and up to 6 in terms of the respondent's description of her/his own current, ethnic or cultural belonging.

Fig. 2 Sample Question of Canadian Ethnic Diversity Survey (EDS), 2002

ID_Q100

'I would now like to ask you to think about your own identity, in ethnic or cultural terms. This identity may be the same as that of your parents, grandparents or ancestors or it may be different.

What is your ethnic or cultural identity?'

Interviewer: Specify up to 6 responses

DO NOT provide examples

Your ethnic or cultural identity is the ethnic or cultural group or groups to which you feel you belong'

Statistics Canada, 2002:5 (emphasis in original)

Respondents were asked how important their ethnic or cultural identity was to them on a scale of 1 to 5 , ranging from 'is not at all important' (1), up to 'is very important' (5). Several questions explored whether they have been made to feel uncomfortable, or out of place, or have felt discriminated against, or unfairly treated on the basis of ethnicity, culture, race, skin colour, accent, language or religion. Insofar as they answered in the affirmative, they

were asked to indicate whether they believed they experienced discrimination based on ethnicity, culture, race, skin colour, accent, language or religion, or combinations of these (or - 'don't know'). They were further probed regarding the locations or contexts in which such treatment (if it occurs) tends to happen most. The survey examined levels of contact with family members inside and outside Canada, the importance of continuing ethnic or cultural customs and the extent to which they currently socially interact with members of their own ethnic or cultural grouping(s) or not, as well as the extent of their general participation in civil society organisations in Canada. It also examined people's sense of belonging to family, ethnic or cultural group(s), to town, city or region, to Province, to Canada and to North America (Statistics Canada 2003a).

The survey report analysed the level of attachment of persons of different generations and ethnic groups to their own ethno-cultural backgrounds and to the broader Canadian society, also taking into account how long they or their families have lived in Canada. It depicts a panorama of altering ethnic allegiances. For instance, while less than half of those who arrived in Canada prior to 1961 retained a strong sense of belonging to their original ethnic-cultural group, 62% of those who arrived since 1991 still did so. And while only 18% of second-generation and 8% of third-plus-generation Canadians with family in the original country or countries of origin, contacted them at least once a month, 75% of first generation immigrants who had arrived since 1991 did so (Statistics Canada 2003b). Forty percent of the first generation said that their identity included Canadian or a provincial or regional identity, compared with 78% in the second generation.

Appendix 3

(Extract from the FAI website)

Why we ask for your ethnicity & nationality

The FAI launched its Intercultural Football Plan in June 2007. It is a conscious effort on the part of the Association to promote football amongst members of minority ethnic and cultural communities within Ireland. Given that Irish society has, and continues to become, more ethnically and culturally diverse the plan also seeks to use football as a vehicle to promote a fully intercultural, and socially inclusive society at ease with its growing diversity.

The FAI aims to provide opportunities to persons of all nationalities and backgrounds to participate in football. The FAI would like to collect data on who takes part in football. This information will help the association in its planning for future grassroots programmes.The FAI recognises that people often wish to choose the way they would like to be described, so if any of the categories listed below do not fit with the way you would describe your background please complete section 10. (Please note that providing information on ethnicity or nationality is optional)

(Please note the image below from the FAI application form does not display all options- Chines , Chinese/ Irish and other appear as options also)

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

file:///H:/der...%20changes.htm x Strength & Conditioning - ... x Book Summer Soccer Schools ... x +

https://payments.fai.ie/coach-education/strength-conditioning-12-11-2015-laois.html

Most Visited Getting Started Latest Headlines

Does your child have a medical condition which may affect her participation on this camp? *

Yes No

Does your child have a disability (Physical, learning or sensory)? *

Yes No

What is your child's ethnic or cultural background?

Details on why we collect this data can be read below

-- Please Select --

-- Please Select --

White - Irish

White - Irish Traveller

White - Irish Polish

White - Lithuanian

White - Irish Latvian

White - Other

Mixed - White & Asian

Mixed - White & Black Caribbean

Mixed - White & Black African

Mixed - Other

Asian & Asian Irish - Indian

Asian & Asian Irish - Pakistan

Asian & Asian Irish - Bangladesh

Asian & Asian Irish - Other

Asian & Asian Irish - African

Asian & Asian Irish - Caribbean

Asian & Asian Irish - Other

Black Irish

Black Other

County or Dublin Area Code * Postcode Country *

-- Please Select -- Ireland

13:33 22/12/2014

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