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# **Research Report**

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## **Faith Based Youth Work in Northern Ireland**

### **YouthNet Faith Based Interest Group**

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**June 2006**

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## **1 Introduction**

This is the research report on the scoping of faith based youth work within the YouthNet Faith Based Interest Group.

The leading objective of the research was to identify and establish the scale, scope and location of current delivery of faith based youth work within the Membership of the YouthNet Faith Based Interest Group.

However to provide a broader indication of the context, scale and scope of faith based youth work in Northern Ireland the research also includes:

- An analysis of 2005 data from the YCNI Geomapping System of all youth groups registered with the five Education and Library Boards in Northern Ireland. This includes church based youth work and faith based, community group youth work delivered by groups that are not members of the YouthNet Faith Based Interest Group.
- An indication of the scale and scope of other faith based youth work that is neither represented within the YouthNet Faith Based Interest Group nor registered with the five Education and Library Boards.

The research was carried out by independent external consultant Tony Macaulay (Macaulay Associates) between April and May 2006.

The report includes:

- An executive summary of the key findings and recommendations
- Information on the background to the project and the terms of reference of the research
- An explanation of the research methodology
- A presentation of key findings under each research objective
- A presentation of the main conclusions

- A series of recommendations for the future based on the findings
- A bibliography
- A set of associated appendices

## **Executive Summary**

### **Introduction**

This is the research report on the scoping of faith based youth work within the YouthNet Faith Based Interest Group. The research was carried out by independent external consultant Tony Macaulay between April and May 2006.

### **Main Findings**

- 1) In 2005, there were 1,405 registered faith/church based groups in Northern Ireland with a total of 98,902 members, 16,457 volunteer leaders and 160 full time youth workers
- 2) 68% of registered youth groups in Northern Ireland were faith/church based in 2005
- 3) 57.8% of all members of registered youth groups in Northern Ireland were participants in faith/church based youth groups in 2005
- 4) 74.4% of all volunteer leaders in registered youth groups in Northern Ireland were volunteering in faith/church based groups in 2005
- 5) 43.2% of all full time youth workers in registered youth groups in Northern Ireland were working in faith/church based groups in 2005
- 6) Faith/church based groups are located in significant numbers in both urban and rural areas and in both TSN and non TSN areas
- 7) The majority of faith/church based youth groups are single identity or predominantly Protestant or Catholic
- 8) The majority of uniformed and non uniformed church based registered groups are connected to Protestant churches and mainly Presbyterian churches
- 9) There is a significant level of full time provision by Catholic Youth Centres in the greater Belfast area, particularly in areas of social disadvantage
- 10) There is currently no single accurate measure available to provide a comprehensive picture of the scale of all faith based youth work in Northern Ireland as many groups are not registered and some of the major providers do not currently have a system for collecting this type of data
- 11) Faith based youth work represented in the YouthNet Faith Based Interest Group is engaged in all aspects of a young persons development, with a particular emphasis on personal, social, spiritual and physical development
- 12) There is equality of access for all young people to participate in groups represented in the Faith Based Interest Group
- 13) Negative perceptions and low profile are the major barriers to young people accessing faith based youth work
- 14) The main outcomes of faith based youth work for individual participants are personal and social development

- 15) Most faith based youth work shares the values and priorities of the NI Youth Work Strategy core theme of personal and social development
- 16) There are good models of faith based youth work targeting social need and church based youth work has the potential to target social need in a more strategic way
- 17) There is clear evidence of faith based youth groups contributing to social capital within local communities including citizenship, leadership development, community participation, networks, volunteering, trust and social cohesion in local communities
- 18) There is evidence of faith based youth work in Northern Ireland “bridging” social capital across the sectarian divide and there is good practice in cross community integration and co-operation. However building cross community social cohesion is a major challenge for religious groups rooted in a divided society.
- 19) With a significant growth in recent years in the number of full time church based youth workers there is an expressed need for a Youth Work with Applied Theology Degree in Northern Ireland

### **Recommendations**

- 1) The Faith Based Interest Group should attempt to raise awareness of the scope and scale of their youth work and its outcomes of personal and social development of young people and its positive contribution to social capital in local communities
- 2) The Faith Based Interest Group should engage with policy makers on the issue of faith communities and faith based youth work as social capital
- 3) The Faith Based Interest Group should attempt to raise awareness of the actual nature of their youth work to address negative perceptions of faith based youth work by young people
- 4) The Faith Based Interest Group should attempt to increase understanding, awareness and acceptance of their youth work by other YouthNet members, agencies, funders and government bodies
- 5) The Faith Based Interest Group should consult with the Equality Commission around perceived unfair treatment of faith based groups in relation to Section 75
- 6) The Faith Based Interest Group should support all faith based groups to gather statistics on the scale of their youth work in an attempt to develop a comprehensive picture of the scale of all faith based youth work in Northern Ireland
- 7) The Faith Based Interest Group should work with other YouthNet members and statutory youth work agencies to address the common issue of segregated provision in the context of developing a Shared Future in Northern Ireland
- 8) The Faith Based Interest Group should contribute to discussions to address the perceived gap in training for full time faith based youth workers at diploma/degree level and should attempt to avoid further segregated provision

- 9) The Faith Based Interest Group should encourage faith based youth work to develop more strategic focus on TSN to fulfil its potential for development in areas of urban decline
- 10) The Faith Based Interest Group should stimulate a debate within the wider Youth Service on approaches to the spiritual development element of NI Youth Work Strategy

## **2 Background**

### **2.1 YouthNet**

YouthNet is the Voluntary Youth Network for Northern Ireland, an independent agency which represents the interests and aspirations of more than 70 youth organisations in Northern Ireland.

YouthNet membership covers a wide range of organisations working with children and young people, from long established organisations through to newly emerged organisations. Member organisations work with a diverse range of young people and vary in size, structure and capacity.

YouthNet member organisations include uniformed organisations, faith based organisations, cultural minority organisations, disability organisations, play organisations, creative and arts organisations, organisations providing specialist support services to young people, organisations specialising in work with disaffected young people, organisations specialising in outdoor activity, and organisations specialising in EDI (Equity Diversity and Interdependence) and community relations work.

### **2.2 YouthNet Interest Groups**

In 2002 YouthNet established a range of interest groups as a means of representing the diversity of membership and the principles of equity diversity and interdependence in policy development.

Members have self-designated into interest groups and a number of these are facilitated to meet regularly to explore and debate issues pertinent to them.

## 2.3 Faith Based Interest Group

The faith based interest group is made up of a number of agencies who have identified themselves as delivering faith based youth work. Members<sup>1</sup> of the group are:

- Baptist Youth
- Boys Brigade
- Catholic Guides of Ireland
- Church of Ireland Youth Department
- Frontier Youth Trust
- Girls Brigade
- Methodist Department of Youth and Children's Work
- Presbyterian Church Youth Department
- Youthcom (Catholic Diocese of Down & Connor Youth Commission)
- Youth Initiatives
- Youthlink
- YMCA

The group has been meeting together for two years and has discussed issues including:

- Outcomes of faith based youth work to participants and the wider community
- Achievements of faith based youth work in Northern Ireland and areas needing attention
- Quality of faith based youth work
- Misunderstandings and misperceptions of faith based youth work in Northern Ireland
- Faith based organisations and government policy

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<sup>1</sup> Girl Guiding Ulster and Scouts NI do not define their youth work as faith based and decided not to become members of the Faith based Interest Group. However, most Scout and Guide groups in Northern Ireland are based in local church halls and are connected to a local church to a greater or lesser degree. The Faith Based Interest Group is open to all faiths. The group has contacted a number of ethnic minority groups involving people of other faiths and they also did not define their work as faith based.

- Networking and partnership between faith based youth work organisations

The Group also considered the findings and recommendations of the publication “Acting in Good Faith: Churches Changes and Regeneration” (Derek Bacon, Eddie McDowell and Jim Robertson, Churches Community Work Alliance, 2004).

## **2.4 Research**

As a result of these discussions the members identified the need for some initial research to quantify the scale and scope of faith based youth work within the membership of this interest group in Northern Ireland and its contribution to social capital.

YouthNet secured resources to carry out this initial research and then invited suitably qualified consultants to tender to carry out the research in March 2006. Macaulay Associates was appointed on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2006.

The strategy is that this research will ultimately form part of a wider paper being developed by the group.

## **3 Terms of Reference**

### **3.1 Research Aim**

The aim of the research was:

*To scope the range of faith based youth work provision within the membership of YouthNet Faith Based Interest Group and its contribution to social capital in Northern Ireland.*

### **3.2 Research Objectives**

The objectives of the research were as follows:

- To identify and establish the scale, scope and location of current delivery of faith based youth work within the Membership of the YouthNet Faith Based Interest group
- To identify the outcomes of faith based youth work to participants, the wider community, and how it fits within the current objectives of the NI Youth Work Strategy and New TSN (Targeting Social Need)
- To identify the contribution of faith based youth work to social capital related to the report on “Communities, Churches & Social Capital in Northern Ireland” Derek Bacon (2003)
- To identify the training opportunities accessed by those engaged in the delivery of faith based youth work and also gaps in training
- To identify any barriers that may prevent equality of access for all young people in Northern Ireland to faith based youth work
- To identify other key issues facing Faith Based Organisations

## **4 Research Methodology**

The methodology designed to achieve the aim and objectives of the research within the resources and timescale is as follows:

### **4.1 Initial Meeting**

The first research meeting with the Faith Based Interest Group took place on 12<sup>th</sup> April 2006. The purpose of the meeting was:

- to discuss the tender brief in depth to give the consultant a fuller understanding of the background and context of the research
- to review the proposed methodology and approach to agree any necessary refinements
- to agree timescales and dates of meetings
- to gather data including relevant information and details on key informants/contacts

### **4.2 Desk Research**

Desk research was carried out to identify, collect and analyse relevant data (reports, statistics, evaluations, research, strategic documents, policies etc) from the Youth Service and Interest Group members.

The main sources of statistical information were the Youth Council NI Geomapping Data for 2005 and data from each member group.

The sources of information are listed in the bibliography.

### **4.3 Semi Structured Interviews**

A series of eleven face to face semi structured individual and group interviews were carried out with a representative sample of relevant organisations.

The interviews explored:

- The scope and scale of current delivery of faith based youth work
- Faith based youth work in relation to government policies and strategies

- Outcomes of faith based youth work to participants
- Outcomes of faith based youth work in the wider community
- Training opportunities accessed by those engaged in the delivery of faith based youth work and gaps in training
- Barriers that prevent equality of access for all young people to faith based youth work
- Other key issues

A list of the interviewees is in Appendix I and the interview questions are in Appendix II.

In addition to the face to face interviews a series of telephone consultations were carried out to extend the scoping beyond the members of the YouthNet Faith Based Interest Group.

## **4.4 Focus Groups**

A series of focus groups were facilitated to explore outcomes of faith based youth work in Northern Ireland. The focus groups were as follows:

### **4.4.1 Youth Workers**

A focus group with a representative sample of seven youth workers from faith based groups took place on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2006. The participants in the focus group were asked to explore their practice in relation to social capital theory.

The focus group questions and a list of the participants is in Appendix III and the notes from the flip chart sheets are in Appendix IV.

### **4.4.2 Young People**

A series of focus groups on the evenings 8<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> May were facilitated. The groups were made up of a sample of 15 young people who access faith based youth work. The focus groups explored their experiences (related to social capital concepts), discussed outcomes on participants and any barriers preventing equality of access.

The focus group format and a list of the participants are in Appendix V and the notes from the flip chart sheets are in Appendix VI.

#### **4.5 Steering Group Interim Findings Workshop**

An interim findings workshop with the steering group took place on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2006. The purpose of this meeting was to test the interim findings and to explore emerging issues and possible recommendations.

#### **4.6 Draft Reports**

A series of draft reports were produced and presented to the steering group for comment and discussion and this final report was produced including the amendments suggested at the draft reports stage.

## **5 Findings**

The main research findings under each area highlighted in the terms of reference are as detailed in this section of the report.

### **5.1 Scale and Scope of Faith Based Youth Work**

The leading objective of the research was to identify and establish the scale, scope and location of current delivery of faith based youth work within the Membership of the YouthNet Faith Based Interest group.

This section provides an analysis of the scale, scope and location of youth work delivered by the members of the interest group.

However to provide a broader indication of the context, scale and scope of faith based youth work in Northern Ireland this section also includes an analysis of 2005 data from the YCNI Geomapping System of all youth groups registered with the five Education and Library Boards in Northern Ireland.

It also includes an indication of the scale and scope of other faith based youth work that is not represented within the faith based interest group and that is not registered with the five Education and Library Boards.

Before analysing the data available it was essential to agree a definition of faith based youth work.

#### **5.1.1 Defining faith based youth work**

In defining faith based youth work it is necessary to define both “youth work” and “faith based”.

For the purpose of this research the definition of youth work being applied is that described in the NI Youth Work Strategy 2005-2008 and the NI Youth Service “Youth Work: A Model of Effective Practice”.

The NI Youth Work Strategy states that:

*“The Mission of the youth service is to promote the development, well-being, rights, and participation of young people (aged 4-25) by ensuring that high quality*

*youth work is inclusively and effectively delivered to facilitate the personal and social development of young people within a supportive public policy framework. Youth work may engage in all aspects of a young person's development – personal, social, educational, political, cultural, spiritual, physical, and vocational”*

The Strategy has the following underpinning values for the future delivery of youth services to young people:

#### *Personal & Social Development*

- *Youth work is a vital non-formal educational process of personal and social development, through which young people can develop their knowledge, understanding, attitudes, confidence and personal and inter-personal skills. Young people have the right to expect that it will be accessible, affordable, high quality and flexible to meet changing needs and a changing environment.*

#### *Promoting Rights*

- *The rights of young people are paramount and should be actively promoted and protected. Each young person is a unique individual who has an equal right to make informed choices, to be valued, accepted and treated with dignity and respect.*

#### *Protection*

- *Young people have the right to enjoy their lives, in a safe environment where they are protected, supported and feel they belong, free from violence or abuse. It is recognised that youth work involves an element of risk and challenge, appropriate to the age and development of young people.*

#### *Participation*

- *Young people have the right to participate actively in decisions that may affect their lives.*

#### *Peace-Building*

- *Youth work should actively promote a peaceful and inclusive society based on equity, diversity and interdependence.*

#### *People*

- *The skills, knowledge and attitudes of those involved in work with young people, paid or voluntary, are critical to their development. All those involved in work with young people should have the appropriate skills and knowledge and, as role models, work with integrity and openness.*

## Partnership

• *Youth service organisations should collaborate effectively together and recognise their accountability to each other, young people, and those who resource and work within the youth service. Partnerships with organisations external to the youth service should adhere to the values outlined in this Strategy.*

The Curriculum Framework described in the “Youth Work: A Model for Effective Practice” has personal and social development as a central theme underpinned by three core principles:

- i. commitment to preparing young people for participation
- ii. testing values and beliefs
- iii. the promotion of acceptance and understanding of others

Drawing on these principles, frameworks and values the youth work being scoped in this research is characterised by:

- personal and social development of young people
- non formal education processes
- voluntary participation
- preparing young people for participation
- testing values and beliefs
- promoting acceptance and understanding of others

Having established a working definition of youth work it is then essential to define the term “faith based youth work”.

For the purpose of this research, faith based youth work is youth work (as defined above) that is motivated by any religious faith and underpinned by the values of a religious faith.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The term “church based” youth work is used in this report to refer to youth work that is physically based in a church. This may be the direct faith based youth work of a local church or may be a youth group meeting in or connected to a local church that does not define itself as faith based e.g. Scouts and Guides – see footnote 1

This definition has been applied in scoping the scale of faith based groups. As a result youth and children's work involving large numbers of participants that is solely focussed on faith instruction such as Sunday Schools has not been included.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, it does not include youth oriented groups whose single purpose is evangelism, faith development, prayer or worship without a core theme of personal and social development using non formal education processes.<sup>4</sup>

### **5.1.2 Registered Groups**

With the assistance of the Youth Service departments from the five Education and Library Boards, the Youth Council Geomapping project collects data from all registered youth groups in Northern Ireland. Data includes number, ages and gender of members, location of group, and numbers/type of paid and voluntary staffing.

The data is based only upon youth groups which submitted annual YS1 statistical returns. Each registered group classified itself within one of six main categories: Controlled, Uniformed, Voluntary, Non-uniformed Church Based, Community Based and Other. All registered groups are required by the Boards to deliver youth work as defined in the Model of Effective Practice. The consultant analysed the findings of the 2005 data cycle as an indicator of the scale of faith based youth work across Northern Ireland. For the purpose of this research the following groups were counted:

- All registered faith based uniformed groups (Boys Brigade, Catholic Guides and Scouts, Church Lads and Church Girls Brigade, Every Girls and Every Boys Rally, Girls Brigade, Girls Friendly Society, Crusaders, Campaigners)
- All registered church based Scout and Guide groups. Scout and Guides groups that are based in a Scout/Guide Hall, school or community centre were not counted. (See Note 1 above)
- All registered non uniformed church based groups (e.g. church youth clubs)

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<sup>3</sup> However it was noted in discussions with the Protestant Church Youth Departments that in recent years Sunday School has moved away from a traditional teaching style towards a more informal learning approach

<sup>4</sup> Of course personal and social development may occur in these groups although it is not a core intentional purpose

- All registered Voluntary, Community and Other groups that are faith based (e.g. YMCAs). This category includes many church based groups that identify themselves as either voluntary or community based (e.g. Catholic Youth Centres such as Corpus Christi YC)

The results of the analysis are presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Registered Faith/Church Based Youth Groups in NI 2005**

<b>From YCNI Geomapping 2005 Data Cycle</b>	
Total No of Registered Units	2067
Total No of Registered Faith Based and Church Based Units	1405
% of Registered Units that are faith/church based	68%
Total No Young People registered	171192
Total No Young People registered in faith/church based groups	98902
% of registered Young People in faith/church based groups	57.8%
Total No of Volunteer Leaders registered	22109
Total No of Volunteer Leaders registered in faith/church based groups	16457
% of registered Volunteer Leaders faith/church based	74.4%
Total No of Registered Full Time Youth Workers	370
Total no of Full Time Youth Workers registered in faith/church based groups	160
% of Registered Full Time Youth Workers working in faith/church based groups	43.2%

The analysis found that in 2005 there were 1,405 registered faith/church based groups with:

- 98,902 members
- 16,457 volunteer leaders
- 160 full time youth workers

This accounts for a significant percentage of all registered youth work in Northern Ireland in 2005:

- 68% of registered youth groups in Northern Ireland were faith/church based
- 57.8% of all members of registered youth groups in Northern Ireland were participating in faith/church based groups
- 74.4% of all volunteer leaders in registered youth groups in Northern Ireland were volunteering in faith/church based groups
- 43.2% of all full time youth workers in registered youth groups in Northern Ireland were working in faith/church based groups

The 2001 Census <sup>5</sup> indicates the population of 5-24 year olds in Northern Ireland was 494,300.

The figure of 98,902 young people participating in faith/church based youth groups is 20% of that total youth population.

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<sup>5</sup> NISRA 2001

Other trends that are notable from the analysis of registered groups are:

- There are significant numbers of faith/church based groups in all five Education and Library Board areas of Northern Ireland
- Faith/church based groups are located in significant numbers in both urban and rural areas
- Faith/church based groups are located in both TSN and non TSN areas
- The majority of faith based/church groups are located in the east of Northern Ireland
- All registered faith/church based groups in Northern Ireland are Christian faith<sup>6</sup>
- The majority of faith/church based youth groups are single identity or predominantly Protestant or Catholic
- The majority of uniformed and non uniformed church based registered groups are connected to Protestant churches and mainly Presbyterian churches
- Many Protestant churches register more than one group (e.g. BB, GB, Youth Club and Youth Fellowship)
- There is a significant level of full time provision by Catholic Youth Centres in the greater Belfast area, particularly in areas of social disadvantage

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<sup>6</sup> While there is some Muslim based youth and children's work in NI there were no Muslim based registered groups and no membership of YouthNet by faith based groups other than Christian. The Indian Community Centre in Belfast which includes a Hindu Temple has a youth work project called LUV involving 70 young people from different faiths. However the group does not define itself as faith based.

- There is a significant difference between the two main religious traditions in Northern Ireland. The vast majority of church based informal education with young people is Protestant based, and mainly Presbyterian or Church of Ireland based. This is in contrast to faith based formal education in Northern Ireland which is mainly Catholic based (Catholic Maintained Schools).<sup>7</sup>
- The vast majority of participants in registered faith/church based groups are in the 4-9 and 10-15 age range and faith/church based groups account for a particularly high proportion of all registered 4-9 year old participants

### **5.1.3 Faith Based Interest Group**

The YCNI Geomapping of registered groups provides the only regularly collated data set that can produce a measure of the scale of faith based youth work in Northern Ireland<sup>8</sup>.

However, this data does not include groups that are not registered. Most interviewees indicated that many faith/church based groups are not registered with the Education and Library Boards and that the numbers of registered groups should be regarded as the minimum level of actual faith based youth work.

Furthermore, the Geomapping data does not include the scope of activities that are undertaken by each group.

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<sup>7</sup> This appears to reflect a different approach to youth faith development between the two traditions.

<sup>8</sup> These statistics may include the same young people participating in more than one group.

It is therefore useful to analyse data collected from the Faith Based Interest Group members as a further indicator of the scale and scope of faith based youth work in Northern Ireland.

Table 2 below provides a summary of the number of units, participants and volunteers within the members of the Faith Based Interest Group as provided by most of the organisations within the group.

**Table 2: Faith Based Interest Group Data 2006**

<b>Group</b>	<b>No of Units</b>	<b>Total No of Participants</b>	<b>No of Volunteer Leaders</b>
Baptist Youth	not available	<b>5049</b>	not available
Boys Brigade	307	<b>16100</b>	<b>3321</b>
Catholic Guides	41	<b>1713</b>	<b>348</b>
Church of Ireland	not available	<b>11315</b>	not available
Girls Brigade	296	<b>18462</b>	<b>3232</b>
Methodist Church	147	<b>3393</b>	<b>594</b>
Presbyterian Youth <sup>9</sup>	not available	not available	not available
YMCA	22	<b>12386</b>	<b>205</b>
Youth Initiatives	1	<b>385</b>	<b>40</b>
Youthcom	13	<b>5712</b>	<b>131</b>
Youthlink	n/a	<b>5250</b>	n/a
<b>Total</b>	<b>827</b>	<b>79765</b>	<b>7871</b>

It is important to note that the total figures do not include Presbyterian Church Youth Work as these statistics are not collected. The statistics from the

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<sup>9</sup> The Presbyterian Church does not currently collect this data. However the Presbyterian Youth department estimates that there are 50 full time paid youth workers in Presbyterian churches.

Geomapping 2005 data suggest that this would be the highest figure of all the interest group members.

However we can conclude that the members of the YouthNet Faith Based Interest Group have at least:

- 827 units
- 79,765 participants
- 7,871 volunteer leaders

Other trends that are notable from the analysis of figures that were available Faith Based Interest Groups members in 2006 are:

- A high number of under 11s among Faith Based Interest Group members
- A significant number of paid staff and growing numbers of full time church based<sup>10</sup> youth workers in Northern Ireland. There were 16 full time and 103 part time paid staff in Youthcom Catholic Youth Centres, 50 full time paid youth workers in Presbyterian Churches, 30 full time paid youth workers in Methodist Churches and 28 full or part time youth workers in Church of Ireland parishes.
- A significant level of leadership training. For example Youthlink trained 266 youth leaders in OCN Level 2 and 3 Youth Work Programmes. The Girls Brigade trained 560 leaders.
- A significant number of young leaders (under 25). Between the BB, GB, Catholic Guides and Youth Initiatives there was a total 924 young leaders.

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<sup>10</sup> In this case, "church based" youth worker refers to a worker employed by a local church/parish/congregation

- A significant number of young people participating in overseas service projects through faith based youth groups. In 2005 between the Girls Brigade, Methodists, YMCA, Youthcom and Boys Brigade there were 263 participants on international projects of this kind.

Table 3 below provides a summary of the type of youth work activities and programmes being undertaken within members of the faith based interest groups.

**Table 3: Scope of Activities of Faith based Interest Group Members**

<b>Type of Activity</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arts (drama, music, dance etc) projects</li> <li>• Anti bullying projects</li> <li>• Youth awards schemes (uniformed badge work, Duke of Edinburgh etc)</li> <li>• Citizenship Programmes</li> <li>• Cross Community/Cross Border Initiatives</li> <li>• Community relations/EDI/ethnic minorities projects</li> <li>• Employment skills training</li> <li>• Group work</li> <li>• Issue based discussion groups</li> <li>• Work with marginalised/at risk young people</li> <li>• Political education projects</li> <li>• Drop in youth centres</li> <li>• Health education programmes</li> <li>• Faith development activities</li> <li>• Community development activities</li> <li>• Leadership training</li> <li>• Childcare and After Schools Clubs</li> <li>• Outdoor education/adventure education/camps</li> <li>• Development education/ global youth work</li> <li>• International exchange programmes</li> <li>• Overseas summer service teams to developing countries</li> <li>• Personal development courses</li> </ul>

- Schools/alternative education
- Young men and young women focussed programmes
- Youth Clubs
- Youth Participation initiatives

The NI Youth Work Strategy states that “*Youth work may engage in all aspects of a young person’s development – personal, social, educational, political, cultural, spiritual, physical, and vocational*”.

It is clear that the faith based youth work represented in the YouthNet Faith Based Interest Group is engaged in all of these aspects of a young persons development, with a particular emphasis on personal, social, spiritual and physical development.

The approach to spiritual development varies from group to group. Some faith based youth groups may not include an explicit spiritual development element in their youth work, while others may have a specific strand or programme that focuses on spiritual development. A number of interviewees indicated that they took a holistic approach to the development of young people that integrated a spiritual development dimension alongside personal, social and physical development.

The Model for Effective Practice states:

*“Many young people are interested in developing a belief system, which may or may not involve a spiritual dimension that can make sense of their experiences and inform their relationships with others and with society, both locally and globally. Natural disasters, human atrocities and personal tragedy can give rise to uncertainty, anxiety and despair in young people. They need opportunities to discuss and ask questions about their own personal life experiences and about the causes and effects of global events.”*

Different faith based groups approach this in different ways. Some present the Christian faith within a faith development programme, while others take a faith exploration approach that may include learning about various faiths.

Sometimes this overlaps with EDI/cultural diversity work. Some groups interviewed referred to integrating a testing of values and beliefs throughout all programmes and activities.

All of the participants in the young people's focus group indicated that faith development had been part of their experience of their youth group (See Appendix VI).

The groups interviewed placed an emphasis on personal choice and voluntary participation in faith development programmes. All of the groups interviewed indicated that proselytising young people (i.e. imposing their faith base on young people) was inappropriate, ineffective and in conflict with both their organisational values and the values of youth work.

There was no evidence of proselytising from the young people's focus group. The participants in the focus group indicated that their youth group did not impose its faith upon them (See Appendix VI).

#### **5.1.4 Other Faith Based Groups**

The researcher also investigated the numbers of young people participating in youth work in other faith based groups that may be neither registered with the Boards or members of the YouthNet Faith based Interest groups. This includes groups such as:

- The 174 Trust (56 young people)
- Armagh Archdiocese Youth Ministry
- Belfast Chinese Christian Church
- Belfast Islamic Centre
- Campaigners (2500 young people)
- Choices (1857 young people)
- Church of the Nazarene Youth Groups
- Church Lads/Girls Brigade
- Crusaders (800 young people)
- Elim Pentecostal Church Youth Groups
- Girls Friendly Society
- Lifelink Churches

- Streetreach
- Youth for Christ Drop In Centres

These groups have at least 6000 young people participating per annum.

A number of faith based groups work alongside other youth groups, churches and schools. For example, each year Christian Aid works with 1,000 young people in youth groups, 5,000 primary and secondary school pupils, 200-300 students and a network of 50 youth volunteers and a network of 400 Youth Leaders and Youth Workers who use resources with their own youth groups to run sessions on global issues.

### **5.1.5 Comments**

Other important issues that emerged in the course of this analysis of the scale and scope of faith based youth work are as follows:

- There is currently no single accurate measure available to provide a comprehensive picture of the scale of faith based youth work in Northern Ireland
- Some of the major providers, such as the Presbyterian Church do not currently have a system for collecting this type of data

## **5.2 Equality of Access**

During the interviews and focus groups the following questions was explored:  
*What barriers prevent equality of access for all young people to faith based youth work?*

The research found that there were no actual barriers or exclusive conditions of membership/participation in the Faith Based Interest Group members groups.

However the Group expressed concerns that their groups were perceived externally as only being for young people with a religious faith.

The research found that these groups were open to all young people regardless of religious belief, background etc. However three areas emerged where there may be barriers to participation for some young people in some groups. They were:

- Physical barriers to access for some young people with a disability to groups that meet in church premises that do not have adequate disability access
- Out dated approaches by some groups that are unattractive to young people today
- Barriers to leadership roles by some groups around issues of faith and sexual orientation

However the major barrier mentioned by all informants as preventing young people participating in faith based youth groups was negative perceptions of faith based groups and their youth work practice.

Interviewees and focus group participants highlighted negative perceptions of faith based youth work among young people, families, government bodies, youth work and funding agencies.

The main negative perception is, as indicated above, that participants will be proselytised. Interviewees indicated that these negative perceptions appeared to be based on both personal negative experiences of religion and/or personal religious prejudice.<sup>11</sup>

This negative perception by young people themselves was the major barrier to young people accessing faith based youth work.

Lack of awareness of the actual nature of faith based youth work within the wider youth service and among young people was also highlighted as a barrier. Informants referred consistently to a lack of marketing resulting in a low profile and lack of understanding of such provision that resulted in sustained misperceptions.

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<sup>11</sup> None of the groups that gave examples of perceived religious prejudice from funders/agencies or government bodies had challenged their treatment under Section 75 of the Equality Legislation.

## 5.3 Outcomes

### 5.3.1 Outcomes for Individuals

The research found that the main outcomes of faith based youth work for individual participants are:

- Personal and social development
- Community participation
- Faith development
- Local and global citizenship
- International service
- New practical skills

The young people in the focus group were asked what they had learned and how they had changes through participating in their youth groups. The vast majority of responses were indicators of personal and social development such as respect and acceptance of others, social skills and listening skills (See Appendix VI).

### 5.3.2 Outcomes relating to Policy

Interviewees were asked the following question:

*How do you see faith based youth work in relation to government policies and strategies such as the New Youth Work Strategy and TSN?*

Three main government polices were discussed; NI Youth Work Strategy, New TSN and Shared Future.

- (a) *NI Youth Work Strategy*: There are different levels of awareness of the NI Youth Work Strategy among groups, with awareness much higher at the regional level than at local unit level. Some groups have been closely involved in the consultations and development of the Strategy

while others have only a basic awareness that it exists. Most groups were able to relate their youth work to the values and priorities of the Youth Work Strategy. One group is using the Strategy as the framework for its own organisational strategic developmental process. Interviewees referred to the fact that spiritual development is one part of the Strategy that they have lobbied for. This raises the questions – is spiritual development just the work of faith based youth groups? Is it a strategic priority and curriculum area within the youth service regardless of the faith base or secular base of the youth group or the individual youth worker?

(b) *New Targeting Social Need:* Once again there are varying levels of organisational strategic focus on TSN. Some groups do not consider TSN as a strategic priority while others such as Youthlink and Catholic Guides have developed a clear TSN strategy. Faith based youth work is located in both TSN and non TSN areas in Northern Ireland. Churches are part of the community infrastructure in all TSN areas. Some churches have developed significant youth work in TSN areas (e.g. Catholic Youth Centres in North and West Belfast<sup>12</sup>) while other churches in urban TSN areas have declined with the community in terms of numbers, volunteers and resources and their capacity to carry out effective youth work in their context has reduced. The pattern among some urban Protestant churches of former residents (and their children and young people) retaining involvement in local churches and youth groups, after they have moved out of the area, may be an untapped source of social capital in these communities. There is also a significant strand of faith based youth work that has a faith based primary emphasis on addressing social disadvantage and these projects are by definition located in the most disadvantaged communities in Northern Ireland (e.g. Mornington Community Project in Lower Ormeau Rd, 174 Trust in the New Lodge, The Link working in loyalist estates in Newtownards and Youth Initiatives in Poleglass).

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<sup>12</sup> Youthcom have just completed an audit of Diocesan Youth Provision demonstrating the significant scale of its provision in greater Belfast

(c) *Shared Future*

There is clear evidence of faith based youth work developing excellent practice in Community Relations and EDI from a faith based emphasis on reconciliation. However faith based youth work appears to be facing the same challenge as the wider youth sector and the formal education sector. How do mainly single identity groups/schools/institutions contribute to building a Shared Future if the nature of their structures sustains separation of Catholic and Protestant young people?

The research identified significant differences between the two main traditions, with a stronger tradition of Protestant faith development within the informal sector and a stronger tradition of Catholic faith development within the formal education sector.

However the strong record of cross community integration and co-operation among some faith based youth organisations, such as Youthlink, does indicate the potential for faith based youth work to address these challenges and contribute towards building a Shared Future.

There is also potential for learning across the churches. For example the Catholic Diocese of Down and Connor has considerable experience in church based youth work in urban areas of disadvantage, that may be of interest to Protestant churches who want to develop further in this area of work.

## 5.4 Social Capital

### 5.4.1 Defining Social Capital

Definitions of social capital vary, but the main aspects include citizenship, 'neighbourliness', social networks and civic participation (see Appendix VII). The term "social capital" is most closely associated with political scientist Robert Putnam and:

*“refers to the nature and extent of one's involvement in various informal networks and formal civic organizations. From chatting with neighbours or engaging in recreational activities to joining environmental organizations and political parties, social capital in this sense is used as a conceptual term to characterize the many and varied ways in which a given community's members interact... it is important to recognize that social capital is not a single entity, but is rather multidimensional in nature.”*(Grootaert, Christiaan, et al. *World Bank Working Paper No. 18: Measuring Social Capital. The World Bank, Washington, D.C.* [http://poverty.worldbank.org/files/11998\\_WP18-Web.pdf](http://poverty.worldbank.org/files/11998_WP18-Web.pdf))

There are many different questionnaires and matrices that have been developed to measure social capital such as the National Statistics Social Capital Matrix of Surveys ([www.statistics.gov.uk/socialcapital](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/socialcapital)).

These include questions that attempt to assess dimensions of social capital such as:

- Groups and Networks
- Trust and Solidarity
- Collective Action and Co-operation
- Information and Communication
- Social Cohesion and Inclusion
- Empowerment and Political Action

### 5.4.2 Context

This research explored the outcomes of faith based youth work to the wider community regarding social capital with reference to Derek Bacon's work on faith based organisations and social capital in Northern Ireland.

Bacon articulates the UK policy context:

*"As the voluntary sector finds itself 'mainstreamed' into public policy through mechanisms like the Compact...the social policy climate provides a new context for the operation of voluntary and community bodies including those that are faith based 'How can we draw on the strength of faith communities for the revitalisation of civil society?' asks David Blunkett (2001)"*

In the Northern Ireland context he explains: *"Home Secretary Blunkett's question is more perplexing in the Northern Ireland context, where trust is at a premium. Here, as elsewhere, religion can be a major motivating factor for voluntary action in an organised form (James, 1987; Greeley 1997) and research has indeed found a significant level and range of voluntary activity among churches (Bacon, 1998; Hamilton, 1999). However religion can also present an absolutist, exclusive edge that puts it at odds with the values of tolerance and democracy and divides in a fundamental way. Churches here have a place and a reach they perhaps no longer command elsewhere on these islands (Morrow, 1995; Morrow et al., 1994). They maintain a significant response to social need (Kinkead, 1995) but, in the main, they do so within two distinct communities whose boundaries are at once cultural, political and religious."* (From: Revitalising civil society in Northern Ireland: social capital formation in three faith-based organisations , Derek Bacon, 2001)

The recent published research project "Faith as social capital Connecting or dividing?" (Joseph Rowntree Foundation/The Policy Press, 2006) explored the question in Britain:

*How far can Faith organisations and their members contribute to social capital that not only bonds people together, but also enables them to cross boundaries and build bridges and links with others in civil society?*

The main conclusions were:

- *Faith communities contribute substantial and distinctive bridging and linking social capital through their co-presence in urban areas, their connecting frameworks, the use of their buildings, the spaces that their associational*

*networks open up, their engagement in governance, and their work across boundaries with others in the public domain.*

- But more could be done if they did not face various obstacles: the misunderstanding and suspicion of others, financial barriers, inappropriate buildings, state managerialism and regulation, and various issues of capacity.*
- Also, changes and developments need to occur within Faith communities themselves. Although practice varies considerably, it is often the case that: bridging and linking is undertaken by quite a small minority; the potential skills and contributions of members may remain unrecognised, constrained and suppressed and issues of power marginalised; and the particular qualities required for wider associational deliberation and political participation often are not a subject of explicit reflection and development.*

While this research is on a smaller scale and more specific, there are interesting similarities between its findings and the findings of this major study.

#### **5.4.3 Faith based Youth Work Contribution to Social Capital**

The contribution of the Faith Based Interest Group members to social capital was explored in the interviews and also within the two focus groups (with youth workers and young people).

The main finding was that there is clear evidence of the faith based youth groups contributing to social capital within local communities. This includes:

- A strong citizenship dimension in all of the groups
- A strong emphasis on leadership development within all of the groups
- Evidence of participants supported to engage in the wider community
- Some faith based youth work making a significant contribution to local community infrastructure/networks/for a etc
- High levels of volunteering contributing to social capital
- A contribution to trust and social cohesion in local communities

The one aspect of social capital in which most groups were weaker was in political empowerment.

However the main weakness of faith based youth groups in relation to social capital in Northern Ireland is with regard to wider social cohesion across the sectarian divide. While most groups are contributing to social capital within separate Protestant and Catholic communities and many of the groups are also active in developing cross community contact and understanding, the mainly single identity nature of the provision does not create wider social cohesion. As Derek Bacon puts it:

*“For generations these Catholic and Protestant communities have been assembling their own social service infrastructure, often centred on the church. This has contributed to their internal solidarity. It has also reinforced social distance from the other (Douglas, 1997). There is a high level of intra-community trust within each of the two communities which has, notoriously, generated a similar level of inter-community distrust and intolerance. Strong localised trust and dense multifunctional ties, associated with ‘bonding’ or ‘within-group’ social capital, have been built up within each religious subculture generally at the cost of thin impersonal trust of strangers and weak ties that are associated with ‘bridging’ or ‘between-group’ social capital.”*

(From: Revitalising civil society in Northern Ireland: social capital formation in three faith-based organisations , Derek Bacon, 2001)

This is clearly an issue that is not confined to faith based youth work in Northern Ireland. For example similar patterns of segregation are evident in non faith based youth work.

However, faith based youth groups do face the particularly challenge of contributing to “bridging” social capital in a society that is divided along religious lines.

## 5.5 Training

Interviewees explored the question:

*What are the training opportunities accessed by those engaged in the delivery of faith based youth work and do you see any gaps in training?*

The research found that most part time youth worker training needs were currently met by Youthlink. This year Youthlink awarded 178 OCN Level 2 and 3 Youth work Programme certificates and 88 accredited Trainee Leader certificates.

A substantial level of in house training on issues including Child Protection is also provided by individual organisations. For example the Girls Brigade NI trained 560 officers and sub officers in the past year.

There is a 2 year accredited Catholic Youth Ministries Studies Programme. The only gap identified was at diploma/degree level particularly for Protestant faith based youth workers in NI.

A significant number of interviewees referred to perceptions of a “chill factor” for faith based youth work within the degree course at UJJ.

With a significant growth in recent years in the number of full time church based youth workers, some interviewees identified a need for a new Youth Ministry Diploma/Degree or a Youth Work with Applied Theology Degree, indicating that such courses were currently only available in England.

However, if the outcome of addressing these issues was to be three main training routes in Northern Ireland; a secular course, a Catholic course and Protestant course this would not contribute to wider social cohesion or “bridging” social capital.

## **6 Main Conclusions**

The main conclusions of the research are as follows:

- 6.1 In 2005, there were 1,405 registered faith/church based groups in Northern Ireland with a total of 98,902 members, 16,457 volunteer leaders and 160 full time youth workers
- 6.2 68% of registered youth groups in Northern Ireland were faith/church based in 2005
- 6.3 57.8% of all members of registered youth groups in Northern Ireland were participants in faith/church based youth groups in 2005
- 6.4 74.4% of all volunteer leaders in registered youth groups in Northern Ireland were volunteering in faith/church based groups in 2005
- 6.5 43.2% of all full time youth workers in registered youth groups in Northern Ireland were working in faith/church based groups in 2005
- 6.6 Faith/church based groups are located in significant numbers in both urban and rural areas and in both TSN and non TSN areas
- 6.7 The majority of faith/church based youth groups are single identity or predominantly Protestant or Catholic
- 6.8 The majority of uniformed and non uniformed church based registered groups are connected to Protestant churches and mainly Presbyterian churches.

- 6.9 There is a significant level of full time provision by Catholic Youth Centres in the greater Belfast area, particularly in areas of social disadvantage
- 6.10 There is currently no single accurate measure available to provide a comprehensive picture of the scale of all faith based youth work in Northern Ireland as many groups are not registered and some of the major providers do not currently have a system for collecting this type of data
- 6.11 Faith based youth work represented in the YouthNet Faith Based Interest Group is engaged in all aspects of a young persons development, with a particular emphasis on personal, social, spiritual and physical development.
- 6.12 There is equality of access for all young people to participate in groups represented in the Faith Based Interest Group
- 6.13 Negative perceptions and low profile are the major barriers to young people accessing faith based youth work.
- 6.14 The main outcomes of faith based youth work for individual participants are personal and social development
- 6.15 Most faith based youth work shares the values and priorities of the NI Youth Work Strategy core theme of personal and social development
- 6.16 There are good models of faith based youth work targeting social need and church based youth work has the potential to target social need in a more strategic way
- 6.17 There is clear evidence of faith based youth groups contributing to social capital within local communities including citizenship, leadership

development, community participation, networks, volunteering, trust and social cohesion in local communities

6.18 There is evidence of faith based youth work in Northern Ireland “bridging” social capital across the sectarian divide and there is good practice in cross community integration and co-operation. However building cross community social cohesion is a major challenge for religious groups rooted in a divided society.

6.19 With a significant growth in recent years in the number of full time church based youth workers there is an expressed need for a Youth Work with Applied Theology Degree in Northern Ireland

## 7 Recommendations

- 7.1 The Faith Based Interest Group<sup>13</sup> should attempt to raise awareness of the scope and scale of their youth work and its outcomes of personal and social development of young people and its positive contribution to social capital in local communities
- 7.2 The Faith Based Interest Group should engage with policy makers on the issue of faith communities/faith based youth work as social capital
- 7.3 The Faith Based Interest Group should attempt to raise awareness of the actual nature of their youth work to address negative perceptions of faith based youth work by young people
- 7.4 The Faith Based Interest Group should attempt to increase understanding, awareness and acceptance of their youth work by other YouthNet members, agencies, funders and government bodies
- 7.5 The Faith Based Interest Group should consult with the Equality Commission around perceived unfair treatment of faith based groups in relation to Section 75
- 7.6 The Faith Based Interest Group should support all faith based groups to gather statistics on the scale of their youth work in an attempt to develop a comprehensive picture of the scale of all faith based youth work in Northern Ireland
- 7.7 The Faith Based Interest Group should work with other YouthNet members and statutory youth work agencies to address the common issue of segregated provision in the context of developing a Shared Future in Northern Ireland
- 7.8 The Faith Based Interest Group should contribute to discussions to address the perceived gap in training for full time faith based youth workers at diploma/degree level and should attempt to avoid further segregated provision
- 7.9 The Faith Based Interest Group should encourage faith based youth work to develop more strategic focus on TSN to fulfil its potential for development in areas of urban decline
- 7.10 The Faith Based Interest Group should stimulate a debate within the wider Youth Service on approaches to the spiritual development element of NI Youth Work Strategy

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<sup>13</sup> While these recommendations are presented to the YouthNet Faith Based Interest Group, the key agencies the group should raise these issues with include YouthNet, Youth Council, Youth Service Liaison Forum, Church Youth Departments and the Equality Commission

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## **Appendix I**

### **Key Research Informants**

#### **Interviewees**

- Gillian Best and David Rock, Department of Youth and Children's Work, Methodist Church in Ireland
- David Brown, Church of Ireland Youth Department
- Howard Davey and Colin Taylor, YMCA
- Chloe Hemphill, Girls Brigade
- Houston Lowe, YCNI
- George McClelland, Boys Brigade
- Brian McKee, Youthcom
- Fergus McMorrow, John Peacock and Patricia Blackman, Youthlink
- Denis Palmer, Director, YouthNet
- Marian Stewart, Catholic Guides of Ireland
- Mags Tierney, Youth Initiatives

#### **Telephone/Email Consultations**

- Catherine Acton, Youth Director, Diocese of Armagh
- Ian Bothwell, Crossfire Trust
- Gabrielle Doherty, NI Council for Ethnic Minorities
- Jamal Iweida, President, Belfast Islamic Centre
- David Ramsey, Youth Director, Baptist Youth
- Bill Shaw, Director, 174 Trust
- Pritam Sribher, Cultural Diversity Youth Development Officer, Indian Community Centre, Belfast
- Graham Thompson, Presbyterian Youth

## **Appendix II**

### **Semi Structured Interview Questions**

1. How do you define faith based youth work?
2. What is the scope and scale of your organisation's current delivery of faith based youth work in Northern Ireland? (numbers of young people participating, young leaders, age groups, volunteers, geographical location, type of activities – seek statistical data)
3. What do you think is the scope and scale of faith based youth work in Northern Ireland as whole? (explore various groups, especially non registered groups)
4. What are the training opportunities accessed by those engaged in the delivery of faith based youth work and do you see any gaps in training?
5. What do you see as the outcomes of faith based youth work to the participants?
6. Do you see any barriers that prevent equality of access for all young people to faith based youth work? (explore)
7. What do you see as the outcomes of faith based youth work to the wider community? (explore social capital, cohesion, trust etc)
8. How do you see faith based youth work in relation to government policies and strategies such as the New Youth Work Strategy and TSN?
9. Are there any other key issues in relation to faith based youth work that you would like to feed into this research?

## **Appendix III**

### **Youth Workers Focus Group**

#### **Purpose**

A focus group with a representative sample of youth workers from faith based groups to explore their practice in relation to social capital theory

7.30pm      Introductions and Purpose of the Focus Group

7.45pm      Questions

1. In what way does your youth work promote citizenship among participants?
2. What contribution does your youth work make to promoting neighbourliness and community spirit?
3. Does your group have shared values with other groups in the community?
4. What other groups in your local community does your group actively co-operate with?
5. To what extent do you support and encourage participants to become active in other groups and activities in the community?
6. What percentage of participants in your group become involved in other groups in your community as a result?
7. To what extent do you support participants to become politically active?
8. In what way does your youth work build trust in the local community?

#### **Participants**

- Andy Hewitt, Youth Initiatives
- Stephen Hughes, Youthcom
- Brian Lacey, Church of Ireland Connor Youth Council
- Ciara McLean, St Joseph's Guides
- Andrea Rainey, Catholic Guides of Ireland, Holy Trinity Parish
- David Rock, Methodist Youth
- Tracey Seawright, Belfast YMCA

## **Appendix IV**

### **Youth Workers Focus Group**

#### **Flip Chart Notes**

##### **In what way does your youth work promote citizenship among participants?**

- It makes citizenship more relevant especially in relation to what they do in school
- Campaigning & lobbying politicians
- We are involved in delivering the EMU programme giving both the local & bigger picture into understand citizenship
- We explore “What is a good citizen?” and how it affects daily life
- We encourage social action related to social capital about taking more responsibility
- We support them along from being young people to adults
- Everything that youth work is about tackles discrimination
- Awards are used to look at citizenship
- Age group programme includes a)Me b)Family c)National d)International/community
- Looking at projects such as Tear Fund/Christian Aid/Habitat for Humanity
- We explore citizenship at national/local level/community level
- There is a knock on effect – everything impacts on citizenship
- It can be simple as developing a skill
- It is Important to put it into action – to test things out

##### **What contribution does your youth make to promoting neighbourliness and community spirit?**

- Establishing a sense of belonging – group dynamics/networking/pride/young people coming together and belonging to something
- Attend local mass once a month
- We have events for all Guides and it moves around parishes
- Bring a friend – cinema night
- Promoting acceptance of others
- Have others involved who are not Catholic
- Ongoing dialogue with Ethnic Minority groups
- Youth work is good at bridging within communities i.e. N Belfast/cross community programmes/developing policies/ developing training

### **Does your group have shared values with other groups in the community?**

- Girl Guides & Boy Scouts share activities
- There are more connections and better pooling of resources – youth workers working closer together and shared values regarding young people
- Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy involves a spectrum of groups supported by Government
- Some groups feel threatened by young people hanging about and there can be tension
- Practicalities can be difficult
- Shared values – we need agreed standards on young people and how you work with them through training of staff and volunteers and faith based professional values

### **What other groups in your local community does your group actively co-operate with?**

- Girl Guides with YMCA (weekends away)
- Special Olympics (promotion & fundraising events)
- Formal written agreement (25 groups)
- Informal partnerships (25-30 groups)
- Use other buildings (halls & mini bus)
- Neighbourhood Renewal – forums etc
- YMCA – huge amount of partnerships
- Connection with Tear Fund/Christian Aid
- Youth workers who work with community groups

### **To what extent do you support and encourage participants to become active in other groups and activities in the community?**

- We encourage community involvement – community, family, church
- Its fundamental to all that you do
- Follow-up work – linking young people to other groups
- Sign posting – encouraging young people to try something different
- There is rivalry between organisations – the voluntary sector can be just as competitive
- It is important that choices are provided i.e. what spiritual road a young person chooses
- Good quality youth services
- Funding can restrict programmes
- Inability to market faith based youth work. We need to sell the brand better. To promote it as “cool”

**What percentage of participants in your group become involved in other groups in your community as a result?**

- Young people are very involved in other groups – although maybe not directly as a result
- Leaders must take the initiative to forge partnership with other groups
- Different parishes can be a good linkage
- Depends on the type of young person

**To what extent do you support participants to become politically active?**

- Make Poverty History
- To make young people socially active – they are politically active beings and they crave that sort of stuff
- It can be about making them active/socially aware
- Provide opportunity and insight to local politics
- Projects with Electoral Office
- Youth in Government Programme – Politics & Citizenship
- Leadership development

**In what way does your youth work build trust in the local community?**

- Girl Guides are trusted to take young people away on trips
- We promote the idea of respect for elders
- What you put in will result in positive actions
- We have seen positive results over a long term basis – with schools/community etc
- Consistent leadership results in trust and respect from community
- Have to think of the job being longer than 3 years
- The key word is “consistent”
- Organised a Gala Dinner to celebrate and thank all involved
- Its about standards i.e. quality of provision, Quality of staff
- Community Relations Issues and faith

**Any Other Issues**

- We don't celebrate our achievements
- Methodist do celebrate with an Awards Night
- We need to market and promote ourselves better
- Standing up to make it “cool”
- We need to provide evidence of the impact of our work on young peoples lives
- Concerned about political correctness re funders/others – suspicious of faith based work
- Funding bodies should have more sensitivity

## **Appendix V**

### **Young Peoples Focus Group**

#### **Purpose**

A focus group with a representative sample of young people accessing faith based youth work to explore their experiences (related to social capital concepts), to identify outcomes on participants and to discuss any barriers preventing equality of access

Introductions and Icebreaker

#### **Me and My Community**

1. Write on post it notes and stick on flip chart sheet:

- How many clubs, societies groups do you belong to now?
- How many clubs, societies groups you belonged to before joining your youth group?

2. Mark on a scale (1-10, not at all - a great deal) on a flip chart sheet:

- How much do people trust each other in my community
- What difference does my youth group make to trust in the community?
  
- How much I trust my neighbours
- What difference has being involved in my youth group made to how much I trust my neighbours?
  
- How much neighbours help each other
- What difference does my youth group make to how much my neighbours help each other?

#### **Me and My Youth Group**

1. Write on post it notes and stick on flip chart sheet:

- What has been the impact of my youth group on me? (learnt, changed etc)
- List all the other groups your youth group works with in your community?
- What stops other people my age from joining my youth group?

2. Mark on a scale (1-10, not at all - a great deal) on a flip chart sheet:

- How well you co-operate with each other in your youth group?
- How well does your youth group co-operate with other groups in the community?
- How much does your youth group encourage you to get involved in other groups in the community?
- How much does your youth group help you to be a good neighbour?
- How much are you encouraged to get involved in politics by your youth group?
- How much does your youth group build more trust in your community?

### **Young Peoples Focus Group Participants**

8<sup>th</sup> May 2006

- Laura Kelly, Catholic Guides of Ireland, Holy Trinity Parish
- Marie Ozanne, St Joseph's Guides
- Laura Whinnery, Youth Initiatives

26<sup>th</sup> May 2006

- Sarah Moore, Cregagh Methodist Youth Club
- Becky Hewitt, Cregagh Methodist Youth Club
- Philip Patterson, Cregagh Methodist Youth Club
- Johnny McCormick, Cregagh Methodist Youth Club
- Craig Meek, Newtownbreda Presbyterian Youth Club
- Philip Todd, Newtownbreda Presbyterian Youth Club
- Philip Emerson, Newtownbreda Presbyterian Youth Club
- Jamie Foye, Newtownbreda Presbyterian Youth Club
- Stephen Pointon, Newtownbreda Presbyterian Youth Club
- Shauna Mateer, Youth Initiatives
- Daniella McMahon, Youth Initiatives
- Laura McAllister, Youth Initiatives

## **Appendix VI**

### **Young Peoples Focus Groups**

#### **Flip Chart Notes**

##### **Me and My Community**

- **How many clubs, societies groups did you belong to before joining your youth group?**

The average number for participants was 3 groups

- **How many clubs, societies groups do you belong to now?**

The average number for participants was 5 groups

- **How much do people trust each other in my community**

Four participants indicated lower levels of trust, four indicated neither high nor low levels of trust and five indicated higher levels of trust

- **What difference does my youth group make to trust in the community?**

All participants indicated a moderate to high impact of their youth group on levels of trust in their communities

- **How much I trust my neighbours**

Three participants indicated lower levels of trust and twelve indicated higher levels of trust

- **What difference has being involved in my youth group made to how much I trust my neighbours?**

Five participants indicated higher levels of impact by their youth group, five indicated neither high nor low levels of impact and five indicated lower levels of impact

- **How much neighbours help each other**

Twelve participants indicated higher levels of helping and three indicated lower levels of helping

- **What difference does my youth group make to how much my neighbours help each other?**

Seven participants indicated higher levels of impact, one indicated neither high nor low levels of impact and seven indicated lower levels of trust

### **Me and My Youth Group**

- **What has been the impact of my youth group on me? What have I learnt?**
  - To camp
  - Learnt new skills
  - Meet new people
  - Growing in my faith and have come to know God
  - I've met many new friends
  - There are a lot of opportunities open to me
  - Be yourself
  - A lot more caring
  - Accept people for who they are
  - See the world different
  - I have encountered God in my life, which has changed me dramatically
  - I have come to know what I want out of life
  - Trust
  - Learnt to share
  - Make stuff out of wood
  - Went places
  - Teamwork & co-operation
  - To respect others
  - To be myself
  - Patience
  - How much a hug means
  - Built and grew in my faith
  - Not to judge people
  - How to lead a group of young people patience
  - Cooking
  - To listen to others
  - To pray for others
  - To respect others
  - Respect
  - Social skills
  - Acceptance of others
  - Importance of sharing
  - Important to support one another
  - Importance of listening
  - To support people
  - Importance of honesty
  - More about God
  - How to communicate with others

- How to stay calm
  - How to help others
  - Faith
  - Social Skills
  - Patience
  - Importance of listening
  - Friendship
  - Grow close to God
  - Learnt about the Holy Spirit
- **What has been the impact of my youth group on me? How have I changed?**
    - My opinion on how to view other denominations
    - Become a more open person
    - Matured
    - Made many close friends
    - More outgoing
    - More encouraged
    - Got closer to people in group
    - Matured
    - Grown closer to others
    - More helpful/for the better
    - Become less shy and more approachable
    - Become a nicer more pleasant person
    - Better person
    - Listen more
    - Now acknowledge everyone as an individual
    - Listen more
    - Now look beyond what people say
    - Help community more
    - More faith
    - Better person
    - Help out more
    - Have more fun
    - I become a better person
    - I enjoy church more
    - Respecting others more
    - More faith in God
    - Volunteering more

- **List all the other groups your youth group works with in your community?**

Youth Initiatives

- Charis
- Oasis in East Belfast
- Crosslinks
- SPY – St Colm’s School
- Poleglass Youth Centre
- Church

Catholic Guides

- Other Guide units
- Church

Newtownbreda Presbyterian Youth Club

- Youthlink
- Good Shepherd Catholic Church
- Cooke Presbyterian
- Ballynafeigh Methodist
- St Jude’s Parish
- St Joseph’s
- Rosetta Primary School
- Forge Integrated Primary School
- Lagan integrated College

Cregagh Methodist Youth Club

- Streetreach
- GB
- BB
- Castlewellan Holiday Week
- Sunday School
- Bible Class
- Praise group
- Youth bands
- Junior fellowship
- Crèche

- **What stops other people my age from joining my youth group?**

- Pride
- Social Life
- Family
- Thinks its childish
- Dancing
- People say there is too much God – they say that we are Bible bashers
- People are anti religion and don’t like faith based groups

- Want a group where they can just play games and nothing else
- Drink
- Boys
- Friends
- Cliques
- Bible/church background
- Involved in other groups that meet at same time
- Drink
- Drugs
- Better things to do
- Peer pressure
- Temptation
- Peers
- The work carried on with YI
- Being afraid they may not know others
- Not well advertised
- Bad timing
- Usually just people from church
- Don't know many people
- Think its all "God stuff"
- Not well advertised
- The Christian side
- Not well advertised
- On a Sunday night
- Dislike church – think its boring
- Other prior commitments
- Not in area
- "Not cool"
- Not interested
- Other things to do
- Don't feel confident to join and integrate into a group successfully –might feel intimidated
- Lack of faith
- Don't know others in it
- Afraid of not fitting in

- **How do you co-operate with each other in your youth group?**

Thirteen participants indicated high levels of co-operation and two indicated moderate levels of co-operation

- **How well does your youth group co-operate with other groups in the community?**

Seven participants indicated high levels of co-operation, five indicated quite high and five indicated moderate levels of co-operation

- **How much does your youth group encourage you to get involved in other groups in the community?**

Three participants indicated high levels of encouragement, four indicated quite high levels and eight indicated moderate levels of encouragement

- **How much does your youth group help you to be a good neighbour?**

Three participants indicated high levels nine indicated quite high levels, and three indicated moderate levels

- **How much are you encouraged to get involved in politics by your youth group?**

Ten indicated very low levels of encouragement, four indicated moderate levels of encouragement, and one indicated a high level

- **How much does your youth group build more trust in your community**

Ten participants indicated higher levels, four indicated moderate levels and one indicated a low level

#### 26<sup>th</sup> May Focus group only

- **My youth group forces its faith and me**

Ten participants indicated not at all and two very little

- **I explore faith in my youth group**

All participants indicated a high level of exploring faith

## **Appendix VII**

### **Social Capital from [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk)**

**Social Capital:** Measuring networks and shared values

#### **What is social capital?**

Social capital describes the pattern and intensity of networks among people and the shared values which arise from those networks. Greater interaction between people generates a greater sense of community spirit.

Definitions of social capital vary, but the main aspects include citizenship, 'neighbourliness', social networks and civic participation. The definition used by ONS, taken from the Office for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), is "networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups"<sup>1</sup>.

#### **Why does social capital matter?**

Research has shown that higher levels of social capital are associated with better health, higher educational achievement, better employment outcomes, and lower crime rates. In other words, those with extensive networks are more likely to be "housed, healthy, hired and happy"<sup>2</sup>. All of these areas are of concern to both policy-makers and community members alike.

#### **How do we measure social capital?**

There are a number of different aspects to social capital and measuring the level of social capital in communities can be complex. In many surveys respondents are asked a range of questions that cover a variety of issues. They commonly focus on:

- Levels of trust - for example, whether individuals trust their neighbours and whether they consider their neighbourhood a place where people help each

other.

- Membership - for example, to how many clubs, societies or social groups individuals belong.
- Networks and how much social contact individuals have in their lives - for example, how often individuals see family and friends.

### **What are networks?**

Formal and informal networks are central to the concept of social capital. They are defined as the personal relationships which are accumulated when people interact with each other in families, workplaces, neighbourhoods, local associations and a range of informal and formal meeting places<sup>3</sup>.

Different types of social capital can be described in terms of different types of networks:

- Bonding social capital – describes closer connections between people and is characterised by strong bonds e.g. among family members or among members of the same ethnic group; it is good for 'getting by' in life.
- Bridging social capital – describes more distant connections between people and is characterised by weaker, but more cross-cutting ties e.g. with business associates, acquaintances, friends from different ethnic groups, friends of friends, etc; it is good for 'getting ahead' in life.
- Linking social capital – describes connections with people in positions of power and is characterised by relations between those within a hierarchy where there are differing levels of power; it is good for accessing support from formal institutions. It is different from bonding and bridging in that it is concerned with relations between people who are not on an equal footing. An example would be a social services agency dealing with an individual e.g. job searching at the Benefits Agency.

## **What are shared norms, values and understandings?**

These relate to shared attitudes towards behaviour that are accepted by most individuals/groups as a 'good thing': examples are not parking in a disabled parking space at a supermarket and giving up your seat to someone who needs it more on the bus. These norms of behaviour are understood by most members of society. Sanctions underpin norms: fear of disapproval might compel individuals to comply with the shared values or norms and behave in an accepted way.

## **What are groups?**

Groups in this context are very broadly defined and can refer to:

- Geographical groups - such as people living in a specific neighbourhood.
  
- Professional groups - such as people in the same occupation, members of a local association or voluntary organisation.
  
- Social groups - such as families, church-based groups, groups of friends.
  
- Virtual groups - such as the networks generated over the internet in chat rooms through common interest groups.

## **Produced by the Office for National Statistics**

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- 2 Woolcock, M (2001) The place of social capital in Understanding Social and Economic Outcomes. ISUMA Canadian Journal of Policy Research 2 (10) 11-17.
- 3 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2000) Measuring Social Capital: current collections and future directions.

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