

Northern Ireland Young Life and Times Survey

**Cross-Community Schemes:
Participation, Motivation, Mandate**

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Introduction

- **Young Life and Times – annual survey of 16 year olds**
- **Range of questions investigating the lives of young people in Northern Ireland**
- **Includes questions about community relations and cross-community contact**

Summary of community relations and cross-community findings

**Young people involved in
cross-community projects or attend
integrated schools have more
favourable views about religion and
are much more likely to have friends
from the other religious community.**

Summary of findings

- **40% of respondents had participated in cross-community projects outside of school.**
- **Catholics (45%) were a little more likely than Protestants (41%) to say they attended such a programme.**
- **12% were currently involved in cross-community projects, of which 36% were Catholic and 26% Protestant.**

Summary of findings

- **88% of those who had contact with people from different religious or ethnic backgrounds said it was positive or very positive. Only 4 people found the experience negative.**
- **65% said that they had been involved in the organisation and running of the programme.**

Summary of findings

Those attending cross-community projects were much more likely to have 10 or more friends from other religious or ethnic backgrounds.

Summary of findings

- **82% agreed that relations between different religions would be better if there were more community relations projects.**
- **69% agreed that sectarian hatred was being directed towards minority ethnic and migrant groups.**
- **49% felt they didn't have enough opportunities to make friends from other religious or community backgrounds.**

What did we want to find out?

- **How often & for how long do these projects meet?**
- **What activities do they run & to what extent are these youth-led?**
- **Do young people feel involved?**
- **What motivates them to join?**
- **What drives project leaders to organise these schemes?**

Becoming a peer researcher

- Tick box on annual survey
- Application process
- Telephone interview

We didn't know what to expect!

The Peer Researcher Team

- **Aaron, Bróna & Maria – REACH Across**
- **Ashleigh & Laura - CROSSLINKS**
- **Felicity – The VOICE Project**
- **Sinead – The ULSTER Project**

What did we do?

- **Training at QUB**
 - research ethics
 - confidentiality
 - facilitating focus groups
 - identify projects & next steps
- **Fieldwork**
 - focus groups in 4 geographic locations
 - interviews with project staff

What did we find?

- **How do young people get involved in cross-community projects?**
 - youth workers
 - family
 - essay competition or church nomination
- **Why do they do it?**
 - meet new people
 - opportunity to learn new skills and have fun

Benefits of involvement

- **Building self-confidence**
- **Making new friends and establishing long-lasting friendships**
- **Learning about different cultures**
- **Gaining new skills**
- **Giving something back to the community**
- **Promoting understanding**

What motivates project leaders?

- Young people need and demand these programmes
- Leaders have skills and abilities to share
- Rewarding work
- Give young people a chance
- Experiences of growing up during the Troubles
- Broadening horizons

Why did we get involved?

- Too good to miss
- CVs/UCAS forms
- Cross-community aspect appealed
- Financial incentive!

What did we learn?

- **Communication skills**
- **Organisational skills**
- **Leadership qualities**
- **New confidence**
- **Understanding of research**

Peer researchers

Why involve young people in research?

- **Listening & communication skills**
- **Can relate to other young people better**
- **Access to sample and maintaining contact with them**

Although adult researchers bring:

- **Management skills**
- **Experience**
- **Authority**

Conclusion

- **Cross-community projects play a vital role in promoting understanding and providing opportunities for young people to meet**
- **Enjoyable**
- **Gained new skills**
- **Helped make young people's voices heard**

THANK YOU!