

**A Report on the  
Evaluation of Evangelistic events in the UK:**

Manchester 2000; Festival Manchester;  
Soul in the City – London; MerseyFest and NE1

Commissioned by

**THE JERUSALEM TRUST**

This study was commissioned by the Jerusalem Trust and was managed by John Baxter Brown of Churches Together in England and Dave Wiles of Frontier Youth Trust. It looks at five Christian social action youth projects which were partly funded by the Trust.

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This report is the outcome of a 24 hour analysis and writing session. The Research Team and Managers are extremely grateful to Ian Sparks for his work in compiling this final report.

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## **SUMMARY FOR THE JERUSALEM TRUSTS' TRUSTEES**

### **Introduction**

This study looks at five Christian social action youth projects which were partly funded by the Jerusalem Trust. These were:

Manchester 2000 and Festival Manchester 2003  
Soul in the City, London 2004  
Merseyfest 2005  
NE1 2006

The purposes of the research were:

To look at the long-term effect of the campaigns on a sample of participants

To draw out examples of good practice and to inform the Trust of some of the conditions that might be put into funding bids.

The study was carried out over a short period of time in late November and early December 2006 and involved with interviews with 131 people who had some connection with the events.

### **Summary of findings**

- These are huge events with great logistical challenges bringing together thousands of young people, hundreds of churches, church leaders and young leaders as well as residents of the specific localities.
- The organisers do not have spare capacity and so are vulnerable to technical breakdowns, funding shortfalls or the illness of key personnel. They are responsible for large numbers of young people under 18 and so have to give particular attention to physical security and child protection.
- A number of respondents were critical of the organisation of the events but the most encouraging aspect was the willingness of later events to learn in a planned way from the experience of earlier events.
- The young people who took part in the events were overwhelmingly positive about them. They learnt more about the relationship between their faith and their actions, their experience was broadened, their faith was deepened and these effects continued after the events were over.
- The effect on local communities was also positive but less long-lasting except where local churches continued the social action work. There was some criticism that young people were parachuted into communities and there was little attempt either to plan with local communities or to involve local young people in the planning or action. The social action projects achieved what they set out to do in practical terms and the young people made a positive impact. However, a lot of the impact soon faded and interviews on a selection of estates showed little memory of what had happened. More significantly none of those interviewed made any connection between the work and the events themselves and only one person recognised that they were Christian in any way. There is no evidence that the events have established themselves in their communities as a brand.
- The events promoted better links between churches although it was more difficult to extend the involvement beyond evangelical and charismatic churches.

- Links with local authorities and the police were very positive and both were impressed by the events. There is potential for local churches to build on these events.

Two over-arching issues are:

- The balance between the overall impact of a very big event and the more sustainable outcome of focusing on a smaller number of estates where projects can be chosen more carefully and there can be detailed plans for follow-up.
- The need to find ways of branding the events more clearly as Christian without losing the support of statutory bodies or the acceptance of local communities.

### **Questions the Trustees might raise with future applicants for funding.**

- What steps have you taken to learn from the experience of previous events particularly in the areas of child protection and logistics?
- How is this learning reflected in your plans?
- How can you demonstrate you have the resources to manage the number of projects you are planning? Have you considered concentrating your energies on fewer projects to have a more powerful impact?
- How realistic is the business plan and does it allow for alternative projects or activities if there are limiting factors, such as lower than expected funding or staffing levels?
- What systems do you have for monitoring the progress of your event and dealing with any problem areas? Are there sufficient management structures in place and how are the managers trained and supported?
- How will training needs be identified and responded to? How will you ensure that key people at local level receive the training they need in areas like health and safety and child protection? What will you do about those who fail to attend the training? What will you do about those who fail the certification and training, particularly with reference to child protection?
- How will you involve the local communities in planning the social action projects you want to do?
- How are you going to convey the Christian basis of your work clearly without alienating the statutory bodies or local communities?
- How are you planning to sustain the work you do beyond the end of your event?
- How will you help people to build on the relationships they establish with the statutory authorities?

## **SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Key Theme 1: Vision Organisation and Planning**

#### **Vision**

- Make sure you share the vision down the organisation so that there is a consistent message from everyone.

## Organisation

- Early contact with church leaders will help to generate local ownership. It is worth identifying a key leader in a particular denomination or grouping who can inspire other leaders. It is useful to regularly report to the church hierarchy to strengthen their support.
- The quality of the local leader has a huge impact on the success of local projects and it is crucial to get the right person with the skills and the capacity to deliver. The leader will need a clear written brief.
- Equally the organisers have to plan the timing carefully so that local leaders do not peak too early and run out of energy.

## Planning

- Map the communication systems so that there is effective communication with everyone involved.
- Set SMART<sup>1</sup> targets throughout the whole organisation so that everyone knows what their part involved and what is expected of them.
- Be clear about relative roles i.e. the link between a role and specific targets, throughout the event.
- Develop or adapt better monitoring and evaluation mechanisms as the event is happening and build in action research into the event itself.
- Share learning from event to event e.g. timing (late August has worked better than late July in terms of follow-through), better training, a more systemic approach, better risk management and the practicalities - transport, showers, loos etc.
- Develop an appropriate recruitment strategy to identify people who can deliver the event at the different levels of responsibility.

## Training

- Be clear of training needs: what is required at each level of the event (e.g. senior management; area management; project management, delegate) and establish the mandatory requirements for the various levels of participants.
- Train young people in good local evangelism and communication skills e.g. basic Transactional Analysis is a way of helping young people to stay in "adult" mode when they face criticism or hostility. This should include conversational skills for faith sharing.
- Build on good practice in training from previous events e.g. child protection at Festival Manchester and find ways to communicate this learning to later events.

## Key Theme 2: Impact and Sustainability – Local Community

### Impact

- The branding of the events did not make their Christian motivation clear. There would clearly be sensitivity in dealing with statutory authorities if the branding was too overtly Christian but the branding could (for example) be:

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<sup>1</sup> SMART: a management tool which helps plan and evaluate project development and performance by having a set of outputs that are: **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**greed, **R**ealistic and **T**ime-bound.

Merseyfest – a Christian social action project.

Reinforce this message with the use of post cards, literature, hand-outs which all carry the core message in a compelling manner. Find some simple marketing material to leave behind with the branding e.g. a mouse mat or a mug.

- Explore the use of small, local acts of worship everywhere – 10 minutes of singing and prayer – which are done openly, sensitively and show Christians doing worship.
- Encourage conversational skills in the young people so that they are more confident in sharing their faith during spontaneous conversations. This is also a training need.
- There is some evidence that projects have a stronger impact where good youth work happens so evaluate proposed projects, training and outcomes against a youth work practice matrix.

### **Sustainability**

- The initial selection of projects needs to include consideration of their sustainability. Can the local community or church sustain the project? Is the project dependent upon the use of delegates? Does the project contribute to local community development in some way or is it primarily designed to give the delegates something to do?
- Despite the attraction of the “big hit” it might be more effective to do fewer projects more intensively and more effectively. A project with a higher level of input and a stronger link to continuing work is more likely to be sustainable.
- There was a sense that teams had been parachuted into communities who were then passive recipients of a specific activity. Sustainability and spiritual impact could both be enhanced by consulting and involving local communities in the selection and delivery of projects.
- Consulting local young people and developing their ownership is also more likely to promote sustainability and may help to achieve the evangelistic aims.
- More attention can be paid to building up existing youth work initiatives and other local projects, for example, encouraging a local youth group to take on a project as part of the build up to and follow up from an event.

### **Key Theme 3: Impact and Sustainability – Young People**

- The worship and teaching was a very positive experience for delegates. It is important to maintain the quality of these events.
- Local leaders are pivotal in enabling young people to build on their experiences at these events. Their pivotal role should be acknowledged and some of the training should focus on preparing them for this role.
- The events provide a good opportunity for informal education. An ‘ideas pack’ for local leaders and youth workers would enable them to capitalise on these opportunities. Follow up material for youth workers to use with their youth groups may also be beneficial.
- Encourage local leaders to help young people think how they will take their experience forward in Christian service, especially how it relates to their home context.

#### **Key Theme 4: Networking**

- These events provide a great opportunity for churches to work together. As much effort as possible should be made to include churches from as broad a theological and denominational spectrum as possible.
- The social action activities bring the church into contact with the agenda of other agencies – housing, environment, police etc. Use this to develop positive and practical relationships.
- Use your awareness of other agencies' issues to develop their involvement on the basis of mutual concerns – "matching our product to your needs."
- It is important to continue after the event. The relationships developed can be built on by looking beyond the immediate event to what is realistic in the longer-term.
- Encourage leaders and delegates to build similar relationships once they return to their home communities.

## **BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH**

This study was commissioned by the Jerusalem Trust and was managed by John Baxter Brown, Executive Officer (Youth) of Churches Together in England and Dave Wiles, CEO of Frontier Youth Trust. It looks at five Christian social action youth projects which were partly funded by the Trust. These were:

Manchester 2000 and Festival Manchester (2003)  
Soul in the City, London (2004)  
Merseyfest (2005)  
NE1 (2006)

The purposes of the research were:

To look at the long-term effect of the campaigns on a sample of participants

To draw out examples of good practice and to use these to develop some of the conditions that the Trust might place upon future funding bids.

The study was intended to be a short snap shot to take place over one month in the autumn of 2006.

With a very limited time-scale and the varying length of time between different events and the research being undertaken it was only possible to carry out a qualitative study. Consequently the research team decided on two approaches:

1. A short e-mail questionnaire which would be sent to appropriate contacts of Churches Together in England and Frontier Youth Trust.
2. A longer structured interview with a random selection of people at various levels i.e. church leader, youth leader/volunteer, young people, church members, members of the community where the social action programme took place and representatives of the police and local authorities.

The final total of interviewees from 1 and 2 above was as follows:

14 church leaders  
34 youth workers  
15 young people  
22 church members and volunteers  
41 people in the local communities  
5 representatives of statutory agencies

Although this is a relatively small group there was a surprising degree of unanimity on the key themes which emerged from the interviews. The research team has grouped the responses into four key themes and has provided some background narrative and recommendations to organisations that might run other similar events in future. There is a separate Summary for the Jerusalem Trust's trustees (pages 3 – 6) summarising the overall report and suggesting some questions the trustees might raise when asked to fund similar events in future. There is also a summary of the recommendations made throughout the Report in this Summary.

Quotes in this report are verbatim and this is occasionally reflected in the use of poor grammar and language in the quotes.

A summary of the research process is included in the Appendix.

## **KEY THEME 1 VISION, ORGANISATION AND PLANNING**

### **Vision**

Many respondents specifically mentioned and appreciated the link that the events made between Christianity and social action.

"I think if there is anything I would like to say it is how excited I am that words and deeds missions are becoming more and more common." (Youth worker)

"It was primarily a witness to show people what Christians are all about. They're not people who just go to church and sing hymns but people who get out in the community and work." (Young person)

Faith was clearly a great motivator and one which opened young people's eyes to a deeper understanding. (See later section on the effect on young people.)

### **Organisation and planning**

These are huge events involving thousands of young people arriving from across the UK (and across the world). Temporary tented cities have to be set up with kitchens, washing facilities and sanitation, transport has to deliver the delegates to their social action projects each day and the technology has to be in place for the major worship events. In addition there are costs for the police and local authority in managing security, waste collection and so on.

The events were vulnerable to circumstances beyond the organisers' control. These included problems with IT systems, the illness of key staff and funding shortages. With all of these pressures, running the events at all was an achievement in itself.

There was a significant division of opinion about the organisation and planning of the events. Young people were generally happy with this while some of the adults – youth workers, volunteers and church leaders – were quite critical. It seems that the adults directly involved in the events acted as a buffer between the young people and some of the operational difficulties:

"There was the general chaos of a 'first time attempt' at M2K (Manchester 2000) especially around the provision of meals...so I sorted a deal at a local restaurant for the week. But I guess the chaos was all part of the experience and certainly the young people were not aware of this." (Youth Leader)

Many of the adult respondents admired the effort involved in planning an event which covered a whole city but were critical of the way the projects were implemented. For example, some church leaders were concerned about lack of clarity:

"There was confusion over who was coming (to help). At first no-one came and then there were different groups on different days."

"Planning was ok. We just needed a bit more clarity about who exactly would be responsible for what (funding, legal issues etc.)"

Others felt that it was all too regimented:

"It all seemed to be set up before contact was made with local Catholic churches"

"Lack of recognition of local church and what they brought"

Clearly there is an issue, especially for smaller churches, of feeling overwhelmed by a big city-wide event. Despite this, most felt positive overall but would want a longer planning phase and more

notice of events in future. Against this, one event director noted that a too long a lead time meant that churches were flagging by the time of the event itself. This issue is one of developing strategic thinking and planning.

Some church members mentioned the importance of the event organisers linking to a person in the church who would be inspired by the possibilities. In some cases people had been discouraged by their church leaders or had had to take action independently of the leaders.

Youth leaders tended to be more concerned with how the events themselves were run. One youth leader described the event he attended as "shambolic". Other remembered the showers and loos as less than satisfactory. One young person reflecting on Manchester 2000 gave as his worst memory:

"The aroma of raw sewage"

Overall however, youth workers were quite philosophical about the events. They were aware of the problems with transport and planning but thought that this was to be expected with such large events.

"Flying by the seat of their pants but well organised. People worked really hard and were learning as they went on."

"Generally well-organised but there were bound to be some glitches with something so big."

One encouraging aspect is the capacity for learning from earlier events. Festival Manchester built on Manchester 2000 and deliberately worked to have a more systems-oriented approach and to manage issues such as child protection, risk assessment and the security of vulnerable young people (including the use of CRB checks) more effectively. The organisers of Merseyfest invited Liverpool City councillors to Festival Manchester to pave the way for their own event and also invited the organisers of Festival Manchester to Liverpool to share their experiences.

## **Training**

Recollections of training were varied. Some people had difficulty in recalling any training while others received a lot and thought it was very helpful. Some young people felt it was probably not that important:

"Using a fork and a litter picker is not that difficult."

Others were conscious of doing something new and felt the need for preparation and support:

"Probably needed more team building and getting to know you etc. to build confidence."

One adult volunteer thought the training was of a high level but was disappointed that so few attended – sometimes only 1 or 2 people.

## **Recommendations for future events**

### **Vision**

- Make sure you share the vision down the organisation so that there is a consistent message from everyone.

## **Organisation**

- Early contact with church leaders will help to generate local ownership. It is worth identifying a key leader in a particular denomination or grouping who can inspire other leaders. It is useful to regularly report to the church hierarchy to strengthen their support.
- The quality of the local leader has a huge impact on the success of local projects and it is crucial to get the right person with the skills and the capacity to deliver. The leader will need a clear written brief.
- Equally the organisers have to plan the timing carefully so that local leaders do not peak too early and run out of energy.

## **Planning**

- Map the communication systems so that there is effective communication with everyone involved.
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- Develop an appropriate recruitment strategy to identify people who can deliver the event at the different levels of responsibility.

## **Training**

- Be clear of training needs: what is required at each level of the event (e.g. senior management; area management; project management, delegate) and establish the mandatory requirements for the various levels of participants.
- Train young people in good local evangelism and communication skills e.g. basic Transactional Analysis is a way of helping young people to stay in "adult" mode when they face criticism or hostility. This should include conversational skills for faith sharing.
- Build on good practice in training from previous events e.g. child protection at Festival Manchester and find ways to communicate this learning to later events.

## **KEY THEME 2**

### **IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY - LOCAL COMMUNITY**

#### **Impact**

Many of the young people were delighted at the impact their work had on the area where they were working:

“A lot of people were blown away that we were doing such a wonderful thing”

and they savoured the misunderstandings:

“When they saw what you were doing there were like “Oh, is this community service?” (i.e. work by young offenders) and when they found we were doing it because we just wanted to help they were quite surprised.”

Young people enjoyed the opportunities this gave them to talk to residents informally sometimes about their faith, sometimes just generally. In fact those who were involved in practical activities divorced from personal contact expressed their disappointment at this. The young people also enjoyed seeing local teenagers with a tough exterior getting involved and beginning to play silly games or going along to the worship sessions.

The research among some church members and voluntary groups confirms that the young people had made a deep impact on the communities at the time. In the light of this it is disappointing to see the limited long-term impact on the communities where the projects were carried out.

An area was chosen from each event for a set of interviews on the street with residents. These communities turned out to be ones where there has been little follow-up since the main event.

In the estate in London only one person (a Council employee) remembered the event at all. This may be affected by a seemingly high level of turnover in occupancy. In Liverpool the area visited included a small centre which had been opened as part of Merseyfest. The staff there felt it had been well-organised with a positive local effect. Staff in 6 out of 8 local shops remembered the event although local residents did not. In Manchester 6 out of 18 people remembered the event and broadly thought it was valuable. NE1 was the most recent event and there the majority of people interviewed remembered the event.

The most disappointing finding was that only two people could remember why the event had taken place. One was a church member and the other person said they knew the young people were from a church. More typical comments about why the work was done were:

“Just to develop the area.”

“There was funding from somewhere.”

“I think we won a competition.”

Some local co-ordinators recognised that they could have done more to promote the events both in the neighbourhood and to the wider community.

“The park keepers were stunned by the cleaning up in the parks but the council officials and general public were not really aware of it. Next time I would do more to promote it to the local press.”

None of the events appears to have achieved any brand recognition with the general public. This is not surprising considering the number of messages carried by posters, newspapers, television and radio and the money spent by major organisations in promoting their brand.

In terms of branding it is worth noting that none of the events had an explicit Christian reference in its title. In fact some young people at one event complained that the sponsors' name on the t-shirts was much bigger than the name of the event itself. It is worth organisers considering how to get some Christian branding into their social action activities.

The big celebration and worship events were explicitly Christian. They were greatly enjoyed by the young people and had a big impact at the time. However, they were separated from the local activities and there was no way of making the connection unless local people went to the big events.

With the emphasis on big events it is easy to overlook the impact of low-key relationship building in these projects:

“the people on the estate couldn’t quite understand why we were (doing this work)...they responded much better to the youth work and the detached workers that were around chatting to young members of the community about their lives and the way they lived them.” (Youth worker)

The evidence uncovered by this research suggests that the events were not hugely successful in terms of evangelism. There were examples of conversion and lives changed but most saw this as pre-evangelism and a way of showing that Christians are engaging with the real world:

“Evangelism is relational rather than from big events. People saw good news from local events and Churches picked up on this. One young person definitely became more active...by seeing a young person he could relate to who followed Jesus.” (Youth worker)

This raised the question for some respondents of having such big events. It is a good PR message to announce that you will clean up a big city but this can affect the quality at a local level:

“Project was so big that some local projects were not good – was intense pressure to get projects...a little more quality for a little less quantity may have been better.”

## **Sustainability**

The questionnaires did not specifically ask about sustainability but it was raised as an issue by many respondents.

Despite the best efforts of the organisers some church leaders still perceived it as “hit and run” evangelism:

“Overall impression was of an outside team coming in, doing something and then leaving....question whether it has any real long-term impact.” (Church leader)

However one respondent saw even a short-term event could be beneficial:

“I also recognise it can be a kick-start to help churches develop something long-term and can be an encouragement to those who have had long-term projects.” (Youth worker)

The most positive responses were from churches that had continued their social action projects and were seeing benefits in terms of continued recognition of their work as Christians and positive links with statutory authorities. However, others had problems with continuing this work despite their best efforts:

“Nothing carried on afterwards. We tried to work with the local evangelical church on continuing the litter picking but nothing came of it.” (Church leader)

The most discouraging project was a group of young people who spent a week clearing an overgrown sensory garden for children. They were delighted with their work but a year later the garden was overgrown again and the adjacent school which used the garden had been closed.

Despite the criticism of short-term events, respondents made two important points:

1. A short-term event can have a continuing value for local people as in the case of the project that fitted window locks and spy holes in the houses of vulnerable people.
2. There was a powerful local impact in some areas:

"1,000 young people went and cleared up the whole estate. During 10 days (there was) zero crime on whole estate and it brought neighbours together. Generated a lot of community spirit. Over following 6 months crime was down about 40% on estate."

**The conclusion would seem to be that there is no problem with short-term social action if it is entered into consciously, if it is connected to the local area and if churches and youth workers are looking to carry on the work in the community and their relationships with young people.**

## **Recommendations for future events**

### **Impact**

- The branding of the events did not make their Christian motivation clear. There would clearly be sensitivity in dealing with statutory authorities if the branding was too overtly Christian but the branding could (for example) be:

Merseyfest – a Christian social action project.

Reinforce this message with the use of post cards, literature, hand-outs which all carry the core message in a compelling manner. Find some simple marketing material to leave behind with the branding e.g. a mouse mat or a mug.

- Explore the use of small, local acts of worship everywhere – 10 minutes of singing and prayer – which are done openly, sensitively and show Christians doing worship.
- Encourage conversational skills in the young people so that they are more confident in sharing their faith during spontaneous conversations. This is also a training need.
- There is some evidence that projects have a stronger impact where good youth work happens so evaluate proposed projects, training and outcomes against a youth work practice matrix.

### **Sustainability**

- The initial selection of projects needs to include consideration of their sustainability. Can the local community or church sustain the project? Is the project dependent upon the use of delegates? Does the project contribute to local community development in some way or is it primarily designed to give the delegates something to do?
- Despite the attraction of the "big hit" it might be more effective to do fewer projects more intensively and more effectively. A project with a higher level of input and a stronger link to continuing work is more likely to be sustainable.
- There was a sense that teams had been parachuted into communities who were then passive recipients of a specific activity. Sustainability and spiritual impact could both be enhanced by consulting and involving local communities in the selection and delivery of projects.
- Consulting local young people and developing their ownership is also more likely to promote sustainability and may help to achieve the evangelistic aims.
- More attention can be paid to building up existing youth work initiatives and other local projects, for example, encouraging a local youth group to take on a project as part of the build up to and follow up from an event.

### **KEY THEME 3**

#### **IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY – YOUNG PEOPLE**

##### **Impact**

The events had a powerful immediate impact on the young people who were involved. As one youth leader put it:

“The young people were buzzing!”

The first impact was that of worshipping with a large group of like-minded young people. Young Christians are in a minority in their schools and communities so this gave them a real boost:

“I especially liked the large amount of young Christians together worshipping and going out to serve.”

“Our group went down every morning to the worship. It was really amazing, the teaching was really great and the music was really loud. Really amazing.”

But it wasn't just the big events. One youth worker noticed that people were more open to worshipping informally:

“My best memory (was) going past the big tent for the evening celebration and seeing people of different races and traditions sitting on the grass and worshipping together while they waited to go. No need of a big band or a fancy set-up, just a guitar and people worshipping together.”

The events also took young people out of their normal setting and gave them new experiences:

“Young people came to (inner London) from Dover and Surrey and both sides benefited from this experience.”

Opened up a whole new world to them...moving out of the safety of their own church.”

Not all of the young people who attended had a strong Christian commitment and the events were significant for some of these:

“At that point I wasn't a Christian and it played a huge part in getting me there. (Interviewer: Would you have become a Christian if you hadn't gone?) Yes, I think so but the experience did kind of jump-start me kind of thing.”

The second main impact was in understanding the link between faith and actions:

“Serving people. It's what Jesus did and He tells us to do it.”

“It really challenged the young people I took showing them that the Christian life was one for living, not just sitting and talking about.”

“It enabled them to make a head-to-heart transition doing things for others enabled them to see what a difference actions could make.”

##### **Sustainability**

The young people had differing views as to whether the events had had a lasting effect on themselves. Some were strictly practical:

“M2K made me want to go to University in Manchester”

while some were uncertain about whether it had changed them:

“It wasn’t a major, major thing but it was positive.”

“It takes a lot to really wow me so it didn’t have a big impact.”

Others, however could see that it had had an effect

“In subtle ways, your faith is tested and strengthened.”

“It gave me more confidence, more ability to talk about my faith.”

Church and young leaders supported this view seeing the real impact being the long-term process of developing young people’s discipleship.

“(There) was a group of young people who were really into skating culture and Festival Manchester enabled them to plug into the bigger picture of Christianity. Journey for them was really helpful and they grew as Christians.”

“At the time they thought it was fantastic and loved it. Long-term it was part of their spiritual journey along with Spring Harvest and overseas trips.”

“Encouraged young people to think more widely about what they would do with their lives. The result is that one young person is working full-time at another church and two are interns at a large local Anglican church.”

Leaders also saw that the events developed young people’s confidence both in witness and in social action.

“The kids in the youth group became more bold in talking to others about God.”

“Gave them something practical to do...and the confidence to do it again.”

The event also had an impact on the leaders themselves:

“It gave me a fresh vision for youth outreach”

The longest perspective came from one of the festival directors:

“Involving young people in social action does make a real lasting difference to personal growth. We see the benefit of more young people going into youth and community work than if we had just employed youth workers originally.”

### **Recommendations for future events**

- The worship and teaching was a very positive experience for delegates. It is important to maintain the quality of these events.
- Local leaders are pivotal in enabling young people to build on their experiences at these events. Their pivotal role should be acknowledged and some of the training should focus on preparing them for this role.
- The events provide a good opportunity for informal education. An ‘ideas pack’ for local leaders and youth workers would enable them to capitalise on these opportunities. Follow up material for youth workers to use with their youth groups may also be beneficial.
- Encourage local leaders to help young people think how they will take their experience forward in Christian service, especially how it relates to their home context.

## **KEY THEME 4 NETWORKING**

### **Between churches**

Many church leaders identified the working together and ecumenical partnerships as a benefit of the events.

“It galvanised existing relationships.”

“Was great to get our church looking out and working in partnership with other churches.”

The exact experience varied from place to place. One church leader said that:

“Lasting links were made with other churches (but) the churchmanship of participating churches was narrow, non-evangelical/non-charismatic churches reacted with suspicion rather than support when approached.”

while another said:

“Churches working together – high Anglican, evangelical Anglican and house church – a joint monthly youth event still happens.

### **With other agencies**

Representatives of the statutory agencies had a broadly positive view of the events. They saw the same organisational problems as the youth leaders but felt that these were out-weighted by the enthusiasm and impact of the volunteers.

The responses immediately after the events were very positive:

“The Chief Executive and elected members were delighted with the work on the streets...It was an inspiration.” (Director of Education and Leisure)

“From the moment I picked up (the work group) I found them to be polite, friendly, extremely approachable and enthusiastic. Nothing was too much trouble for them”. (Community Beat Constable)

The respondents to this study were able to take a longer-term view and were more circumspect. They all praised the enthusiasm of the respondents and the quality of their work but they were less certain about the long-term impact. A project for disabled children said the event had transformed their centre and there had been no vandalism since. The work in communities had had a more variable impact:

“(Impact) incredibly hard to measure. Have been improvement in certain areas...Some areas less crime, some less so.” (Police Officer)

“It’s always difficult for every individual project to leave a significant legacy but perhaps this needs to figure more strongly in the project vetting process.” (Park Estate Manager)

There was disappointment that the involvement had not continued and that, except in a few cases, it had not been rooted in local communities and had not used local young people. There was also a concern that the organisations had not related their work to other community activities:

“Need to be careful to recognise that other good youth work is ongoing.”

### **Recommendations for future events**

- These events provide a great opportunity for churches to work together. As much effort as possible should be made to include churches from as broad a theological and denominational spectrum as possible.
- The social action activities bring the church into contact with the agenda of other agencies – housing, environment, police etc. Use this to develop positive and practical relationships.
- Use your awareness of other agencies' issues to develop their involvement on the basis of mutual concerns – "matching our product to your needs."
- It is important to continue after the event. The relationships developed can be built on by looking beyond the immediate event to what is realistic in the longer-term.
- Encourage leaders and delegates to build similar relationships once they return to their home communities.

## APPENDIX

### A Summary of the Methodology

The two managers met with a representative of the Jerusalem Trust and one of the researchers to develop a suitable research methodology in mid-October 2006. It was decided to investigate the events at two levels.

Firstly a short email questionnaire was developed and sent to a number of youth workers and church leaders. Having asked about which event and levels of involvement, the key questions were:

- Could you tell us two good points regarding the event
- Could you tell us about two areas that could be improved regarding the event

Two youth groups, known to the researchers were also approached. The young people were to be interviewed about their experiences of the event.

The researchers were asked to do more in depth research in two locations. The first location was to be identified by the festival organisers and second location chosen randomly by the researcher. In reality, due to very tight time frames and lack of current contact information the researchers were sometimes forced to use their own networks and communication channels to identify the two locations.

For each location the researchers were to perform a 'community stroll', asking local people about their memories of the event and any impressions they had. The conversations were to be recorded after the stroll.

It was decided that there were several key personnel with whom interviews would either be essential or desirable:

- a) Ordinary members of the community (to be done based on impressions from community stroll) ESSENTIAL
- b) Voluntary groups in the area (this should be a relevant association that relates to the task undertaken in the community – e.g. if the task was cleaning up housing – approach tenants association, if the task was cleaning a canal – approach a local environmental group.) DESIRABLE
- c) Young people in church who were involved in the event (via youth worker and/or clergy) ESSENTIAL
- d) Youth worker/leader/volunteer - ESSENTIAL
- e) Police DESIRABLE
- f) A relevant person from the local authority/statutory sector DESIRABLE
- g) Church members DESIRABLE
- h) Church leaders (lay or ordained/qualified/recognised) ESSENTIAL

The researchers were to carry out the ESSENTIAL and at least two of the DESIRABLE for each location. For each category of person a set of questions were developed and followed.

In mid-November the researchers for the Manchester, London and Liverpool events met for 24 hours of analysis and writing. The Newcastle research was given an extended time-frame in which to work as NE1 was not included in the initial brief. The findings from Newcastle were analysed in early December and have been included in the report.