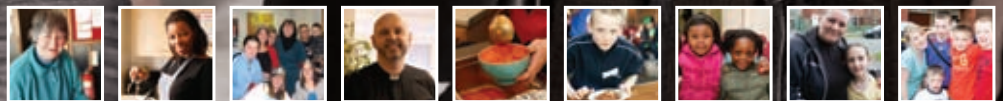


Church **Urban Fund**

CHURCHES IN **ACTION**

Where Churches are Making a Difference



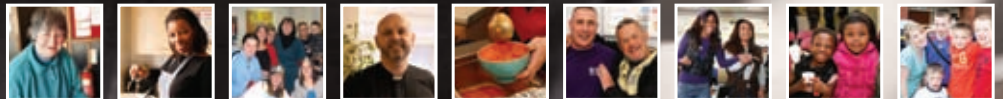
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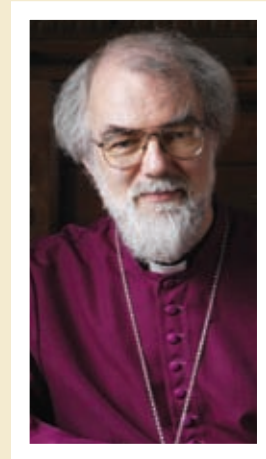
CHURCHES IN ACTION



Where Churches are Making a Difference



Research for the Church Urban Fund, carried out by the Applied Research Centre in Sustainable Regeneration (SURGE) at Coventry University.



We are increasingly aware of living in a complex and, at times, even dangerous world. Many people are experiencing in their daily lives a feeling of helplessness and an increase in anxiety and depression. Some speak about Britain as being a broken society.

When you read this report you will find echoes of some of that in the hardship and deprivation being addressed by the six projects described, all of them examples of the "Church in Action"; all of them supported by the Church Urban Fund (CUF).

But you'll find something else, something more powerful and uplifting.

The stories are of people who have found something, just when they most needed it, and in some cases when they had sunk into the depths of despair. They found warmth, welcome and friendship. They found people, often volunteers, who re-affirmed them as part of the human family. They found hospitality, respect, esteem. They found that the possibility of being part of a web of trusting relationships had not disappeared forever. As one says, "It was like finding family again."

This is not a piece of research about the complexity of modern life. It is research which reveals how simple it can be to offer people a fresh start, to open the way to healing and renewal, new friendships and possibilities. No magic wands here, but a testimony to human worth - how it gets lost, but also how it can be rediscovered and regenerated.

From the Christian perspective that informs the sense of vocation or motivation behind these projects, the volunteers and professional staff who animate them, and Church Urban Fund which supports them, this is the same story that Jesus told us in the Gospels. It is a story of how God's love for every one of us is never lost however far we stray, however hard the times we have to live through. Nobody falls outside the compass of God's love. He, after all, created us and in his own image. How could he not love and wish us well - and give us what we need to be the people he longs for us to be? This research is the story, simply told, of how we cooperate with God in Jesus to make that happen in our own lives and in the lives of those we pay attention to.

Directly and accessibly written, this report is a real nourishment for hope. I commend it very warmly indeed. If you have any doubts about the contribution that the Christian faith makes to the life of our country, read this.

† **Rowan Williams**

Archbishop of Canterbury

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Case studies of 'Church in Action' presented in this report evidence the breadth of activity undertaken by churches and church-based organisations in addressing deprivation and disadvantage in the local communities that they serve. The six projects showcased (see below) have benefited from a variety of support from Church Urban Fund, including funding towards the costs of building work or salaries, and practical advice and information.

One	Superkidz, Diocese of Southwark	
Two	Apostles and Cuthbert's Youth Project (YPAC), Diocese of Manchester	
Three	All Saints' Centre for Employment and New Directions (ASCEND), Diocese of St Albans	
Four	Basics Bank Project, Diocese of Derby	
Five	Crisis Centre Ministries, Diocese of Bristol	
Six	Hull Lighthouse Project, Diocese of York	

As well as telling the stories of featured projects through individual project vignettes, the report also draws out nine cross-cutting themes. These describe issues that highlight the value of church-based community projects, and provide insights useful for those developing and implementing projects in the future. In more detail, the nine themes are:

Faith grounding

The projects outlined in this report were initiated by churches or church-based organisations. Many involved in running the projects also share that same faith motivation. In this sense, supporting project users is regarded by many staff and volunteers as a calling or a vocation, rather than simply a response to a visible need.

Provision of safe spaces

Church-based projects can provide 'spaces' in which people feel valued and safe. This gives project users an important, and often unique, opportunity to meet others, to talk, to make friends, to learn to trust, to grow, to get help, to rest, and to heal.

Holistic approach

Projects typically adopt a holistic, person-centred approach when addressing the needs of users. Fundamental to this approach is the value placed on establishing enduring relationships of trust, allowing an appreciation and understanding of people and their circumstances to emerge over time.

Distinctive provision

Combinations of services offered by projects, and the manner of their delivery, are often unique, meeting needs within their local communities which are hidden or unaddressed. This distinctive provision is founded upon detailed understanding of, and sensitivity towards, local issues.

Dedication of staff/volunteers

The drive of project staff to make a difference in their local communities is a key factor in the achievement of positive outcomes by projects. Such impetus stems both from the immediacy of the issues which they are working to address, and in many cases an underlying faith motivation.

Outreach and communication

A capacity to engage with clients as equals, and to support them in the places where they live is an important factor underlying the accomplishments of projects. Outreach also provides a non-threatening environment, which encourages users to ask questions and enables their personal development.

Funding

'Seed funding' from Church Urban Fund has played an important role in enabling projects to develop and become established. The continuity, and external validation provided by financial support from Church Urban Fund, has also acted as a catalyst for further investment. This allows projects to demonstrate positive outcomes.

Recognition

Projects have achieved a high degree of recognition, both from partner agencies and the local communities that they serve. Their reputation as reliable and trustworthy service providers is based on the positive outcomes achieved, and the professional approach of project staff and volunteers.

An opportunity to 'give something back'

By fostering strong, beneficial and lasting relationships with users which help to build skills and confidence, clients often feel inspired to repay the sense of being valued, and 'give something back' to their community, for example, through volunteering.

Collectively, these themes demonstrate the fact that projects operate within the framework of a Christian faith imperative to live out the Gospel in the midst of people who are poor, marginalised and vulnerable in our society. In doing so, the emphasis of projects is person-centred, focused on befriending and establishing positive, enduring relationships of trust. Such an approach is invaluable in enabling projects to support people that are 'hard-to-reach,' and that statutory provision finds difficult to engage with. Overall, this ethos and practice serves to meet needs that might not otherwise be met.

CHURCHES IN ACTION

Where Churches are Making a Difference



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"Projects operate within the framework of a Christian faith imperative to live out the Gospel in the midst of people who are poor, marginalized and vulnerable in our society."

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report, published for the Church Urban Fund (July 2009), presents six case studies of 'Church in Action'. The projects studied, listed in the table 1.1 below, have benefited from support from the Church Urban Fund in a variety of ways, including funding towards the costs of building work or salaries, and practical advice and information.

Table 1.1 Case study projects

One	Superkidz, Diocese of Southwark	
Two	Apostles and Cuthbert's Youth Project (YPAC), Diocese of Manchester	
Three	All Saints' Centre for Employment and New Directions (ASCEND), Diocese of St Albans	
Four	Basics Bank Project, Diocese of Derby	
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Six	Hull Lighthouse Project, Diocese of York	

Each case study captures the following key information, to show how churches and local church-based organisations have played a significant role in alleviating the greatest disadvantage in the local community:

- What is the nature of the activity, and how was it identified?
- How is the activity delivered, and who leads the delivery?
- How does the local project work with other organisations and participate in local partnership structures?
- How is the project resourced, and what is its principal funding source?
- What influence has support from Church Urban Fund had on the project?
- How has the activity impacted on the local community, and particular individuals or families?
- What factors have influenced the design and method of supporting local communities contributing to the success of the project?

It is important to recognise that the activities illustrated in this report take place against a background of UK government policy towards faith which, over the past decade, has come to view faith communities as providers of public services, both informally and, increasingly, formally.

This growing conception has been reflected in a stream of publications from government, the most recent of which, 'Face-to-Face and Side-by-Side: A framework for inter faith dialogue and social action', suggests that faith-based organisations must be a part of any response that public authorities make to tackle complex challenges faced by communities across the UK¹.

In turn, many faith communities themselves recognise that they have an important role to play in contributing to efforts to address the 'social evils' faced by communities, and in ensuring wider social well-being, including meeting the combined challenges of an absence of shared values, inequality and individualism².

Within this context, the report also provides an analysis of cross-cutting issues emerging from case study evidence, providing insights to aid future development of church-based community action.



"Faith-based organisations organisations must be a part of any response that public authorities make to tackle complex challenges faced by communities across the UK."

FootNotes

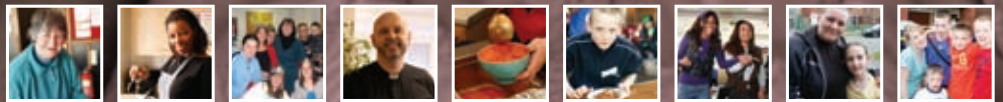
¹ *Communities and Local Government (2007), "Face-to-Face and Side-by-Side": A framework for inter faith dialogue and social action, (Communities and Local Government Publications, Wetherby). p.5.*

² See <http://www.jrf.org/socialevils>

CHURCHES IN ACTION

Case Studies

Where Churches are Making a Difference



2.0 CASE STUDIES

The case studies presented in this report are the product of research conducted by staff at Coventry University's Applied Research Centre in Sustainable Regeneration (SURGE).

Projects featured were identified by Church Urban Fund under three key themes, evidencing the breadth of activity undertaken by churches and church-based organisations to address deprivation and disadvantage in the local communities they serve:

- Vulnerable children and youth (case studies one and two)
- Vulnerable communities (case studies three and four)
- Vulnerable people (case studies five and six)

Each project has benefited from Church Urban Fund support, and project leaders were initially contacted by Church Urban Fund to secure agreement for their participation in the research. Once formal consent had been obtained, researchers from Coventry University liaised with project leaders to organise and carry out data collection visits.


Data collection methods included face-to-face interviews, focus groups, and observation. The precise form and combination of methods deployed were tailored to the particular requirements of each project, reflecting the need for a flexible and informal approach to discussions with both project workers and project/service users.

Visits over one or two days were made to each project allowing for observation of the people at work. Interviews were conducted with individuals and groups, comprising: 17 project leaders and respective committee/board members, project workers/volunteers and church leaders, two personnel from partner agencies, and 25 service users. In addition, for one project, there was access to existing anonymous client comment survey material.



2.1 CASE STUDIES

Superkidz, Diocese of Southwark

Project Contact	Helen Russell	
Address	Holy Spirit Church 91A Telemann Square Ferrier Estate Kidbrooke London SE3 9YU	
Web site	n/a	

Superkidz is located in Kidbrooke at the centre of the Ferrier Estate, described in the media as 'one of South East London's most infamous developments'. The original project was started in 1999 as a children's club based in a local evangelical church, a mile away from the estate. In 2001, the project was saved from closure by the current director: 'it was announced at a management meeting that the club would end. I was quite upset to hear that ... it was the one project on the estate that was getting out into the community and reaching families and getting to know people, and offering support. It was important to continue the work'

The Superkidz ethos is to 'build happier worlds for children, young people and families in deprived urban communities, and to see neighbours equipped to walk alongside each other and transform communities from within'. The project has grown, and today it provides a range of services. These include a children's club (for 5-11 year olds), two youth clubs, Rock Solid (11-14 years) and Rock Solid Extra (15-17 years), a girl's club for at-risk teenage girls, Girlzone (13 and upwards) and a mentoring scheme called COACH. Part of the work is delivered on an outreach basis.

Young people find out about the project from youth workers on the estate and from each other. For young people living on the estate, Superkidz is more than a youth club or children's club, as the approach underpinning all aspects of its work is to value each person as a human being, and to offer a safe space for young people. 'Many of the kids we work with have been through difficult times in their lives'. The value of this approach is captured by a mother who said, 'there is nothing else on the estate; my children have been going to Superkidz for a long time, they get a lot out of being involved. God nourishes my children'.

An innovative aspect of the work is the emphasis placed on encouraging people in the community to get involved, and to support each other. Over 80 junior helpers (aged 11 years and above) have supported the work of Superkidz and have been informally mentored by the team. The junior helpers support younger children, and this is considered a way that they can 'give something back to the group and to their community'. Being a junior helper offers the opportunity to learn new skills, such as managing lighting and P.A. systems for performances, something which gives many young people the chance to shine.

As part of their outreach programme, Superkidz regularly visit children in their homes and offer support. On a Friday evening, the project youth workers make contact with all of the children on their visiting list, providing an opportunity to speak to young people on an individual basis, to offer support, and provide information about the events of the forthcoming week. This demonstrates the importance of building relationships with children, which underpins all activities: 'a Christian project like Superkidz is really looking to build up a personal relationship with each child, and affirm that child, and try and raise the self-esteem of that child through the experience of being valued through a personal relationship with the workers'. This is challenging work because, at times, there can be up to 200 children on the Superkidz visiting list.

Alongside working with children, Superkidz also recognises the need to include families, particularly mothers, in the work that they do: 'one of the emphases we put on the work is on positive relationships, building kids up and encouraging carers and parents'. Project workers form close and supportive relationships with mothers, and encourage their involvement as volunteers, facilitating activities and generally supporting the work of Superkidz. A mother involved in the project (despite having grown-up children who have moved away from the estate) said that she continues to volunteer at Superkidz because 'it gives [her] something to get up for' and she is fulfilled to see children happy. This reflects a strongly held view that ownership of the project should come from the local community, from 'insiders' who have an awareness of local issues: 'we wanted to develop something that was a community-led and community-owned model'. This community-based approach may include supporting residents with provision of emotional support, writing letters on behalf of families to the local council, prison visiting and accessing grants for those in financial difficulty. 'It [the project] has been kind of organic in the way it has developed, based on the needs of people in the community here'.


Faith plays an important role in the lives of those involved in delivering the Superkidz project: 'Jesus said in his manifesto that he was anointed to preach good news to the poor ... then, as now, the poor were not regarded as important by wider society... an identity has been imposed when a community is described as socially excluded ... there is a lot of learning to do to really understand how deprivation affects people in different ways ... a whole number of factors add up to a form of oppression that people live under, so the message that they are valuable to God is a new concept'.

Church Urban Fund has supported Superkidz with funding: 'funding is a difficult thing. Our first big break was with the Church Urban Fund and they have been fantastic all the way through. It has helped me to build up confidence in raising additional funds'. Church Urban Fund's financial support has been continuous over the past five or six years, and has played an important part in establishing the project.

Superkidz are continuing to plan for the future. The Ferrier Estate is currently being re-developed, and up to two thirds of families have already been moved elsewhere. Superkidz are currently expanding to four other estates within the Borough, where local families have been re-housed and where families encounter similar issues. The support of Superkidz is long-term and on-going; they have a strong vision and are committed to improving the lives of those living in their local community.

2.2 CASE STUDIES

Apostles and Cuthbert's Youth Project (YPAC), Diocese of Manchester

Project Contact	Tracey Hemmerdinger	
Address	Apostles and Cuthberts Youth Project (YPAC) 10 Redacre Road Manchester M18 8RU	
Web site	www.ypacmanchester.org.uk	

The Youth Project at Apostles' and Cuthbert's (YPAC) in Manchester aims to support young people aged between 11 and 19 to become whole, fulfilled human beings. The work of YPAC is a work of Christian faith, expressing the love of God for the young people of the Miles Platting and Ancoats areas, through practical care and encouragement. Each person is valued simply for being who they are.

This important work is taking place in an area that is within the top one percent of the most deprived neighbourhoods in England. Residents face a range of social issues in this area, including lack of educational opportunity, barriers to accessing housing and services, unemployment, health deprivation and disability. Before the formal work of YPAC began in 2005, an assessment of need in the area was carried out, which revealed two key priorities: a need for long-term generic youth work, and for support for young people when moving from primary to secondary school.

The approach to generic youth work involves going out into the neighbourhood and meeting young people wherever they are - on the streets, in the park, through contact with schools or other agencies. Having made contact, workers build relationships with young people, involving them in choosing and planning a wide variety of activities. Young people have been involved in events, trips, residential visits, as well as projects including media, photography, music, graffiti art, fashion and design, and drama. The project is run by a project co-ordinator, two full-time youth workers and part-time and sessional workers, as well as volunteers. The management committee embodies the ethos of the project, with representatives from a number of other agencies who work in partnership with YPAC, and members of the community including church representatives, local teachers, and crucially, two young people. The involvement of young people is at the heart of YPAC, and they are encouraged to take part in all levels of decision making, from choosing activities through to planning and organising events. From talking to the young people, it is clear that their involvement is vital in fostering a sense of ownership.

The Transitions Project was established in response to the second identified need. A project worker makes contact with children in Year 6 (aged 10 and 11) at the local primary school and begins, over a period of a whole term, to build relationships with them. In the second term she

begins to work intensively with pupils who would benefit from support. In response to a growing need, the number of Year 6 pupils supported by the project has doubled between 2008 and 2009. Evidence of success from the Transitions Project is seen in terms of improved attendance rates at school, and also in terms of increasing confidence and alleviation of fears and concerns about moving to secondary school. In 2008/09, 100% of young people supported are still in education and 93% are progressing well. A teacher from the primary school described how 'YPAC has managed to engage young people who have not responded to previous interventions.' The project worker said 'it works because families have a relationship with me. A lot of families are scared of social care or family welfare, it works because they have a relationship with someone who knows their child.'

YPAC takes a holistic approach towards supporting young people. As the vicar said, 'youth work is not about a target, it's about a person'. The youth work is centred on the needs of the young people, and there is a clear commitment to long-term engagement. The value of this approach is that needs emerge as trust begins to develop. As well as the work, which is focused upon individual young people, the project aims to foster a sense of shared identity in a neighbourhood where young people have to travel to different areas of the city each day as there is no secondary school close by.



"Youth work is not about a target, it's about a person."

2.2 CASE STUDIES *Cont.*

Speaking with young people at the project it becomes immediately clear that YPAC has had a profound impact on their lives. One young person said, 'people you would look at, and you're like, "no they're not successful" ... you'll see them come here and you'll actually be shocked, because they're like the naughty people, and when they come here they are actually sensible. It has really changed a lot of people.' The support, advice and opportunities that are offered have particularly helped young people to increase their confidence, and to gain respect (see lyrics below from the Respect Music Project). One particular project, which used the medium of photography to explore the ways in which young people are stereotyped, led two young women to secure a place at college to study photography 'A' level. As one of them said, 'I've chosen to do it for college because I enjoyed it and was good at it'.

'Respect is about having self control

It comes from the heart

It comes from the soul

It's the little things that you do

That builds respect for you

Someone listening - letting you speak

That's the respect I seek

Support each other - give people a chance

Respect and we all advance.'

[Lyrics by young people from the Respect Music Project]

One young person said, 'you come in, if you are worried about anything, you ask one of them and they help you, and really do lead you on the right path. I have a lot of trouble at home, and I come here and it just opens up a new door for you'. The level of support that young people receive at the project, and the environment which is fostered by the workers and young people together mean that, as another young person said, YPAC is 'like a big family'. YPAC has many plans for the future, including the building of a new church and buildings on the site of the new local school. It is hoped that more outreach work could then be done with other family members, and that the important work of the Transitions Project could be expanded to other schools in the local area. YPAC are also hoping to develop a partnership with a mental health provider to support the emotional wellbeing of young people.

YPAC is the only service of its kind in Miles Platting, and as the vicar said, 'probably all of the needs it meets wouldn't be met through mainstream provision'.

All Saints' Centre for Employment and New Directions (ASCEND), Diocese of St Albans

Project Contact	Christine Wyard	
Address	ASCEND All Saints Church Centre Gosforth Lane South Oxhey Watford WD19 7AX	
Web site	Web site www.ascend.org.uk	

For the past thirteen years, All Saints' Church in South Oxhey has been the home of ASCEND (The All Saints' Centre for Employment and New Directions), a community based charity that helps people move forward in life, challenging their perceived barriers to education and training, and providing them with more choice and control over their lives. Set in an area of high unemployment and social deprivation, ASCEND offers nationally recognised qualifications, and is a local provider of government programmes such as Skills for Life and Flexible Routeways to Work. From September 2008 to February 2009, ASCEND actively engaged with 237 people (in addition to general enquiries), 133 of who were new clients. Many of these clients are long-term unemployed, some are dealing with mental health issues or disabilities, and others have multiple needs. Over these six months, 207 people took training courses. As one client now in part-time employment said, 'I've got more qualifications through ASCEND in the last eight years than I ever did when I was at school'. The confidence that this gives is clear: 'this is what ASCEND do. They give you the confidence, they give you the courage to say, yes, I can be better, I can be somebody else.'

People of all ages come to ASCEND. 'It's all ages in the class,' said one client, 'it's not just young ones, and we're all there to help each other'. Courses are offered in computer skills, life skills, arts and crafts, counselling, speaking, parenting and creative writing, and classes on numeracy and literacy are at the heart of their work. The impact of difficulties with reading and writing can be wide reaching. One client told how 'because I'm dyslexic, to me, it was shameful really because I can't read very well, and my writing is atrocious, and [my] spelling ... but I've been with people that say, "oh, you know she can't read," and things like that, and I kept myself to myself.' She came with a friend to ASCEND about a year ago and 'we've never looked back since. They're always here to help ... and nobody in ASCEND ... talks about you behind your back ... I am thrilled to pieces to be here.'

2.3 CASE STUDIES *Cont.*

For those who run ASCEND, helping people to read and write is part of living out the Gospel. Jesus spoke of the necessity of his followers feeding the hungry, visiting the stranger, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, or visiting those in prison (Matthew 25:31-46). Today, this list could include teaching people to read, giving them confidence, allowing them to be part of the rest of society, 'because that is what we are doing, we are giving them back their pride and their place in a society that doesn't know what to do with them'. While ASCEND offers training and skills, as well as advice and assistance with finding work, it is so much more than this. It is not just that clients may receive extra support and find their tutors very approachable during the training sessions, but the holistic approach taken by the project offers a safe space for them as well. 'I've lost count how many times I've walked in ... and I've just bawled me eyes out', said one client, 'but I've felt better afterwards because I've talked to somebody.' 'Let me put it this way,' said another client, 'ASCEND is more of a family than anything else. A family that helps you learn, and a family that is always there for you. If we lose a member of our family, we feel downhearted; if we lost ASCEND, we'd be devastated'.

This holistic approach is reflected in the Achiever of the Year Award where the project identifies people who have not necessarily received qualifications, but have overcome significant barriers and obstacles. This is presented at the annual award ceremony where all the clients receive their certificates, watched by family members. One client told of how, walking home at the end of the evening, her son turned to her and said, 'I'm proud of you, mum'. Another client's eyes filled with tears as she recalled how one of her children had sent her a bunch of flowers when she received her certificate. This sense of self-esteem is shared by clients who have come from having 'no focus, no ambitions, no nothing, really' to a new found confidence and sense of self-worth.

While ASCEND is an independent charity, it shares premises with the church, renting space, and thereby providing a small income for the church. The main hall used for services on a Sunday becomes a classroom during the week. The project is open to people of all faiths and none. While several people who were not members of the church when they came to ASCEND now are, many others are unaware of the church context, more conscious of a sense of welcome. One such client commented, 'I'll tell you what I felt ... when I walked through them doors the first time ... I felt in myself very warm, as though I was walking into a church and having really brilliant thoughts. It sounds silly, but that's how I felt when I walked through them doors, and I felt this is a place I need to be to get help ... and friendship, and that's how I felt ever since I've been here. ... and it's every time I walk - not just then - but every time I walk through them doors, I feel that sense of security.'

ASCEND has five staff members and around 30 volunteers, all of whom were previously clients who wanted to give something back to the project because of what they have received. In many ways, it has become a one-stop shop, and if staff can't help someone, they are able to direct them to another organisation that can. Since 2003, ASCEND has received six awards for its work, and has gained a reputation for the professionalism and quality of its service. Church Urban Fund has contributed funding in the past, and more recently, when ASCEND were facing the possibility of closing, provided essential core costs without which they could not function.


ASCEND is vital to the wellbeing of the area. A spokesman from VINCI has said: 'VINCI is the biggest construction company in the world and we build many bridges - however we cannot build people's lives the way ASCEND can.' Put another way by a client, 'without ASCEND, South Oxhey would not be the place it is. South Oxhey needs ASCEND badly and all the time it's here, there's hope'.



"ASCEND is more of a family than anything else. A family that helps you learn, and a family that is always there for you."

2.4 CASE STUDIES

Basics Bank Project, Diocese of Derby

Project Contact	Andy Clark	
Address	Basics Bank Project Derby City Mission 32 Quarn Drive Allestree Derby DE22 2NQ	
Web site	www.derbycitymission.org.uk	

'Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.' Proverbs 31:8-9 (NIV)

These verses sum up the ethos and work of the Basics Bank project run by Derby City Mission (DCM). Their mission is to serve those on a low income by providing free debt advice, and food parcels for those who need it. Running four clinics in separate venues around Derby every week, the Basics Bank helps around 250 different people each year, each person attending for an average of six to eight weeks in order to work through their particular circumstances.

Three of the four clinics are held in church premises, and when clients arrive they are greeted by volunteers from the local churches, who sit and chat with them over tea and biscuits while they wait to see an advisor. The no-appointment system means that clinics can vary between being very busy to being quite quiet, but it means that clients can come to any of the clinics when they need to. While clients often initially feel apprehensive about coming for help and talking about money worries, they soon feel more at ease. As one person said, while the hardest thing for them to overcome was 'opening up to deal with the issues,' they felt comfortable after the first session. When people come to the Basics Bank, usually the first thing they do with an advisor is to make a financial statement that looks at their income and outgoings. This process shows what their main issues are. The advisers help clients to sort out what are priority and non-priority expenditures. Where there are arrears or difficulties in making payments, advisors negotiate by telephone or letter with landlords, statutory agencies and creditors, arranging reasonable payments that the client can afford. As one client put it, 'if it wasn't for a place like this I would have been going to court and paying court summons and all sorts, you know, and they can help you so you don't get that far.' This intervention can be crucial. 'The best results are where we've got people paying on an arrangement, and we've stopped evictions,' said one advisor. 'If you've kept somebody in their home and they've realised how close to the bone they've got and they are doing something about it from now on, that's a tremendous success. It gives people hope.'

The service is open to anyone who wishes to use it. The majority of clients are in receipt of some form of state benefit and about a third of project work is helping people with the benefit system. 'The system is too complicated for the people who use it, and that's the problem,' explained an

advisor, 'it's too divided up into little bits and pieces... we just sit between the statutory agencies and people who use the system and try and help them to understand it. We kind of interpret it for them.' This 'hands-on ongoing support' is different to what statutory agencies themselves are able to provide.

Quotes from project users include:

"It has made a great difference to me ... I'm very grateful for this as I've got my life back on track and [am] less stressed."

"I feel I can cope."

"It helped greatly and I felt relieved."

"I can see a future now. Thanks."

"It has (made a difference) so much for me and my children. Thank you."

Low income, whether through being out of work, on an irregular income, or receiving low pay, is the main reason for people having financial difficulties. The project also has clients who have got into debt because of alcohol or drug dependency issues, and some women for whom getting into debt has been part of their victimisation in cases of domestic violence.

If people on low incomes are repaying debts, they can struggle to afford to feed themselves adequately. So while, from January to March 2009, for example, the Basics Bank saw an average of 34 people a week at their clinics, they also gave out around 12 food parcels a week, put together mainly from harvest festival donations from around 60 churches and schools. These parcels - a contemporary version of gleanings from the harvest left for the poor (Leviticus 19:9; 23:22) - have been an important part of the work of the project throughout its life and reflect the inspiration for the project, which emerged from DCM's work with people who were homeless or in need of help to feed themselves. After exploring projects elsewhere, in 1995 DCM began the work that was formalised into the Basics Bank project in 1999, and have established good working relationships with local agencies. From its beginnings, when it focused on the effects of debt, the project has evolved to deal with the causes of debt, providing advice and an atmosphere where people can feel safe and welcome: 'for some of our clients we see actually that debt isn't the only problem. A lot is about loneliness.' This is why local church involvement is very important, because, as DCM's leader says, advice and advocacy is part of a holistic approach of caring for the person who is in debt: 'removing the yoke of debt from people' is 'part of the Gospel'.

The project has two staff advisors, two volunteer advisors and four volunteer welcomers, without whom it could not provide the service it does. The team carry all their equipment to each venue in turn. The support of the Church Urban Fund has been invaluable in funding some of the

2.4 CASE STUDIES *Cont.*

routine running costs, without which they could not function, and it means the project can 'serve the church's vision of breaking the cycle of poverty ... Jesus came to the poor and this is what Jesus looks like - a Christian who is helping with debt problems.'

Most people come to the Basics Bank having heard about it from friends or relatives. In the future the project would like to reach out to people outside these current networks. They would also like to hold budgeting sessions where people can learn how to manage their finances and thereby avoid getting into debt. As one client put it, the project 'made me look at my finances differently and value my money more.'

The project has provided support, advice, advocacy, empowerment, and acceptance to many people on the lowest incomes and in greatest need. One client spoke of how, having gone back to work after three years' illness, she found she still wasn't earning enough to pay her bills. 'I didn't think I could carry on... but I [came to the clinic] - I didn't even know them, and they didn't know me, but they could see that I was making the effort, like going back to work after being on sick for three years with depression... [They] managed to fight in my corner and sort all my bills out for me, so I'm really happy. I was going to pack my job in - I love my job but I didn't see a future down the road, and now I do.'



"advice and advocacy is part of a holistic approach of caring for the person who is in debt: 'removing the yoke of debt from people' is 'part of the Gospel'."

Crisis Centre Ministries, Diocese of Bristol

Project Contact	Paul Hazleden	
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Web site	www.crisis-centre.org.uk	

Crisis Ministries is located in St Pauls, an inner city neighbourhood in Bristol. Although the area is currently the subject of urban regeneration, it is one of the most deprived areas in Bristol in relation to income, employment, education and health. The project was established in 1984 to offer support to people with life-disrupting problems and provide them with opportunities for change, with the aim of seeing their lives transformed. Shared by those running the project is the belief that ‘God cares for the weak, the poor and the outcast – so the Church must be involved in caring for such people.’

The project works with people who often have multiple needs and have experienced issues such as poor physical or mental health, homelessness, addiction, debt, unemployment, crime and violence. In keeping with the project’s beliefs and ethos, those using the service are placed at the centre of everything the project does: ‘they are a human being, not a set of needs. Their needs are only details, what matters is they are a person who needs to be treated as a person’. Taking a person-centred approach is deemed essential. As the project director stated, ‘for many people, knowing that you are loved and accepted for who you are is a life-transforming experience.’

Crisis Centre Ministries employs six members of staff and is supported by around 120 volunteers, all committed Christians, from a diversity of denominations, and all supported by their respective churches. In bringing God’s grace and healing love to people with life-disrupting problems, they have three key areas of work: the Wild Goose Coffee Shop, the LITE Course and Bridgehead Church.

The Wild Goose Coffee Shop was established in 1986 to ‘provide a space where people are welcome, where we can build relationships. It’s not a project designed to get people off the streets or get them sorted or get them into treatment or whatever – the aim is to be friendly, to be welcoming, and through relationships to find out where people are and what we can do together’. Around 250 people visit the coffee shop each day where they are able to receive a hot meal, and volunteers are also on hand to offer friendship and support: ‘we don’t just give people a form and tell them to get on with it. Here, we sit down with people and help them complete the form ... go with them to all the appointments ... and see it through.’

2.4 CASE STUDIES *Cont.*

One woman, who has been attending Wild Goose for over a year, spoke of the significant role she believes it occupies in the local community: 'vulnerable members of the community, like the refugees, the homeless and mental health patients are often stigmatized. It is a place where people come together and discuss their differences. Without it the community would be at risk from some very vulnerable people going a bit crazy without the practical, physical and emotional, mental and spiritual support that comes from Wild Goose, it is core ... in the community'.

The intention is for Wild Goose to sell hot meals for a pound where people are able to pay, and to provide food handouts for those who have no means. However, the current logistics of space and volume of clients means that it is more practical to offer hot meals to all, and people who wish to can give a donation.

Crisis Centre Ministries also offers the LITE Course ('Lifeskills Initial Training for Employment'), which was one of the first of its type in the country. It was set up to benefit people in the coffee shop and those facing multiple barriers to employment. However, learners tend to be referred to the course by other agencies or recruited directly. A member of staff explained that the reason for this shift in emphasis is because 'the majority of our clients ... have chaotic lifestyles. They are not ready for that yet.'

The course is taught in small groups (maximum of ten learners), with an average of four to six people on each course. The only criteria for entry onto the course is; 'that you are 18 years old and motivated to move on with your life'.

Four modules are taught on the LITE Course covering practical skills such as cooking, nutrition, healthy living, budgeting and strategies to encourage learners' development in areas such as assertiveness training, goal setting and basic computer skills. In the final module, learners are offered a two-week work placement. Learners are supported through their placements by a 'buddying' system: 'they get partnered up with a buddy, and that buddy will work with them and be available to them for the duration of their placement.' This can be a positive and rewarding experience: 'one person did a work placement at Marks and Spencer, he got on very well and they liked him. They offered him a permanent job and he has been there five years now.'

In addition to the course content, staff ask each learner if they would like someone to pray for them. One staff member recounted, 'I once prayed for someone who wasn't a Christian and at the end he spontaneously prayed for me. I was quite taken by that ... I think offering prayer communicates something about their value to us'. The Bridgehead Church offers friendship, Christian encouragement, Bible study and prayer to anyone who wants to attend. Gatherings of the Bridgehead Church are held on Saturday evenings and provide what for some may be a first experience of Christian worship and teaching. While there are specific meetings with this focus, Crisis Centre Ministries overall provides a safe space for people to explore faith. As one client said, 'I always feel like it is a communion of Christ.'

2.5 CASE STUDIES

Crisis Centre Ministries work in partnership, and have established positive working relationships with a variety of agencies across the statutory, voluntary and community sectors. For example, one of the specialist drug rehabilitation facilities will make places available to the project on a preferential basis because they know that people recommended by Crisis Centre Ministries are ready to take this step in their lives: 'if people are not ready for rehab we don't push. So we have a good track record; when we refer people they tend to do very well, so our success rate is higher than the average because we are careful when we recommend it. We don't want to set people up to fail'.

In Bristol there continue to be many people who need the support that Crisis Centre Ministries provides. The project is responsive to this ongoing situation, and hopes in the future to find larger, more suitable premises, expand the content and capacity of the LITE Course, and employ additional staff to co-ordinate and develop the work of volunteers. All of this work continues to be rooted in and embody the conviction that: 'as Christians we are called to the poor, wherever the poor need us.'



"Around 250 people visit the coffee shop each day where they are able to receive a hot meal, and volunteers are also on hand to offer friendship and support."

2.6 CASE STUDIES

Hull Lighthouse Project, Diocese of York

Project Contact	Jane Honey	
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Located in Kingston upon Hull, the Lighthouse project aims to offer a beacon of hope to women working in Hull's commercial sex industry. The project was established 13 years ago in order to offer friendship, advice and opportunity for change, and began with four members of Hull Community Church and four members from the local Salvation Army, 'walking around the streets, praying at nights for the girls, their safety, and offering a drop-in service that provided women with a safe space where they could talk and receive refreshment'. This period was instrumental in shaping the service Lighthouse provides today: 'we really learnt from listening and talking to the women... it no longer became about trying to help women out of prostitution, it was trying to help them get off drugs... we had to try and get organised and get some funding. We came to the Church Urban Fund, our very first funders, to ask for support for a manager, and we were successful with that.'

Hull Lighthouse Project today has grown significantly. It is a registered charity, employing two part-time Project Managers, an Outreach Co-ordinator, an Outreach Worker and a Social Worker. The project is supported by a team of trained volunteers and offers placements to student social workers. Adopting a holistic approach to their work, Lighthouse provides a variety of services aimed at meeting what are often complex needs. Services provided include a mobile drop-in centre, intensive daytime support, and a recently-established evening drop-in session. Since 2001 Lighthouse has supported over 250 women involved in prostitution. This has included support with issues relating to health, housing, education, budgeting, debt, facilitating contact with children, prison visits and probation.

The project has become well-known and valued in Hull for supporting people in prostitution, and is part of a city-wide team of agencies responding to the needs of women and children involved in the industry. The work of Hull Lighthouse Project is recognised for: 'getting people through the door, supporting appointments where people don't ordinarily attend. Workers at Lighthouse are flexible and amenable and very client-centred'. This positive reputation is due in large part to the time spent building positive relationships amongst the women they seek to support, the wider community and other statutory and voluntary agencies. For example, a drug worker recounts: 'we have had a couple of girls that have been quite chaotic in engaging in treatment,

or engaging in anything at all. Working together, Lighthouse and myself, I know that one girl in particular is engaging in treatment and has given her first negative test. She has stopped using, and stopped working the streets'. Another drug worker from a partner agency explains what he feels distinguishes Lighthouse from statutory services: 'Lighthouse know the narrative behind people's lives ... our service is very focused on the addictions part of the person. The Lighthouse worker sees the context, the housing situation, the domestic violence, the relationships with family members, and gets a clearer picture... we don't always see beyond the person ... there is a humanistic side to their work.'

The importance of the project for women involved in prostitution is encapsulated in the comments of one client: 'when my mum died last year the only people that were there for me was Lighthouse... if it wasn't for them I wouldn't be alive now. I really wouldn't. When I first met them I was going through a really bad period. I was self-harming, really heavy on drinks, drugs, solvents, you name it I was taking it trying to block things out. They managed to get me away from all that. It is important to have someone who doesn't judge you. A lot of people think, "drug addict, you're scum" ... they don't treat you like that. They treat you like a normal human being. It is not often you get that... There have been times that I have been sat at home with a knife in my hand. Instead of cutting myself I ring them up ... I love them to bits I do. They are like a second family. They are my Lighthouse family'

The role of faith has been integral to the development of the Lighthouse project, and has supported workers through the emotional labour involved in work in this area. Faith also continues to be the driving force behind wanting to continue to make a difference in the lives of the women: 'the concept was always to try and befriend... what we wanted to do was to engage in friendship, and we wanted to introduce the girls to our friend Jesus. We know that Jesus wanted people to be free, that he came to set people free, and he also very clearly, when we interpret scripture, says that "if you give someone a cup of water, you are giving it to me, if you're feeding the hungry, then you are doing it to me... clothing the naked, visiting people in prison". There are different sorts of prisons, there are not just bars. There are prisons of addiction, loss of dignity and hope, and being stripped of everything. We wanted to take that love of God and that clothing ... there is that desire to introduce Jesus to these girls, because we really honestly



"Jesus came to love people and make a difference in people's lives, and a lot of people never came into the Kingdom. Would Jesus have still done it? Yes he would!"

2.6 CASE STUDIES

believe that the Gospel is about turning lives around, setting people free, clothing them, healing them, restoring them in a fullness and not merely in words ... trying to introduce them to a loving environment.'

A recurrent message from all associated with the project is the need to recognise that women engaged in street prostitution are diverse. Some have been let down by their families, others failed by services and others have been drawn into prostitution by a combination of circumstances. However, the common perception often is that they have chosen this life and are undeserving. Yet it is essential to remember that: 'Jesus came to love people and make a difference in people's lives, and a lot of people never came into the Kingdom. Would Jesus have still done it? Yes he would! He would have still loved people no matter whether they chose to believe in him or not. That is a really important message for the church: that we have to keep going, and the seeds that we are sowing - we have got to trust God with them. We don't know what is happening with those seeds. Even just the act of loving and caring for people ... actually caring about their lives, is what we are here for, and if people become Christians that is up to God... so I often say to people that you don't have to wait for a lightning bolt from above to know that God wants you to do something. You just have to get on and do it.'

This drive to 'get on and do' is a defining characteristic of Lighthouse and the project goes from strength to strength whilst holding onto its original ethos. Future hopes and aspirations include the development of a social enterprise project for women - run by women who were/are working girls - and the purchase of dedicated houses for women, to provide safety, security and support with rehabilitation.



"Workers at Lighthouse are flexible and amenable and very client-centred."

CHURCHES IN **ACTION**

Cross-Cutting Themes



Where Churches are Making a Difference



CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

3.0-1 CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

3.0 Cross-cutting themes

This section of the report draws out nine cross-cutting themes from the six case studies presented in section 2.0. The purpose of this analysis is to highlight issues that demonstrate the added value of church-based community projects and provide insights that may be useful for those developing and implementing future projects.

3.1 Faith grounding

The first cross-cutting theme to emerge from case study projects is the central role played by faith commitment in driving their delivery. All six of the projects featured in this report were initiated by a church or a church-based organisation, and many involved in running the projects share that same faith motivation. In this sense, supporting project users is regarded by many staff and volunteers as a calling or vocation, rather than simply a response to visible need. Moreover, faith provides staff and volunteers with the strength to carry out the work of their project, which many regard as what they, as Christians, should be doing. The quotes below, collected during visits to the featured projects help to illustrate the inseparability of faith from the work that they are undertaking.

Faith grounding:

Case study quotes

"The work of YPAC is a work of Christian faith, expressing the love of God for the young people of Miles Platting through practical care and support." [YPAC]

"God is redressing the injustice." [Superkidz]

"Values are important; Jesus came for the poor, not the most religious people." [Hull Lighthouse project]

"[What we are doing is] a simple outworking of the truths we profess every Sunday." [Crisis Centre Ministries]

"... I believe so strongly this is exactly what we're supposed to be doing as Christians - changing people's lives for the better, and giving them a sense (and the pride) in themselves of the person God made them." [ASCEND]

"There is one battle we fight, and that is churches see mission as mission overseas. Helping the poor and deprived in other countries, I believe, comes easier than targeting poor and deprived in this country, and I suspect that's a psychological/emotional thing, that it is much harder on you emotionally to believe that on your doorstep there is that kind of deprivation or marginalisation." [Church Leader]

3.2 Provision of safe spaces

Evidence from the six case studies presented here indicates that church-based projects can provide spaces in which people feel valued and safe. This gives project users an important, and often unique, opportunity to meet others, to talk, to make friends, to learn to trust, to grow, to get help, to rest, and to heal. A range of quotes from the different case studies illustrate these different dimensions which are an important part of the way in which projects support the local communities in which they operate.

Provision of safe spaces:

Case study quotes

"You come in, if you are worried about anything you ask one of them, and they help you and really do lead you on the right path. I have a lot of trouble at home, and I come here and it just opens up a new door for you." [YPAC]

"It's relaxing. You're made welcome." [Basics Bank]

"They are our second family, The Lighthouse Family." [Hull Lighthouse project]

"It is coming in here and feeling safe and loved, and people do know that they are coming in and that there is something different about the place." [ASCEND]

"You meet a lot of people who are in the same boat as you and you think you're the only one and obviously you're not so it's quite good coming here really and seeing a good outcome of everybody else as well not just yourself." [Basics Bank]



3.3 CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

3.3 Holistic approach

The third cross-cutting theme concerns the fact that case study projects typically adopt a holistic, person-centred approach in engaging with, and addressing, the needs of users. Fundamental to this approach is the value placed on establishing enduring relationships of trust with individuals, seeking to understand people and enabling an appreciation of their circumstances to emerge over time. This differentiates projects from much mainstream provision, which tends to focus on issues, and seeks to tackle particular aspects of disadvantage and deprivation in isolation, often in a restrictive timeframe. This can be problematic in that such an approach neither recognises fully the inter-relationships between the problems individuals face (the context), and, therefore, the complexity of support required, nor is it able to provide effective, long-term, help through appreciation of service users' emotional needs. Recognition of the wider narrative of individuals' lives, and the multifaceted nature of solutions required to address their problems, can only be achieved through a holistic approach. In projects showcased here, affiliation to a church organisation means that individuals are offered pastoral care alongside help to resolve presenting difficulties, maintaining a focus upon the individual rather than the problem *per se*. Further quotes, which emphasise the added value of the holistic approach to issues addressed by case study projects, are presented below.

"The first thing is you are present, the second thing is you build relationships, you understand where people are, what their needs are, what the issues are, what practically can be done, and then you are in a position to do something."



3.3 Holistic approach Cont.

Holistic approach:

Case study quotes

"The first thing is you are present, the second thing is you build relationships, you understand where people are, what their needs are, what the issues are, what practically can be done, and then you are in a position to do something."
[Crisis Centre Ministries]

"The debt project cannot function in isolation from the local church, because the problem is bigger than the debt, and if all we do is set up a debt project and don't care for the person who is in debt, then we have failed in what we are seeking to do, and that is where the church must partner us, because actually, what we've got to do is care for the person."
[Basics Bank]

"They might go down to the library and do a computer course, but that's where it ends: there's no shoulder to cry on, there is nobody to talk to about their other problems, their housing, or how afraid they are because they have no literacy skills ... whereas here ... it's a safe place and it's somewhere where it looks at the whole person and the whole of their life not just, 'we'll teach them to read' and then 'bye bye'. It's the whole deal. They are not abandoned as people." [ASCEND]

"[They] work in an inclusive way ... holistic in its proper sense ... the self confidence and self esteem [women] get from being treated as a true equal is something that I feel is brilliant and is what is needed." [Hull Lighthouse project]

"Youth work is not about a target, it's about a person." [YPAC]

3.4 Distinctive provision

The fourth cross-cutting theme can be seen as an extension of the holistic approach described in section 3.3, in that the combinations of services offered by case study projects, and the manner of their delivery, are often unique, meeting needs within their local communities which are hidden or unaddressed. This distinctive provision is founded upon detailed understanding of, and sensitivity towards, local issues, and is heavily reliant upon the dedication of project volunteers and their motivation to make a difference to their local communities (see section 3.5). This ethos, which is driven in many cases by a faith commitment, and a belief that befriending others is the right thing to do, contrasts with other mainstream provision which can be constrained by the statutory framework in which it operates. One concrete manifestation of this is the commitment and time that project providers are able to give to clients in addressing their needs. In turn, this

3.4 CROSS-CUTTING THEMES *Cont.*

3.4 Distinctive provision *Cont.*

fosters friendship, the building of trust and development of enduring beneficial relationships. Moreover, the distinctive and independent nature of provision offered means that projects can generate a strong sense of ownership within the communities served, and be prized locally for the successful outcomes achieved. A selection of quotes below, collected during visits to case study projects, help to illustrate the distinctive nature of provision offered.

Distinctive provision:

Case study quotes

"If ASCEND and the church wasn't here most of us wouldn't know what to do with ourselves during the day." [ASCEND]

"We're definitely not professionals delivering a service, we're friends. It's a completely different ethos to the 'service' that is there to achieve targets." [Crisis Centre Ministries]

"If we weren't here, there are just lots of people that would fall into a black hole, because some people need more hand-holding and more support than is available elsewhere." [Basics Bank]

"That's what makes us so unique as a project, because this feeling of hope, this feeling of friendship, you don't always get that in other projects." [ASCEND]

"Probably all of the needs it (YPAC) meets wouldn't be met through mainstream provision." [YPAC]



"It gives you confidence, they give you the courage to say, yes, I can be better, I can be somebody else."

3.5 Dedication of staff/volunteers

As noted in the preceding section, the fifth cross-cutting theme concerns the dedication and motivation of staff and volunteers who deliver the projects featured in this report. The drive of delivery staff to make a difference in their local communities is an important factor in the success of projects, and the achievement of positive outcomes. Such motivation stems both from the immediacy of the issues which they are working to support, in that they concern their immediate neighbourhood or community, and in many cases an underlying faith motivation, that befriending and helping to support others in difficulty is the right thing to do. A selection of quotes in the box below help to illustrate this theme.

Dedication of staff/ volunteers:

Case study quotes

"I think you are wonderful and I don't know where I would have been without your help. The difference your help has made: I can sleep at night and don't cry myself to sleep. Thank you."
[Basics Bank]

"I would go hungry and miss everyone. The Community Support." [Crisis Centre Ministries]

"I sometimes find it quite difficult making friends, but coming here has helped me make friends. I see quite a few of the girls outside Lighthouse. It has helped me make friends and helped me socialise a bit more....I never use to go out because I found it difficult to make friends."
[Hull Lighthouse project]

"They have 100% commitment to what they are doing. A complete and utter belief in what they are trying to do and are continually striving to find new ways to engage with women. Complete solid commitment and genuineness."
[Hull Lighthouse project]

3.6 Outreach and communication

The sixth cross-cutting theme has two principal dimensions. The first concerns the capacity of projects to reach out to clients and support them in the environment where they live. The physical location of services at the heart of the communities they serve is crucial to ensuring ease of access for clients, and is an important factor in maximising engagement with potential users. The second dimension of this theme is the degree to which projects can support users in negotiating state bureaucracies, such as the benefits system or health service. By explaining systems and procedures in uncomplicated language, and by treating users as equals, projects

3.6 CROSS-CUTTING THEMES *Cont.*

3.6 Outreach and communication *Cont.*

offer people a non-threatening and non-humiliating environment in which they can understand and question their level of entitlement. In addition, such an environment means that clients are able to grow as people, because it removes lack of understanding as a barrier to gaining skills, training, experience and, indeed, to making relationships that are also important for personal development and human flourishing. Once again, quotes below help to illustrate this issue.

Outreach and communication:

Case study quotes

“The management and staff here speak to you so that you can understand every word they are saying... They speak to you in words that you can understand, not in double-Dutch or officialese. Cos officialese turns everybody off.” [ASCEND]

“Staff came across so you could understand what is going on, because when your confidence is gone so low you just feel you’ve got no confidence left, and so when they boost your confidence obviously you want to come back and do a little bit more.” [ASCEND]

“An awful lot of those don’t actually understand the benefit system as clearly as the benefit system thinks it should be understood. Especially when it comes to housing benefit rules and that kind of thing. It’s very easy to muck up your benefit because you actually haven’t signed and dotted your i’s and t’s. So there’s a lot of that that goes on.” [Basics Bank]

“We may meet [young people] on the streets on a weekly outreach session, through contact with the schools or other agencies, because they come along with a friend or even on their own accord ... workers build long-term relationships with young people and identify their needs.” [YPAC]



3.7 Funding

The seventh cross-cutting theme relates to the challenge of funding and, significantly, the important role that 'seed funding' from Church Urban Fund has played in enabling the projects featured as case studies to become established. The continuity provided by financial support from Church Urban Fund has also acted as a catalyst for further investment, by allowing projects to demonstrate their effectiveness and to achieve positive outcomes, which can be used to lever funding from other sources. In this regard, a key feature of Church Urban Fund funding is the fact that it is not linked to, or dependent upon, the achievement of specific targets, but rather offers projects the flexibility to direct investment according to their own needs and priorities.

A selection of quotes (below) helps to illustrate this issue.

Funding:

Case study quotes

*"Church Urban Fund gave Superkidz our first big break."
[Superkidz]*

*"Church Urban Fund has been absolutely fantastic actually because they can be so flexible."
[YPAC]*

"One of the significant things about the Church Urban Fund is although they are not the major funder, they are the funder who have enabled [it]. So from what Church Urban Fund have contributed, the project has been formed and we have been able to attract 2 full-time posts, part-timers, project funding, because if that money hadn't been there in the first place, we wouldn't have them." [YPAC]

*"Church Urban Fund funding has been crucial, we would have had to stick at giving out tea and coffee without it, unless you have the financial resource you can't step up a gear. If Church Urban Fund hadn't been willing to invest at that early stage, the most difficult stage, ... We said, this is what we're doing, we need money to support us doing it rather than give us some money and then we'll do it."
[Hull Lighthouse project]*

"Getting a solid chunk of funding for several years really helps enormously. Not having to apply year after year." [Crisis Centre Ministries]

"... Funding is the biggest challenge; the challenge is looking at ways of sustaining ourself." [ASCEND]

3.8 CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

3.8 Recognition

The eighth cross-cutting theme concerns the level of positive recognition that case study projects have achieved, both from partner agencies and other service providers, and the local communities which they serve. The reputations that they have gained as reliable and trustworthy service providers are based on the positive outcomes that have been achieved, and the 'professional' approach which project staff and volunteers take, including securing accreditations and qualifications where these are required to underpin services. The level of esteem afforded to some projects by partner agencies can be evidenced by the receipt of awards and the prioritisation of project clients where they are being signposted, or making the transition to, other statutory provision (e.g. drug rehabilitation programmes). A selection of quotes below, collected during case study visits, help to illustrate this theme.

Recognition:

Case study quotes

"YPAC has managed to engage young people who have not responded to previous interventions." [YPAC]

"Our reputation has grown and is growing, people have begun to respect what we do. And what has helped is our sustainability."

"We will be 13 years old in August. They have realised that we are here to stay." [ASCEND]



"We now have schools who have an issue with a young person, and will ring us and say 'can you help?'. They notice that when our transition worker is involved attendance increases at school, which wouldn't be happening. There are young people who would be out of school permanently were YPAC not involved." [YPAC]

"As a charity, Lighthouse [has] sometimes been excluded. Agencies may not recognise the work, but women's testimonies are powerful. Lighthouse has worked for a long term, supporting women in need." [Hull Lighthouse project]

3.9 An opportunity to 'give something back'

The final cross-cutting theme to emerge from the six case studies presented here is the opportunity that church-based projects provide for people to 'give something back' to their local community. By building strong, beneficial and lasting relationships with users, projects help to build skills and confidence, and encourage individuals to relate positively to others in their community. An additional effect is that many clients are inspired to repay the sense of being valued that comes through their engagement with projects. This often takes the form of volunteering to help support the delivery of the project itself, which in turn, builds capacity within local communities, such that they are better able to address problems for themselves. Quotes below from case study interviewees illustrate this dimension clearly.

An opportunity to 'give something back':

Case study quotes

"I'm thankful for everyone that's helped me." [Basics Bank]

"As young people become more involved in YPAC they are encouraged to think not only about developing themselves, but about the contributions they can make to the development of a cohesive local community. This year, young people have painted the church railings, taken part in a car wash event to raise funds, and cleared the community garden." [YPAC]

"Volunteering at Superkidz gives me something to get up for." [mother whose children accessed the project and are now grown up]

"I would like to do more to help ASCEND. I'm sure there's something that I can do that would help." [ASCEND]

"You want to volunteer because you know that you're needed." [ASCEND volunteer and client]



3.10 CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

3.10 Reflections

The nine cross-cutting themes drawn from case studies presented in this report show clearly that working successfully with people who are marginalised or socially excluded requires both a considerable commitment of time, and an emotional investment by project staff and volunteers alike. This dedication is implicit in the success of case study projects, as is the pivotal role played by their underlying faith commitment, which provides a source of strength in facing the challenges of disadvantage and deprivation.

A further factor implicit in the success of projects showcased here is that they are all based on local need as their key starting point, and do not represent a statutory or 'dutiful' response to problems of disadvantage and deprivation. In this sense they are generally founded on tacit research or knowledge, which stems from the fact that the initiating organisation is embedded within a particular community and locality.

The core values of projects are, therefore, concerned with meeting the needs of individuals in a holistic way, with funding seen as a facilitator rather than the driver of service provision. This ethos can cause tensions with state bureaucracies where projects have grown to take on some responsibility for delivery of statutory services, and represents a significant challenge for projects as they bid to ensure long-term sustainability of provision. Tensions would appear to arise at two levels. First, from different interpretations of what is meant by terms such as 'service user', 'client', or 'positive outcome'; and second, with regard to the distinctive approaches adopted by projects, fundamental to their success, but also frequently at odds with the target-driven environment of statutory service providers such as local authorities.

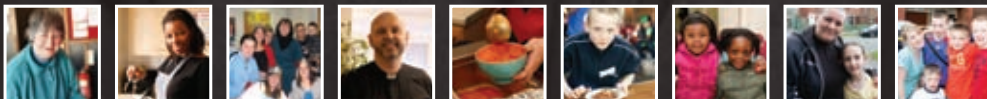
The projects operate within the framework of a Christian faith imperative to live out the Gospel in the midst of people who are poor, marginalised and vulnerable in our society. In doing so, the emphasis of projects is person-centred, focused on befriending and establishing positive, enduring relationships of trust. Such an approach is invaluable in enabling projects to support people that are 'hard-to-reach' and that statutory provision finds difficult to engage with. Overall, this ethos and practice serves to meet needs that might not otherwise be met.

Church Urban Fund has played an integral role in the development and continuity of projects showcased here. Through initial grants and funding at key points, it has been pivotal in the life of the projects. A further benefit of Church Urban Fund funding has been the external validation that its involvement provides, both internally and in seeking support from other sources. In this sense Church Urban Fund funding is often a precursor to attracting funding and support from elsewhere.

"Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."

Proverbs 31:8-9 (NIV)

Where Churches are Making a Difference



CHURCHES IN ACTION

CHURCHES IN **ACTION**

*Where Churches are
Making a Difference*



Credits

With thanks to Coventry University, and all the project workers, volunteers and service users who contributed to this research.

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