

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON



Faculty of Social, Human and Mathematical Sciences

(Southampton Education School)

Sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland:
a perspective-based evaluation on the contribution of youth work.

By

Martin Mc Mullan

(2) 23308885

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ABSTRACT

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SECTARIANISM AND SEPARATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND: a perspective-based evaluation on the contribution of youth work.

Research on the conflict in Northern Ireland that focuses on young people and education has been approached from a mostly formal education analysis. My research study fills this void by putting a lens on the role and contribution of youth work (informal education) in addressing sectarianism and separation through an evaluative perspective-based study. Some writers have hinted at many shortcomings within the youth work approach and this lack of certainty on the role and contribution of youth work has informed the direction of my exploratory research study (Morrow, 2004; Millken, 2015).

This research provides a platform for a contemporary review of youth work and peace-building by practitioners within the youth work sector by exploring their insights and perspectives based on their lived work experiences. Using qualitative methodologies, within an interpretivist paradigm, and specifically a perspective-seeking evaluative framework, the research gathered perspectives through five focussed workshops with youth work-related practitioners in making a qualitative assessment of the effectiveness of youth work in addressing sectarianism and separation. Multiple perspectives provide a conclusive evidence-base which can inform policy and strategy within Education and the Youth Sector. Primary data gathered through four focus groups with young people further provided another dimension to the study, by shedding light on how young people experience or perceive sectarianism and separation.

The findings present a foundation of evidence which support the case for fore-fronting youth work as a contributor in addressing sectarianism and separation. A framework and model 'Developing an Agenda for Peace through Youth Work' has been proposed that is aligned to findings and consistent citations by those within the profession.

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Martin Mc Mullan

declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

Sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland: a perspective-based evaluation on the contribution of youth work.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission.

Signed: Martin Mc Mullan

Date: May 2018

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

| | |
|-----------|---|
| CRC | Community Relations Council |
| CRED | Community Relations Equality and Diversity in Education |
| DE / DENI | Department of Education (Northern Ireland) |
| EMU | Education for Mutual Understanding |
| EU | European Union |
| GFA | Good Friday Agreement |
| IBC | Issue Based Collaboration |
| ICR | Institute for Conflict Research |
| MLA's | Members of the Legislative Assembly |
| NEET | Not in Employment Education or Training |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| NICCY | Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young people |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OFMDFM | Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister |
| PfY | Priorities for Youth |
| PSNI | Police Service of Northern Ireland |
| RAG | Regional Advisory Group |
| TBUC | Together Building a United Community |
| UDA | Ulster Deference Army |
| UVF | Ulster Volunteer Force |
| YANI | YouthAction Northern Ireland |
| YCNI | Youth Council for Northern Ireland |
| YLTS | Young Life and Times Survey |
| YSSPG | Youth Service Sectoral Partnership Group |

Chapter 1: Introduction and rationale for the research

1.1 The context

Sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland: a perspective-based evaluation on the contribution of youth work.

There are often two principal schools of thought for those who write about the conflict and its impact in Northern Ireland. The first is that the majority of people living throughout the conflict felt that it did not have much impact on their lives and coped well (often by denial of the existence of its impact). The other is that everyone has been touched in some way by the conflict (Radford and Templer, 2008). This provides the backdrop to my research study which considers the legacy of the conflict on the lives of young people and how youth work contributes to change in building a more peaceful society.

Smyth et al (2004) note that while Northern Ireland may be termed a "post-conflict" society by some, and that the 1998 Good Friday Peace Agreement (GFA) has brought a structural framework for local democracy and decision-making, the reality is that both sectarianism and separation remain a key feature of life for many. Furthermore, sectarianism (prejudice and discrimination based on the intersection of religious, political and ethnic identification) manifests itself in various guises, some more explicitly than others. Smyth et al (2004) note that many children and young people have continued to be affected by factors lingering from the conflict and, in particular, community control and punishment, street rioting, and continued antagonistic and sectarian attitudes and behaviour. Young people in deprived and interface communities (characterised by residential segregation and boundary lines), often experience and feel a more pronounced reality of separation as a result of the conflict in Northern Ireland (Mc Grellis, 2010). Much of the impact of the conflict is more subtle, and can involve patterns of unconscious or subconscious attitudes and behaviours often not immediately recognisable to young people.

From the 1980's, and more significantly since the 'peace process' in the 1990's, International and European funding have influenced the peace-building journey in Northern Ireland. The most recent Peace IV 2016-2023 programme (Cooperation programmes under the European Territorial Cooperation, 2016:1) specifically names

young people as a priority thematic area. It prioritises initiatives aimed at engaging young people within peace and reconciliation activities, noting further that Northern Ireland and the border regions of Ireland still require significant intervention to support peace development. Core priorities included:

more effort to develop and deepen reconciliation between divided communities; increase tolerance and respect to reduce the levels of sectarianism and racism; promote increased community cohesion; and address the legacy of the past (Cooperation programmes under the European Territorial Cooperation, 2016:1).

The named priorities all correspond directly to my research in which I explore how youth work can address sectarianism and separation based on a perspective-based evaluation. The literature review (chapter 2) provides some analysis on the ideology and possible drive behind much of this peace investment.

1.2 A timely review of progress

Youth work has undergone significant changes in Northern Ireland over the last few years, including the development of a Department of Education 'Priorities for Youth Policy' (2012) and an Education Authority 'Regional Youth Development Plan' (2016), providing a new landscape for youth work outcomes and interventions. Core to this process is an evidence-based needs-assessment, which is informed by both young people and practitioners. My research study complements this process with a more specific lens on issues relating to the legacy of the conflict such as sectarianism and separation, from a practitioner-informed perspective. In this way, it considers the global influence and professionalisation of peace in tandem with the ongoing professionalisation of youth work.

Furthermore, almost 20 years on from the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, I felt it was timely to review the role and contribution of youth work in supporting a sustained peace – namely, in addressing two core features of a divided society – sectarianism and separation.

While much research has been focussed on the conflict and 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland, this has been more limited in terms of its focus on young people, and even more limited in terms of the relationship between youth work, young people's development and the wider peace-building processes. Some have questioned the contribution and impact of youth work (Morrow, 2004; Community Relations Council, 2010; and Milliken, 2015) and further caution that there is often an assumed impact and effectiveness through youth

work. Milliken and others would advocate that youth work has the potential to do much more (Morrow, 2004; Mc Alister et al, 2009). Community Relations Council (2010:38-40) emphasise this stance, noting *'the contribution of youth work to peace-building in Northern Ireland still remains untapped in terms of its potential...'* My research study provides an assessment of the contribution of youth work based on perspectives from within the profession.

Previous research has tended to focus on young people's experiences of the conflict with limited attention to the role and contribution of youth work. Views and perspectives from youth workers themselves have been under-documented or understood in research, and hence, my research study provides new insight and understanding. Many other references and studies imply a deficit within youth work whereas my study takes an approach which provides a more informed assessment from 'inside' the profession as cited by the 'insiders' themselves. My research positionality is discussed in chapter 4, section 4.21.

An evaluative research framework has been adopted to structure a qualitative narrative on how youth work addresses sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland. This focuses on the perspectives of practitioners rather than seeking demonstrable hard output and outcomes-based evidence. The rationale and explanation for such an approach is detailed in chapter 4, section 4.5.

This evaluative framework is informed by two core research questions in which the perspectives of practitioners shape the evaluation and assessment of the contribution of youth work, with supplementary findings from young people which provide insight on relevance and 'need'. The two research questions are:

RQ1: What are practitioner perspectives on how youth work addresses sectarianism and separation?

RQ2: How relevant do young people perceive sectarianism and separation within their lives?

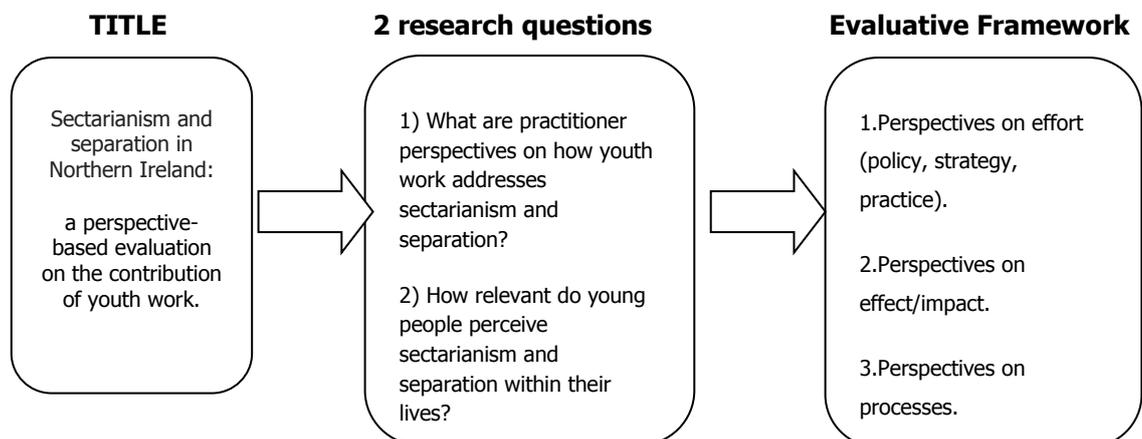


Figure 1.1: Description of research exploration

Figure 1.1 above describes the interconnection from the thesis title to the core research questions and evaluative framework.

To help evaluate how youth work is addressing sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland an established evaluative framework (Suchman, 1967) has been employed:

- Perspectives on **effort** across policy, strategy and practice;
- Perspectives on **effect** in terms of impact; and
- Perspectives on **processes** which support or restrict development.

Within the youth work profession many practices actively engage young people as central stakeholders in identifying needs and reviewing practices, strategies and policies that are being developed to meet these needs (United Youth, 2016). In this way, I have followed an ethical process in which young people's perspectives were used initially as a stimulus for dialogue and exploration among practitioners (chapter 4, section 4.13). Thus, the professional is able to consider and review their perspectives about practices and priorities alongside the perspectives of young people. A retrospective decision was made to analyse the data from young people due to its richness and thus, provides another dimension to the study. The research findings (chapter 5) firstly present key findings on research question two (How relevant do young people perceive sectarianism and separation within their lives?) as this sets the context for considering how youth work perceives that is addressing such a need (research question one).

The specific illuminative form of evaluation (chapter 4, section 4.4) adopted, aligns to a subjectivist study in which participants (young people) describe their experiences of the conflict and other participants (practitioners) describe their views and perspectives on youth work interventions. The evaluative framework of findings is further supplemented by a contextual backdrop through a literature review as detailed in chapter 2.

1.3 Structural separation in Northern Ireland

For those outside of Northern Ireland it can be difficult to observe or acknowledge, never mind understand, the extent of separation and segregation throughout many aspects of life in Northern Ireland. For some observers, they may indeed witness a 'mirage of peace,' wherein a superficial harmony is portrayed (Mc Mullan, 2010). While demarcation is often

physical, there are also many virtual barriers and subtle demarcation which exist and impact on people's attitudes, choices and behaviours.

The structural separation and division across Northern Ireland can be observed at a range of levels and spheres, including politics, education and housing. At the political level, democracy is based on a form of consociational power-sharing and political decision-making, which arguably maintains a politics of separation. Hughes (2011) affirms how this consociational framework embeds a deep structure of divisive politics.

In terms of education and schooling, separation can be clearly observed with over 93% of young people at separate Catholic or Protestant schools (Integrated Education Report, 2015). There are also separate education syllabuses in subjects such as religion and history, with slanted perspectives according to the religious/ethnic affiliation of that school. This physical separation of young people, and the partisan content of the curriculum, provides a continued challenge for those supporting more integrated approaches. Magill et al (2008) note that the school context in both Northern Ireland and in Bosnia and Herzegovina has tended to ignore much of the challenging and contentious issues, thus, exacerbating the problems of sectarianism and separation.

Housing in Northern Ireland also highlights how the issue of separation has been a feature of life since the beginning of the 'Troubles' (and before), with ongoing movement and displacement. Mc Grellis (2004) emphasises how this residential segregation can be best observed with statistics estimating that 50% of the population live in areas that are more than 90% Catholic or Protestant (Smyth, 1998).

Beyond these more obvious separations, everyday life in Northern Ireland can appear to be startlingly normal. However, behind this normality lies a sense of isolation, introspection, and volatility, whereby tensions readily emerge which often lead to violence and civil unrest. Having regular reminders of the 'past' through events, such as parades and marches, or even with visible markers, such as flags and emblems, altogether maintains a landscape of territory, culture and competing identities. Professor Marianne Elliott (cited in Community Relations Council 2011:25) notes how,

identity is acquired, built up step by step from influences around us, which decide the groupings we feel we belong to and those to which we do not.

With this in mind, it can be understood that any discourse on Northern Ireland as a 'post-conflict' society is premature as the realities show that the society is still living with the legacy of the conflict, and in fact is still emerging from it. Processes of conflict

transformation and reconciliation, which are core to a progression towards peace, are explored in more detail in the theoretical framework chapter (chapter 3). Sectarianism and separation are discussed in more depth throughout the literature review in chapter 2.

1.4 The contribution of youth work

Structural separation in Northern Ireland has had a significant impact throughout all aspects of society, none more so than educational settings and approaches (Wilson, 2015). Whilst most literature and analysis has focussed on separation, integration and formal education (primary and post-primary schools), less is known about informal education through youth work and its relationship to bridging community division and separation.

My research set out to consider how youth work addresses sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland, with data gathered from the multiple perspectives of those involved in youth work practice and development. The youth work profession advocates needs-led approaches in which interventions, strategies and policies should be informed by the end-users themselves (United Youth, 2016). Therefore, my research also captures findings from young people about their perceptions of how the conflict affects their lived realities. These findings are subsequently used to stimulate discussion among practitioners about their interpretations of the efforts and impacts of youth work in addressing such needs.

My research study strives to gather the views of practitioners themselves in the face of existing findings which have shown a minimalist approach by youth work to addressing contentious issues, such as dealing with the legacy of the conflict in Northern Ireland (Bell et al, 2010). The Youth Council for Northern Ireland (Bell, 2010), for example, indicate that very few youth organisations had initiated practices dealing with contentious issues, and furthermore, not invested in staff development on politics and political discussion. My research study, using an illuminative evaluative research methodology, gathers perspectives among practitioners themselves to contest or confirm such accusations. The aims of such an evaluative approach is to consider youth work practices in relation to peace-building (perspectives from primary data) whilst taking into consideration the wider historical, political and policy influences (literature review). Explorations around division, identity, contact theory and contact hypothesis (Hargie & Dickson 2003) are explored alongside models of intervention in the theoretical chapter (chapter 3). The evaluation further considers varying approaches across youth work organisations and '*what those directly concerned regard as its advantages and disadvantages*' (Parlett and Dearden,

1977:13). This complements Suchman's evaluative framework which considers 'processes' as one component affecting the development of progressive practices and interventions.

With an ever-increasing landscape focussing on outcome-based measurement and impact demonstration, this has fuelled my interest in assessing the value, significance and impact of youth work in addressing sectarianism and separation, but from a more in-depth qualitative perspective. My chosen approach has been for practitioners to share experiences and understandings from their perspectives, rather than documenting specific examples of so-called 'best-practice'. While some practices are cited throughout the research process, the research methodology embraces an approach which provides a broad analysis of the opportunities and challenges for youth work in this area, as identified by practitioners themselves.

The research provides opportunities for reflection in four crucial ways and with three sets of stakeholders (young person, practitioner and researcher). Firstly, an analysis of existing literature provides an evidence base and informs the direction of travel and analysis within my study. Secondly, young people are facilitated to reflect on their lived experiences of the realities of sectarianism and separation. Thirdly, practitioners (mostly youth workers) using accounts of young people and data from the literature, reflected on and evaluated their practices from an informed position and self-reflective judgements. This is an approach which is less imposing or intrusive and which doesn't require micro-evidence gathering carried out in a clinical or bureaucratic manner. Finally, the researcher can reflect and synthesise all the datasets using a thematic analysis approach, and from this comment on the links between the lives and needs of young people and youth work priorities and interventions.

The evaluative approach, by its very nature, prompts considerations for growth and progress for youth work which are indicated in the discussions chapter. The findings provide an evidence base which can inform the direction of both youth work policy and practice-based interventions. To date, for example, the research findings have been shared as part of conferences and seminar road shows across Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom, as well as being acknowledged by academic institutions for future articles and papers. In this way, the findings are the catalyst for further discussion and possible action.

In summary, my research study considers perspectives on the role of youth work as being one of the many catalysts for reconciliation between the two main communities in Northern Ireland - those identifying as Catholic/Nationalist and those as

Protestant/Unionist. Such assessment is based not on evidentiary claims, but rather through reflection, deliberation, review and self-evaluation among practitioners - interpretations which inform an illuminative evaluation of the contribution of youth work.

1.5 Research Contributions and Outcomes

My research provides an evidence base which has not recently been available and in which little has been documented. The findings provide new knowledge and insights which can inform a range of key stakeholders, including the youth work sector in Northern Ireland, those funding youth work and peace programmes, the Department of Education Northern Ireland and the recently established Education Authority (EA, 2015). It will be of relevance, and of interest, to other societies who have experienced conflict and who strive for change.

The research will be significant in providing 'insider' perspectives on how youth work can contribute to peace-building, namely how it addresses sectarianism and separation. It will further support the youth work sector to have more insight on some of the opportunities and challenges for growth in this area. The youth work sector often claims to pioneer work in this area of peace-building, while many others dispute this. By using an illuminative evaluatory research approach I provide a better understanding of where interventions may have impact. As noted by Harland (2009:17),

unfortunately to date, there remains little evaluatory evidence that community relations work is more effective now than during the early days of the Troubles.

While this research may not supply hard quantitative evidential claims, it does provide perspectives from young people and practitioners which give a picture of reality based on experience and perception. Wylie (2016) noted that youth work should not be assumed to have impact, but rather, requires reflection on practice embracing a conscious effort to interrogate current practices. This reflects a wider government agenda which seeks evidence on impact. The House of Commons Education Committee, for example, (2011:19) notes that,

despite the weight of individual testimonies, we experience great difficulty in finding objective evidence of the impact of services...(this) was recognised by many in the youth sector itself as a historic, and continuing problem.

My research goes some way in uncovering how practitioners have reviewed their practices and the impact of their work through an honest and enquiring approach.

This research reflects an area of self-interest based on my practices of over 20 years in this area and provides a significant needs-assessment for my practice organisation (YouthAction N.I.). Beyond this, the research should provide invaluable to the wider research community, including the University of Southampton (Education School), Ulster University (Community Youth Work, Peace and Conflict Studies, Cross Border Studies, International Conflict Research Institute), Queens University Belfast (Institute for the Study of Conflict Transformation and Social Justice) and the Institute for Conflict Research (ICR).

The findings will continue to be used as a living and interactive interface to further discussion, review existing practices and to prompt further growth and development. Suchman (1967:21) emphasises that the applied researcher, such as in evaluative research studies, must be '*constantly aware of the potential utility of their findings.*' The core outcome will be that youth work can better illustrate the opportunities and challenges in addressing sectarianism and separation based on practitioner experiences and perspectives. In this way, an illuminative evaluation approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the complex reality (or realities) of peace-building: in short to '*illuminate.*' This is, therefore, a purposeful study to illuminate perspectives from practitioners and young people in relation to the experience, opportunities and challenges for youth work development in the area of peace-building (Parlett and Dearden, 1977:24).

1.6 Overview of thesis

The proceeding literature review is broken down into core inter-related headings that directly correlate with the research exploration: Sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland – a perspective-based evaluation on the contribution of youth work.

- Chapter 2: Literature Review
 - Section A Context of Northern Ireland
 - Northern Ireland - A history of sectarianism and separation
 - Northern Ireland - The impact of the conflict
 - Northern Ireland - Identity, tradition and culture
 - Peace Agreements within Northern Ireland
 - Section B Debates within Peace-building
 - Section C Youth work and youth work pedagogy

The further chapters are detailed as below:

- Chapter 3: Theoretical framework (theories, models and policies)
- Chapter 4: Research methodology
- Chapter 5: Findings
- Chapter 6: Discussion
- Chapter 7: Summary

The chapter 2 literature review provides a contextual understanding of the 'problem' that youth work is attempting to address. By making sense of the 'problem' the reader can then better understand the placing of youth work as a conduit for peace-building, and the challenges it faces. The key concepts within the literature review, such as inclusion, integration and contact, are further explored within the theoretical framework chapter (chapter 3). The research methodology (chapter 4) clarifies the interpretive methodology approach chosen to capture perspectives from youth work practitioners on how practices address the problem (such as sectarianism and separation) and how it supports contact and integration. The data collection process is explained providing attention to sampling, data analysis, research credibility and researcher positionality. Chapter 5 provides key findings from young people about how relevant sectarianism and separation are to their lives followed by practitioner perspectives on the role of youth work in addressing such issues. This connects the findings back to the literature and models discussed. Chapter 6 provides an overall discussion and locates the findings within the evaluative framework of perspectives on effort, effect and processes while suggesting potential implications for practice and policy. It further introduces a proposed model developed from my findings 'Developing and Agenda for Peace through Youth Work.' The thesis closes with recommendations from the findings and a critical review of the research process.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Section A: The context of Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland – A history of sectarianism and separation

2.1 Introduction

An understanding of the conflict in Ireland is the backbone of the lived realities in Northern Ireland. Sectarianism and separation are two core areas that continue to prevail in the everyday context in Northern Ireland. This chapter acknowledges the historical context of the conflict and the subsequent impact in creating and maintaining a divided society throughout Northern Ireland. This is particularly relevant to educational approaches which help young people to both address the past and progress towards a peaceful future. Youth work as an educational intervention can subsequently play a role in addressing sectarianism and separation and hence, the focus of my study gathered perspectives on how this may be achieved. As noted by Morrow (2017), *'the story of our past is the biggest battleground.'*

2.2 The beginnings of division

Politics, religion and economics are part of the essential mix in explaining the conflict in Northern Ireland.

Equally the politics of empire, hatreds and exclusions which shaped religion across Europe and discrimination and injustices in the economy all played their part (Morrow, 2007A:1).

Throughout many parts of the world, imperialism and colonialism have left a lasting mark, such as that of the division within and across Ireland. The significance of the colonial 'plantation' of Ulster in 1609 by Scottish Protestant settlers has arguably provided the foundation for the current division and tensions within Northern Ireland. Historian Ann Curthoys, describing the Aboriginal context in Australia, reflects a similar sentiment in which colonialism continues to have an impact. Curthoys argues that all non-indigenous people *'are beneficiaries of a colonial history'* (Maddison 2011:6). In terms of the recognition of various historical wrongdoings and conquest, such as British colonialism, these can often go unrecognised or overlooked in the Northern Ireland narrative. On the other hand, others use selective histories to affirm their ancestral 'firstness' in occupying

Northern Ireland. Many Unionist/ Loyalist historians, for example, have claimed that their ancestors, the Cruthin, were in the territory, now called Northern Ireland, even before the Celts, as frequently cited by Nationalist/ Republican historians (Dixon, 2008). As with many contested spaces there is a continued historical debate about 'who arrived first,' to justify one group's legitimate claim to the territory over another. This territorial claim and divide are reflected in modern day realities which are further explored in the proceeding section 'Northern Ireland – The impact of the conflict'.

In the case of Australia, Maddison (2011:38) recalls how an historical context of the arrival of 'newcomers', 'civilisers' or 'invaders' to the country has implications in perspectives, understandings and behaviours in modern day society. She more importantly recognises people's comfortability in not confronting the historical harm and conflict imposed upon nations, such as that of Australia.

Our guilt not only persists in the present but is transmitted to each new generation, maintained by a form of defensive nationalism that will not allow an honest attempt to redress past wrongs (Maddison 2011:24).

This historical recall perpetuates throughout modern day understanding and perspective in Northern Ireland. The significance of how this identity and cultural alliance and allegiance is manifested is described in a later section 'Northern Ireland – Identity, tradition and culture.'

2.3 Division and majoritarianism

The early twentieth century witnessed the biggest change in Ireland, in terms of sovereignty from England, and the establishment of the Northern Ireland State. After much conflict, uprising and political debate, Northern Ireland came into being in 1921. O' Leary and Mc Garry (1993) highlight how this appeased Unionists who had resisted Home Rule from Dublin in favour of British governance. They note that the Northern Ireland government, aligned to the formal institutions of a Westminster model of representative government, '*built a system of hegemonic control over the nationalist minority in Northern Ireland that persisted until the late 1960's*' (O' Leary and Mc Garry 1993:277). Division and separation were thus enhanced while the political framework became more exclusively majoritarian in its philosophy and approach. In 1939 the political make-up and orientation of Northern Ireland was such that the Prime Minister James Craig could proclaim that 'all I boast of is that we are a Protestant Parliament and a Protestant State' (Mc Kittrick and Mc Vea, 2001). Throughout the life of the Northern Ireland (Stormont)

government, as the administration from 1920 to 1972 was known, the Unionist Party exercised an uninterrupted hold on political power, fuelling the continued ascendancy of Unionists based on discrimination. O' Leary and Mc Garry (1993:111) note this as '*territorial, constitutional, electoral, economic, legal, and cultural domination and control.*' This is relevant in considering the legacy of such divisive politics and social policy.

Just as in pre and post-war Europe, where ethnicities fought over the same territory, many minorities (such as Nationalist Catholics) within the state of Northern Ireland became marginalised by the domination and exclusive control of the Unionist 'winners'. Ironically, Unionists would however, have been viewed as the losers in an Ireland configuration of Home Rule, but what emerged was a Nationalist/Catholic minority status in the state of a majority Unionist/Protestant Northern Ireland. Mac Garry (2014, presentation) remarks that,

Irish Protestants were treated well in the Republic, probably though based on their non-threatening minority status. This differed from the North where Irish Catholics were seen as a threatening minority.

A change in the political landscape from the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) 1998 has signified a change in ideology, from majority dominance to shared coalitions and equality frameworks. This seismic shift has had a psychological impact among those in Northern Ireland where the concept of 'winners and losers' has become more pronounced. This is explored in Chapter 3.

Insiders and external commentators often remark on the religious divide and intolerance (sectarianism) between Catholics and Protestants as the catalyst for conflict, but this is actually more multi-faceted than religion alone. To best understand the Irish, Northern Irish, British conflict within Northern Ireland, demands that superficial problems and contexts are better explored with a concentrated lens. O' Leary and Mc Garry (1993) note that rather than being a conflict between two religious communities, it is in fact, a conflict between two internally divided national communities. They further define the sustained conflict as a result of political development and relations between the British and Irish nations throughout the twentieth century. They cite that,

the two ethnic communities in Northern Ireland have been partially mobilised into the Irish and British 'nations'. One community, the Irish nationalists of Northern Ireland, is a sub-set of a wider ethnic community, the 'native' Irish of Ireland...who are usually but not invariably Roman Catholic in religion. Ulster Protestants see themselves as a sub-set of the multi-ethnic UK polity...' (O Leary and Mc Garry 1993:3-4).

The legacy of such division has transcended each generation thereafter with many influencers and influences reaffirming traditional loyalties. Often those most susceptible to such influence are those who are vulnerable, such as young people. Mc Grellis (2010) notes the impact has most significance on young people living in working class areas. This is explored in the following section 'Northern Ireland – the impact of the conflict.'

2.4 Consequences of conflict and division

According to Pareto,

mankind is made up of war-like peoples and of peaceful peoples; the happiness of the first lies in conquering the second; and the happiness of the latter lies in not being conquered (Femia 2006:91).

Such can be the case, and story of Northern Ireland, which has left in its wake victims, and indeed, survivors. Mc Grellis (2004) for example, indicates how the conflict in Northern Ireland since 1969, (the 'Troubles'), has claimed more than 3,500 lives, representing approximately 1 in every 500 of the population. Mc Grellis (2004) further emphasises that another 100,000 people in Northern Ireland also live in households where someone has been injured in 'Troubles'-related incidents. O' Leary and Mc Garry (1993:8) remark on how the divided nature of Northern Ireland has witnessed intense levels of political violence across both the United Kingdom and that of any member state of the European Community and '*the highest levels of internal political violence in the continuously liberal democratic states of the post 1948 world.*'

The 'Troubles' have deeply affected the psyche of people living in Northern Ireland. Fear and anger, coupled with antagonism, violence and murder have aided both a physical and psychological separation between many communities. 'Ethnic cleansing' has resulted in most housing estates being dominated by one religion or the other, with some areas having separating walls. Many examples exist which represent such ethnic cleansing. For example, in the 1970's the IRA killing of Protestant farmers were an attempt to 'ethnically cleanse' the South Armagh area. Revels (2014) reflecting on this period in the Newry and Armagh area cited the situation as an 'orgy of slaughter.' Territorialism, sectarianism and organised hatred have all been part of the backdrop within Northern Ireland. Community Relations Council (2010:Chpt2, 1b) particularly note how,

centuries of sustained antagonism, including sporadic and planned violence, along political lines with strong associations with religious tradition have defined, confined and even eradicated life not only in Northern Ireland, but on the island of Ireland as a whole.

The physical and psychological separation is explored in Section 2.9.

2.5 Understanding Sectarianism

The legacy of colonialism and divided territory has left such a deep mark whereby division, mistrust, suspicion and anxiety remain a part of everyday life for many. These attitudes and behaviours are labelled as 'sectarianism' and can adopt both an active and passive stance.

Sectarianism in Northern Ireland is very much about the intersection of politics and religion, often more aligned to ethnicity. The conflict that took place was not religion as such but the social, historical and political divisions which religion signified. Geoghegan (2008:14) describes the tendency to try to explain the Northern Irish conflict in terms of doctrinal difference as '*the theological fallacy*' (Mc Veigh, 1999). That said religion gained precedence throughout periods in history, such as between 1912-1916, in which many churches fed into the propaganda war, mobilising opinions and instigating campaigns and actions among its peoples (Mac Garry, 2014, presentation).

Morrow (2006) defines the actions of being sectarian as '*hostility and separateness around politics and religion.*' Geoghegan (2008:5), further, refers to sectarianism in Northern Ireland as a,

complex social and political phenomenon that is constituted by specific sets of discourses and practices that (re)produce sectarian narratives and identities in social space.

A sectarian attitude or belief is one that discriminates against another person or group, or excludes them on the basis of their actual (or imagined) belonging to a different community, aligned to a religious, ethno-national identification. My research study gathers perspectives on the impact of this, and explores the experience and contribution of youth work in this area.

The political identification of Catholic/Nationalists with Ireland, and that of Protestant/Unionists with Great Britain, reflects deep-seated ethnic identification and conflictual histories and geographies, rather than simply religious beliefs per se. The division is therefore, based on group identification (such as British or Irish, Loyalist or

Republican) rather than theology, and this has a defining role in the production and maintenance of division in Northern Ireland. This identity is of particular relevance when considering the attitudes of young people in identifying as either one of the two competing identities, British or Irish. Of particular interest was the placing of a new 'Northern Ireland' identity option in the 2011 Northern Ireland census. Nolan (2014) remarks on how many younger people were opting for a Northern Irish identity, rather than traditional Irish or British identities. However, Nolan further notes that, since 2011 there has been backsliding in favour of either exclusive Irish or British identification.

While ethno-political identification forms a core component of sectarianism, it is also entangled with separation and territory. In Northern Ireland, the conflict has focussed on who should be entitled to occupy the region, which is core to the problem in current day society. As Mc Alister et al (2009:92) have noted *'territory is blatantly marked to promote culture and identity as well as to warn off any threats to this identity.'* The Orange Order, and the marching season are one example of how regular visible and audible reminders reflect the challenge to progression, and creating cultural 'sharing' in a more shared society. On the one hand, the Orange Order unashamedly defines its 'season' as laying claims to its territory and 'traditional routes,' while, on the other hand, many communities view this as an oppressive approach on their territory. Territory can thus, be the source of conflict, but also reproduce conflict by keeping ethnic groups apart.

Sectarian beliefs and attitudes are generally more prominent in segregated areas or segregated sectors of life. Hamilton et al (2008) clarify segregated communities or areas as those where there is a 70% or more concentration of one religious-ethno-political identity. Even in areas which claim or appear to be 'mixed,' many streets and avenues are sub-divided into exclusive identities. This segregation or total separation can breed misunderstanding, misperception and distrust. In interface areas this can be more intense where neighbours on 'either side' can be wary of the other, and often exist in a state of 'prepared to fight' mentality. Therefore, in some respect the prevalent precautionary attitudes of those living in interface areas may be more obvious based on their lived realities.

My research provides some further insights through the perspectives of young people on how the legacy of the conflict remains significant, and how it impacts on their experiences and attitudes. These findings are used as a stimulus for discussion among youth work practitioners, and further used as part of data analysis. The insights and deliberations of the study provide insight to the contribution of youth work in helping to bridge separation, and to challenge sectarianism among those growing up in Northern Ireland.

Northern Ireland - Impact of the conflict

2.6 Introduction

Northern Ireland found itself in a 35 year protracted conflict....Communities became totally divided and segregated....Isolation, separation, segregation and communal division became the accepted order, both during and after the conflict (Grattan et al, 2009:80).

This view presented by Grattan et al (2009) forefronts how the impact of the Northern Ireland conflict has resulted in a divided society, based on separation and segregation. This section specifically outlines how this separation affects everyday life, particularly the choices and consequences for young people. The section also defines some second and third generational issues which remain as a result of the conflict, including poverty and unemployment.

2.7 Structural separation

Segregation and sectarianism are a continuing legacy of the 'Troubles'. This separation is most visible in housing, education, leisure and across community divides or interfaces. Mc Alister et al (2009:156) note that such segregation has created *'insurmountable barriers to ending sectarianism and in fact infuse and secure the continuation of such prejudice and discrimination.'* My research study gains insights about young people's experience and understanding of sectarianism and separation, and from this considers how youth work addresses this division based on perspectives from workers.

Historically, Northern Ireland has in fact, been based on separation from its inception in 1921. The formation of Northern Ireland as a colonised state, in part, created separation from the Republic of Ireland, but yet a union with the United Kingdom. Such a situation resulted in both physical and psychological separation. Grattan (2007) notes that from 1921-1968, Northern Ireland differed from other parts of the United Kingdom, through both its physical isolation, and through its insular views, which prevented cultural diversity and interaction. The next period of the 'Troubles' (1968-1998) further embedded silo-mentalities and behaviours where segregation infiltrated public housing and schooling, as well as through social, political and cultural spheres (Mc Alister et al, 2009). Residential segregation, in particular, has been a feature of life in Northern Ireland since the beginning of the 'Troubles' (and before), with ongoing movement and displacement.

Roche (2008:21), for example, highlights that *'just under 95% of Northern Irish housing estates are segregated on ethno-religious and ethno-nationalist grounds.'*

In urban centres, such as Belfast, a variety of physical separations emerged throughout the 'Troubles', including the Westlink road thoroughfare and a range of physical walls and structures to keep and maintain this already developed separation. This segregation and lack of social interaction was not confined to urban centres. As Rosemary Harris et al note (Leyton 1975; Harris 1972; Darby 1986 cited in Bell et al, 2010:17), while basic levels of social interaction in rural areas tended to be *'amiable enough'*, in many cases Protestants and Catholics had *'little contact'* and indeed operated within distinct social spheres including church, education and political belief. Harris notes that,

Protestants would tend to give custom to shops owned by their 'own', and the same was similar for local Catholics. Any interactions between the two communities tended to be limited....it was only with members of the same side that individuals could relax to talk freely to say what they thought (Harris 1972 cited in Bell et al, 2010:17).

This research also found cases in which some members of the majority community came to 'resent' the increasing minority population expanding into 'their' neighbourhood. Such territorialism and separation challenges the practices of 'sharing' as per the current government policy in Northern Ireland and is further explored in chapter 3.

Segregation can often be best observed and experienced through the education system in Northern Ireland. Young people are mostly educated in schools that are segregated on religious grounds, except the small minority who attend integrated schools which is approximately 5-6% (Roche 2008). Hayes et al (2007) illustrate how the Northern Ireland system means that children study different subjects, read different books, and learn different perspectives on history according to their political/religious backgrounds. The OECD report (2012) notes the schooling system in Northern Ireland as the most socially segregated in the developed world, being 34th out of 34.

The separation of the school systems is also identifiable at the everyday level, such as through wearing separate school uniforms which can create problems for young people, as these uniforms provide visible identifiers to a particular religious identity. The Community Relations Council (2013:38) highlight the significance for young people when *'attacks on people for wearing 'the wrong' uniform are recurrent.'*

Separation and segregation also transcend into other social spheres, such as employment and leisure services. Continued separation in these areas accentuates suspicion, mistrust and fear. The impact of such fear among many communities and in particular interface

areas, can be demonstrated in research by Shirlow (2003) showing that almost 50% of young people would not travel through the 'other' community during the day, rising to 88% at night. Actual and feared intimidation, abuse, verbal and physical violence remain key factors in sustaining exclusivity and maintaining geographical boundaries.

Grattan (2007) notes that this sectarianism and segregation are sustained and extended through the routine and mundane decisions that people make in everyday lives. Geoghegan (2008) affirms how sectarianism is found in everyday life practices and therefore, not solely aligned to periods of armed conflict. Jarman et al (2008), in exploring the nature of people's daily routines because of the social divisions in Northern Ireland indicates that, for the majority of people the intensity of segregation is increasing. They further describe core areas in which segregation is most visible and embedded. For example, they note that,

mixed or neutral spaces are more available than in the past, but they co-exist with heavily segregated spaces. Individuals are required to operate on the basis of an ever more complex series of mental maps that guide and inform them where to go and where to avoid (Jarman et al, 2008:61).

Grattan et al (2006) emphasised this concept whereby young people assess a variety of situations often unconsciously, in an attempt to ensure a sense of safety. The feeling of '*just in case*' (Morrow 2007A:2), is paramount in the Northern Ireland psyche whereby people, for example, tend to avoid mixed housing, avoid confrontation of issues in the work environment, avoid socialising in areas where they may be in the minority, and avoid travelling to areas of unfamiliarity 'just in case'. Grattan (2009) further highlights how in-group members seek connection and security through a 'protective shell' with intra-group members, which subsequently reduces the potential for confrontation or antagonism with the out-group. This firmly presents a challenge for interventions such as youth work in supporting safe contact, interaction and integration.

However, it has also been noted that this separation is not solely based on a lack of social interaction, but rather more deliberate conflict management and avoidance. Milliken (2015), refers to Gallagher's (2003) concept of 'social grammar,' where people in Northern Ireland tend to avoid talking about religion or politics in mixed religious settings, as this would be considered 'impolite'. Bell et al (2010:13) also refer to rural examples of how people avoid interaction with each other in a 'ritualised and systemic fashion.' They explain that segregation became an extreme way of avoiding forms of contact with the 'other', which in turn reinforced perceptions of hostility and 'otherness' through a lack of contact or understanding of the 'other's' interests and concerns. Bell et al (2010:13) note

that this deliberate and selective everyday activity takes place through accessing separate *'shops, bars, doctors, health centres, places of employment and leisure centres.'*

Sustained suspicion, cultural alliance and purposeful avoidance can be best demonstrated when it comes to territory, especially in the selling of land. Kirk's research, for example, in rural Glenravel (Co. Antrim) between 1958 and 1987, showed that only 12.8% of land sales took place between Catholics and Protestants (Bell et al, 2010). This again presents a systematic and purposeful management of maintaining division, exercising power and control and restricting levels of mixing. My research study considers perspectives from young people on their mobility and cross-community movement and explores the significance of youth work in enabling such mobility and cross-community contact.

2.8 Segregation: limiting opportunities

Roche (2008) emphasises the realities of the extent of the segregation. She notes the difficulties and limitations in being able to meet, never mind build relationships, with other communities. In her research, she found that young people demonstrated limited exposure to the opposite community. The young people mostly lived in areas where they not only interacted with members of their own communities, but, they also had little desire for mixing with the other community. Roche's research (2008:27) further noted that just under two thirds of young people were isolated to such an extent that they expressed being *'unaffected' or 'untouched'* by sectarianism, suggesting that a *'cocooning' between communities has occurred, where 'separate' but 'content' was acceptable for many of the participants.'* Only when their relative isolation was discussed with them did they begin to consider the segregated circumstances in which they live. Freire also refers to 'Boundary Situations' emphasising the need for people to be aware and critical of the boundaries which limit their opportunities (Beck and Purcel, 2011). Roche's research also echoes that of Hargie, Dickson and O Donnell (2006) noting that three quarters of young people stated that they would be concerned or fearful if they went into an area of the opposite community (Roche, 2008). My research study highlights perspectives from young people in relation to their exposure to the 'other' community. It further considers how youth work supports safe inter-community movement and integration between young people.

Avoiding the 'other' to maintain a sense of safety can be theorised within the 'ethnic boundary' framework developed by Fredrik Barth (Jørgenson 1997). These ethnic boundaries are deeply embedded cognitive and mental maps or boundaries where

markers signify the 'us' and 'them' or the 'insider' and 'outsider' (Jørgenson 1997). Tajfel's social identity theory (1979) emphasises how the world is divided into 'them' and 'us,' based on a process of social categorization where people are put into social groups.

Mc Grellis (2010) claims that the fear of being identified as 'them', the 'other', or as an 'outsider', limits young people's movement and ultimately their opportunities and choices. In Mc Grellis' research (2004:14) young people talked about a variety of identity markers or identifiers which included accent, mannerisms, dress codes, social style, hair colour, and 'the look'. In this way young people assess the potential threat of the other whilst maintaining self-preservation through particular identifiers. Mc Alister et al (2007) also make an argument that such 'sussing' out of the other tends to not only restrict inter-group connections, but rather that in-group identification often creates strong out-group antagonism.

Hargie et al (2006) and Roche (2008) note the impact that both physical and mental barriers have in restricting the movement and subsequently options available to young people, especially those in interface areas. Hargie et al (2006:10) referring to the 'Bubble Syndrome' and Roche (2008:27) to a process of 'Bounded Contentment' reflect how young people limit their life choices in part as a result of perceived, and indeed, real barriers they face and their 'fear' of entering into the domain of the 'other' community to access shops, services, schools and employment. Within a rural context it can be less obvious and blurred, and referred to as 'Fuzzy Frontiers' (Donnan, 2006), particularly to the outsider. Bell et al (2010) further note how numerous small villages and rural communities have interfaces whereby visible division is less obvious, but in which an individual's behaviour, movement and sense of safety may be informed by a 'sectarian' knowledge of who, where and what to avoid. Subconscious and inherited patterns of everyday routines reinforce the separation and lack of opportunity to move outside of the 'known'. My research findings reinforce these observations.

'Bubble syndromes' (Hargie et al, 2006:10), 'bounded contentment' (Roche, 2008:27), 'cocooning' (Roche, 2008:27) and 'fuzzy frontiers' (Donnan, 2006) all describe the restrictions as a result of separation in Northern Ireland. Cultural identity and restricted movements often mean that young people, in particular, are like to remain close to family and friends, subsequently limiting their options and opportunities (Mc Alister et al, 2007).

Alongside the commonplace sectarian outlooks there can also be concurrent rejections to any new 'outsider.' For example, increased racist attacks on the Polish and Romanian communities in Northern Ireland have validated the perspective that closed-minded and

inward-looking attitudes can still prevail. PSNI statistics (2014:9), while noting the most commonly reported hate crime in 2013/14 as sectarianism (48%), further, indicate that this is closely followed by racism, accounting for 36%.

Within Northern Ireland, young people can often have limited exposure to the other community. This exclusion illustrates how levels of sectarianism and separation can influence the options, opportunities and behaviours of young people. This has implications for education and youth work in which young people can be encouraged to develop a sense of curiosity, be open to attitudinal change and have meaningful experiences through sustained social contact.

2.9 The impact of conflict - physical and psychological interfaces

Wilson (2015) affirms how the dynamics of antagonism, violence and insecurity continue to separate people through their everyday relations, ultimately affecting how resources align to separation maintenance, rather than a future-oriented and shared society.

In addition to generic separation and segregation, there are areas where such division is more pronounced, namely, interface communities. Bell, Jarman and Harvey (2010:4), note that the term 'interface' refers to *'locations where divisions and contestation over space results in persistent and recurrent acts of violence.'* Subsequently, the construction of walls, fences and other visible barriers divide and separate, protect and secure the people residing in the area.

Jarman (2008) has emphasised that since the various peace accords since 1998, the number of physical divides has increased in areas such as North Belfast where the conflict had most impact. While barriers have been removed on the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, and security barriers have been removed within Belfast city centre, there have been many more extended and erected in areas of high tensions. In May 2007 the Northern Ireland Office announced that an 8 metre high fence would be built in the playground at Hazelwood Integrated Primary School, on the Whitewell Road in North Belfast, to protect the houses and residents of Old Throne Park from attack (Jarman, 2008). The parody of such a high-fenced 'peace-line' development can be understood when considering this was being built in the grounds of an integrated school (one of the first schools in Northern Ireland to integrate formal education between young Catholics and Protestants). The announcement also came just a few weeks after the formation of the new devolved government in which power-sharing and a form of

peace was developing at the political level. The erection of such 'peace-lines' or divides reinforces the ongoing divisions and territoriality that persists in parts of Belfast. Jarman (2008) outlines the extent of such separation, noting that since the years following the ceasefires, 41 Northern Ireland Office barriers existed in Belfast, with many being built or extended in this period. However, further sites have subsequently been identified, including barriers which take on a variety of formats, such as fences, security gates, buffer zones and derelict land. In 2014 it was estimated that there could be anywhere between 53 and 99 such barriers (Jarman, 2008). Whether at school, in their communities, or on their way to leisure or shopping, young people experience and/or observe these on a regular basis.

These barriers are extremely significant as they are effectively 'markers of intent', which form part of the fabric and landscape of everyday life. They are generally not temporary measures of separation, as once erected, they are difficult to remove due to fears of safety and intimidation. Jarman (2008) emphasises, that while these barriers may provide some form of reassurance to those residing in the area, they do however, restrict movement, interaction and opportunities, ultimately serving to reinforce separation and division. The Community Relations Council / Institute of Conflict and Research report (2013) highlight that young people felt that the time was not right for the removal of peace walls, and that more work was required to further improve community relations first. These walls reflect a reality in which residents feel safer, particularly at times of high tensions. Many believe that if the walls were removed that the threat of increased tension would still remain. Alarming, young people's attitudes still tend to remain more negative in survey data when compared to older generations. This is explored further in chapter 2, section 2.15 and chapter 3, section 3.7.

The Community Relations Council and Institute for Conflict Research report (2013) further notes that most young people in interface areas felt they had limited opportunities to meet, interact, and become friends with young people from the 'other' community. Even young people who had participated in school cross-community activities tended to feel that these were not sustained enough to have much of a lasting impact. The report also shed light on the development of friendships, and what exactly this means in reality. Despite evidence of some cross-community relationships, many young people stated that they did not have any friends from the 'other' community, mainly because they believed that they did not have the opportunities to meet, given that they went to different schools and lived in different areas (2013). While research by Leonard (2010) indicated that 75% of young people referred to having a friend from the 'other' community, this does not

clarify the nature of the relationships. It would thus, seem that the definition and meaning of friendship is crucial as, for many, this 'friend' was really someone they knew of, rather than being a friend per se. The placing of youth work as a catalyst for 'contact' is explored in chapter 2, section C and documented in my research findings (chapter 5).

In contrast to the urban centres and spaces, many rural areas portray no physical evidence at first sight of division or boundary marking. However, those living in these areas recognise segregation and markers which are often less visible to the untrained eye. Bell et al (2010:14/6) note that,

a subtle form of demarcation exists which often can be only recognised and named by local people who have historical and psycho-social interpretations and experiences of this separation.... the demarcation can be a 'turn in the road', new road layouts, street names and election posters.

This demarcation can also be more visible at different periods throughout the year, especially when annual celebrations or anniversaries of cultural, historical or political significance occur. Such cultural and traditional symbols resonate among young people and their identity formation. This is explored in section 2.13.

These 'rural interfaces,' described by Bell et al (2010:19), are often based on 'patterns of avoidance' among members of the two main communities, referring to high levels of segregation rather than the existence of tension and violence (Bell et al, 2010:20-22). For example, people have made conscious choices to travel longer distances to shop in towns and villages that reflect their religious and national identification. This is often based on the perceived 'our' and 'their' spaces, and in places where safety is paramount. While not specifically exploring young people's attitudes towards interface walls and barriers, my research study provides insight into how young people perceive separate spaces and opportunities for integration and the role that youth work can play in bridging this divide.

2.10 A broader impact on everyday issues

The legacy of conflict, sectarianism and separation goes beyond that of killings, shootings and bombings. The structural sectarianism has left a plethora of wider social issues. The Northern Ireland Peace Monitoring report (Nolan, 2014) affirms that inequalities exist along poverty and life expectancy lines, noting that Catholics are still more likely to experience significant economic and social disadvantage than Protestants. The report further refers to the Labour Force Survey, which notes that Catholics are more likely to be

unemployed and, more likely to be in poor health and, according to the Family Resources Survey out-score Protestants on almost every measure of deprivation. This would indicate that the hangover of the conflict has left a wake of wider social issues that will require a long term investment as part of the peace development process.

In a presentation to the Northern Ireland Assembly, Professor Mike Tomlinson of Queen's University Belfast, emphasised that the highest concentrations of suicide were in the constituencies of North and West Belfast, areas highly associated with poverty and violence. He suggests a link between the increase in suicide from 2000 and extreme traumas experienced by young people during the turbulent year of the conflict, such as the 1970's (Nolan, 2014). This again would inform strategic policy development and service provision that longitudinal issues may require a significant period to repair, never mind flourish. Such findings are significant for my research study in not only considering the contribution of youth work to directly addressing conflict specific issues, but, also in addressing those issues, and targeting those communities which continue to experience the most significant hardships as a result of the conflict.

Hargie, Dickson and O Donnell (2006) particularly note the impact of sectarianism as a major barrier to employment. They refer to the lack of investment in areas from employers and businesses in areas most affected by the conflict. In addition to this lack of investment, Hargie et al (2006) further cite that, even if employment were available, most young people would not want to go into an area of a different religion to work. This is mainly due to fear, and indicates that young people would be more content in either a work environment with in-group members, or in a neutral work environment with the out-group. This reflects their 'bubble syndrome' concept in which young people feel comfortable and secure within the in-group micro society. Hargie et al (2006:10) claim that this '*denotes a mind-set of insularity and reduced horizons.*' A challenge therefore, for youth work is to consider how risk and movement can occur safely for young people so that they may avail of wider opportunities.

The Community Relations Council annual review 2008/2009, citing Mc Alister et al (2009), note that beyond economic investment and child poverty, that high levels of mental ill-health have further impacted upon people, such as impairing employment opportunities. Wilson (2017) describes how an insecure adult society, such as the current austerity climate, infiltrates the lives of young people, thus creating insecurities and higher levels of negative health and well-being among young people. Ironically, 'happiness surveys' show Northern Ireland to be the most content region within the United Kingdom (Office for

National Statistics, 2014), yet figures for suicide, self-harm and mental health suggest that, for some, the reality is quite different. The notion, then, that Northern Ireland is one of the happiest places may be surprising as its capital city Belfast scores as the place with the highest anxiety levels.

The conflict has undoubtedly contributed to deep structural inequalities. These can include inequalities based on class (poverty and economic marginalisation); based on culture and religion (sectarianism); and based on gender and sexuality. Scraton (2011) notes how the inter-play between these inequalities is regular and complex. The complexity of this is beyond the scope of this research study, but the findings do present an insight into young people's lived realities in relation to the legacy of the conflict.

2.11 The impact on the lives of young people

Mc Grellis (2010) draws attention to the significant impact of sectarianism and conflict on the lives of young people, particularly those living in working class areas. Mc Alister et al (2009), noting priorities by the Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People, highlights core concerns such as a lack of safe and social spaces, leisure facilities and in providing safe communities. Roche (2008:74) further highlights that young people from communities of high and multiple deprivation who are also restricted by sectarian divides, are actually experiencing a '*double sentence*' or '*double penalty*.'

As a result of the conflict and ongoing community tensions, it is unsurprising that reports also often indicate high levels of young people involved in interface tensions and violence. These young people often form an alliance with other young people from periphery communities, but with a shared identity, to present a joined force of aggression and provocation to the opposing community identity. The Terry Enright Foundation (2010:3) note that 44% of young people aged 12-25 years within an urban interface, admitted to '*being involved in some form of rioting or stone throwing at interface areas with 33% also being engaged in vandalism*.'

Likewise, the conflict and subsequent peace-building efforts in Kosovo show the significant role of children as one of the main perpetrators of the March 2004 violence. Here it was found that children were regularly engaged in acts of intimidation against minorities (stoning, verbal abuse) resulting in many years of prejudice and distrust, where the K-Serb and Serbs were defined as *'the enemy'* (CDA Collaborative Learning Projects, 2006:12). Writers and commentators must be careful though, not to name young people as the problem, and to provide a deeper analysis to the factors that may have led young people to engage in violence. Section 2.16 describes an example of how this is reflective of that in Northern Ireland.

The Community Relations Council (2008/2009) remains convinced that division can be exploited and some, especially young people, used as the catalyst for unrest. While it is often assumed that the longer 'peace' sustains a new constructive younger generation will emerge to maintain this, the influences and changing context of society might challenge the commitment of young people to do this. Within periods of political drift and leadership, coupled with an economic downturn, this can create a dangerous void where tensions are likely to emerge. This is a particularly important juncture for young people where, at times, a sense of hopelessness and abandonment can outweigh any emotions and feelings of hope and determination.

The stage one research findings present perspectives from young people about their lived realities, expectations and views for the future (chapter 5).

Northern Ireland - Identity, Tradition and Culture

2.12 Introduction

This section highlights the significance of identity development and cultural influence in Northern Ireland and how this affects attitudes and behaviours. It emphasises how the legacy of the conflict has resulted in strong 'in-group' identification among many communities, coupled with an oppositional and defensive stance towards 'out-group' identities. This identity formation has become a cultural war for many in proclaiming either an Irish or British identity, as opposed to a Protestant or Catholic identity. It is in fact, all entangled. The section further considers how young people often feel a sense of loyalty to maintaining in-group culture, particularly considering wider community pressures.

2.13 Identity and cultural formation in Northern Ireland

Competing historical narratives and cultural representations are expressed in many ways including political symbols, flags, commemorative and cultural events in most cities, towns and villages in Northern Ireland (Bell et al, 2010).

Such physical displays serve to support in-group identification and allegiance while protruding explicit messages of presence to the out-group. Morrow and Mullan (cited in Community Relations Council, March 2011:7), emphasise how *'every event is a matter of a partisan celebration.'* In this way, identity and cultural formation is shaped by visual reminders, with the division between the two main ethno-political communities in Northern Ireland being made explicit (Bell et al, 2010). Competing perspectives equate with each of the two main cultural/political orientations having their own interpretations of past events, which in turn justify contemporary attitudes and policy positions (Bell et al, 2010).

Geoghegan (2008:28) argues that this identity formation is not pre-given, but rather *'developed through routinised practices'* over a period of time. In the Northern Ireland context, for example, political parades, especially Orange Marches, have been interpreted as significant and symbolic acts through which sectarian identities and behaviours are constructed and naturalised in social space. Geoghegan (2008) emphasises that parades represent a physical and psychological opportunity to perform sectarian identities, and to reaffirm spatial sectarian boundaries. He further notes David Cairns (2000), when illustrating how affiliated songs, dances and sport, as well as more subtle personal politicised objects such as a photograph of a family member in an army uniform, all form part of cultural and identity influences.

Sennett (1974) discusses how inhabitants within local neighbourhoods can often make their local territory in some way *'morally sacred.'* The more visible markers in communities, such as wall murals and kerb markings, are reminders to those within the *'in-group'* of their loyalties, and to the *'out-group'*, or predator, that they are *'unwelcome'*. The local community remains uncontaminated by outside influences – *'this is our street; no-one is coming down our street'* (Mc Alister et al, 2009:92).

2.14 Competing identities: us and them

According to Tajfel (1978 and 1982), people divide the social world they live in into two categories: 'us' and 'them', or 'in-groups' and 'out-groups'. As a consequence of this process, people develop social identities which make them distinguishable from others (Devine & Schubotz, 2010). The 'out-groups' that people do not belong to, can be seen more negatively or approached with caution and suspicion. In addition to marking differences, Tajfel's theory also signifies how the 'in-group' also creates good feelings about their own group identity (Devine & Schubotz, 2010). Connolly (2002) further notes how children and young people learn cultural and political allegiances to their own community by the age of 3 years, with one in six 6 year olds making sectarian comments. Ethnocentric romantic ideals and loyalties to a particular culture of country do not reflect the diverse ethnic mix of many modern day societies. Wilson (2013:7) notes how this 'local essentialism closes people to difference,' thus enforcing assimilation rather than inclusive citizenship based on difference and diversity. In such situations, within-group similarities and between-group differences are often overstated, rather than within-group differences and between-group similarities. In either case the promotion of sameness, and resistance to difference and diversity, can often maintain conservative outlooks and perspectives. In this way the notion of sameness can often be overstated by young people and adult's alike, rather than embracing difference as an asset and virtue within civil society. This illuminates a potential danger, where societal sameness can produce a negative assimilation in which diversity has little ground. As Paulo Coelho remarks, while there is often a focus and emphasis on sameness he notes, *'there is no beauty in sameness, only difference'* (Langer, 2013).

Local cultural identities often come with a negative label in Northern Ireland. Many cultural traditions do, however, unite people through a collective identity which supports social bonding and the development of social capital. It is often the perceived threat to these cultural identities which prompts negative perceptions. Giddens (2002) notes that local nationalisms spring up as a response to globalising tendencies, as the hold of older nation-states weakens. Change, however, is not always welcome and, in fact, threatens known certainties (Grattan, 2007), which can result in actions which are often not compatible with a peaceful and democratic society. Grattan et al (2009) further emphasises how this 'feeling' of uncertainty and insecurity tends to be more intensified in areas that have experienced prolonged conflict, such as Northern Ireland. Furthermore, in such societies communal segregation and separation is regarded as 'normal' and indeed, essential for not only physical security but also for the survival of 'identity'. Therefore, the 'us' and 'them' becomes more pronounced in a battle for both sympathy and survival.

Hewstone and Straube (2001:486) revisit the work of Tajfel (1978) through the writings of Rubert Brown distinguishing between interpersonal and intergroup behaviour which can result from competing identities between out-group and in-group members. The interpersonal behaviour is action based on individual drive with little emphasis on social categories whereas intergroup behaviour relates to group action aligned to group belonging rather than individual association. It is these social group categories and intergroup behaviours that can have a significant impact in contributing to ongoing hostility and prejudice, but they can also serve as an important contributor in relationship-building and border-crossing.

2.15 The significance of national identity

As well as wider global influences impacting upon localised cultural revivals, one of the most overarching pre-occupations among life in Northern Ireland has been the demographic of Catholics and Protestants. Buckley and Kenney (1995) highlighted this 'majority-minority' dynamic, and referred to Poole's work in relation to the '*double minority*' and '*double majority*' theory, whereby both Catholics and Protestants are minorities in relation to two different territorial units (Poole, 1983). Therefore, in Northern Ireland,

Catholics are a minority but they form a majority in Ireland as a whole. Protestants, conversely, are in a majority in the north, but would form a minority in any future united Ireland (Bell et al 2010:18).

In Northern Ireland, the Protestant/Unionist community has maintained a dominant representation, all the while the numbers within the Catholic community have been increasing. Nolan (2014) referring to the 2011 census cites the narrowing of the gap between Catholics (45.1%) and Protestants (48.4%). While Protestants predominate in the older age cohorts, Catholics prevail in the younger. Catholics are in the majority up to and including 35-39yrs. This shift in demographic balance is significant, and may have later consequences for the constitutional framework of Northern Ireland in future years. A view of one side making gains, coupled with loss among the 'in-group,' can further enhance unease and anxiety among community identities. For example, a notion of 'tipping the balance' is prevalent in some people's views whereby Catholics are gaining in numbers through Polish incomers (who tend to be Catholic). As noted by Mc Alister et al (2009) such perceptions can exacerbate fears about the potential dilution of cultural identity within communities.

One of the most significant factors at play is not necessarily the identification of either Catholic or Protestant, but rather the ethno-political national identification. In the 2011 Northern Ireland census a question on national identity was included for the first time. The three main categories showed that 40% of the population identified as British (40%), 25% as Irish and 21% as Northern Irish. Many younger people were aligning with this Northern Irish identity, but since the 2011 census, a more traditional identification of old loyalties has begun to re-emerge. Of the Catholic respondents to the 2012 BBC-Ipsos/Mori poll, a larger majority (62%) chose to identify as Irish than in the 2011 census, and fewer Catholics (25%) identified as Northern Irish. In this poll, there was also a decline in Protestants aligning with a Northern Irish identity, but rather favouring identity based on Britishness (Nolan, 2014:137).

These two mutually exclusive positions create a polarity which has ramifications throughout Northern Irish society. Mc Alister et al (2009) note that while concessions have been made on both sides within political power-sharing, such concessions however, in reality are often perceived with a feeling of loss and threat which overpowers the sentiment of compromise and shared space. Many view the questioning of and challenge to cultural habits as '*a concerted attempt to weaken their culture and to advance the culture of Catholics*' (Mc Alister et al, 2009:98).

The obvious and subliminal messages that young people receive about identity restrict much progression beyond the confines of their lived community. Consequences and repercussions influence young people to refrain from inter-community friendships and opportunities. My study draws attention to such realities for young people and the challenges for those working with them.

2.16 Emotional legacies

The emotional impact of the conflict transcends current day life in many guises in Northern Ireland. Identities, cultural habits and traditions are often built upon retold narratives of division, attack and defence. In a volatile society, such as that of Northern Ireland, any threat to stability and order can cause negative or positive emotions which provide physical and expressive responses (Barbalet, 2002:39). Often these emotions are a response to threat, such as the 'fight, freeze or flight' mechanisms that biologists frequently emphasise. Individual reactions do not cause government or society particular concern, but rather emotions which result in collective action. Social scientists are primarily interested in the mechanisms that transpose emotions into some sort of action,

noting situations and moments which may prompt an emotional trigger (Barbalet, 2002:36). For example, in 2012, when the Belfast City Council voted to restrict the flying of the union flag to 18 designated days, it ignited emotional responses and actions such as street protests, and which challenged the peace process and political institutions. Jasper (1998) notes such reactions and outcry as reactive emotions based on 'outrage and grief.' These forms of emotions are defined by Jasper (1998) as affective emotions, such as 'love and hate'. Affective emotion can unfortunately result in organised hatred towards out-groups such as has happened in Northern Ireland throughout the conflict. Jasper added a third category that he labels '*moods*' that includes '*defiance, enthusiasm and envy*' (Barbalet, 2002:37). Moods of defiance and determination have been commonplace in Northern Ireland, as the real and perceived threats to in-group security often translated to hate and anger towards the out-group. Unfortunately, those that find themselves at the front line of this defiance are often young people, encouraged by elder powers within the community. The December 2012 'flags dispute' and resulting public disorder found many young people from the loyalist community subsequently implicated through the criminal justice system. Such a conviction can further inhibit the life chances of a section of the population already disengaged from civil society. A more positive outcome has been cited in a report by Dr Jonny Byrne (Ulster University) noting that while there was an acceptance that the protests may have failed to reverse the City Council decision, they have created a platform, '*which allows them to focus on the concerns and needs of the Loyalist community*' (Nolan, 2014:154).

Emotions and feelings can, thus be heightened by a single 'trigger' event. The restriction placed on the flying of the Union flag at Belfast city hall in 2012 presents an example of how one event triggered a ripple effect across Northern Ireland. In place of one flag flying at Belfast city hall, thousands of flags have been displayed on lampposts, houses and public buildings throughout Northern Ireland (Nolan, 2014). The implications of such symbolic frustration, and arguably progression, can have a direct impact on young people's perspectives.

Dealing with such symbolic changes, however small, prompts emotional responses from either, or, both sides of the ethno-political divide. A committed move for peace and equality by some in Northern Ireland can be seen by others as a threat to identity and culture. It may be perceived that communities and cultural identities in Northern Ireland can experience such feelings of shame (such as insecurity and vulnerability), which in turn prompts them to over compensate by outward displays of pride (such as being resilient and confident). For example, Orange Order marches portray a Protestant confidence and

resilience on a yearly basis, and yet scenes of angry protests display a more visible vulnerability and anxiety. Such emotional responses play their part in maintaining community identities. Grattan (2009:43) cites how,

a threat to traditions can create 'emotional' responses such as intolerance, prejudice, discrimination, antagonism, hatred, conflict and violence towards the out-group.

Such emotional responses reinforce sectarian out-workings and serve to retain mistrust and suspicion, ultimately maintaining separation.

For many Unionist/Loyalist communities, in particular, the feeling of abandonment has been continually rising (Nolan, 2014). Even in 1998 when there was a referendum which led to the Good Friday Agreement, the confidence and aspirations among the Unionist/Loyalist community were significantly less than that of the Nationalist/Republican communities. The focus of anti-agreement Unionists was mainly about Northern Ireland being taken out of Britain, but this has been replaced by a feeling of 'Britishness' being taken out of Northern Ireland (Nolan, 2014). The once supported peace process has come to be known by some as a 'surrender-process'. Embracing a peace settlement and concepts of sharing seem distant when some keynote speakers in the Loyalist community preach scare mongering and threat. Speaking at the Orange demonstration in Derry-Londonderry, for example, the Orange Order Grand Master, Edward Stevenson, said Protestants were facing an almost daily onslaught on their British heritage and culture, specifically naming a cultural war employed by Republicans (Nolan, 2014). Subsequently, Unionism at community level would appear to be more disengaged and disillusioned by the peace process which perhaps was interpreted as an end product, rather than an ongoing process and continued effort. As Magee notes (2013),

the crisis facing Loyalist communities is one of abandonment: economically; socially; and politically. It is only when people can see a way out that they will have hope.

That said evidence would seem to indicate the reverse of what might be perceived, as 2013 figures show more parades and marches than ever before, the largest numbers of registered marching bands, and significant investment from the European Union to Unionist/Loyalist cultural heritage. Nolan (2014:162) remarks that this would actually indicate *'a possible flourishing loyalist culture.'*

Whatever the perceptions and realities many people and communities bereave the 'known', the 'familiar', the 'certainties' and the 'assumed' as the society in which they experienced becomes open to change and compromise.

Brewer (2010) emphasises how insecurity, fear and anxiety can be as pronounced through peace processes and developments as they were during the violence. Former familiarity through ideas, routines and behaviours becomes replaced by uncertainty and for individuals and groups to reshape their sense of who they are and indeed, who their enemies may be. Lederach (1997) refers to this as 'identity dilemma.'

2.17 Unquestioned tradition

Traditional and cultural habits are often accepted as permanent features of the fabric of many societies. However, what is often considered as tradition is in fact, an invention over recent history. The invention of 'tradition' such as the Scottish kilt and Christmas address by Queen Elizabeth have been cited by Hobsbawm and Ranger as examples of contrived inventions (Giddens, 2002).

Giddens (2002) notes that the linguistics of the word 'tradition' is old, coming from the Latin word *tradere*, which meant to transmit or give something to another for safekeeping. A particular group has often invented these traditions to perpetuate cultural values and ideals. The messages and nuances of traditions have usually been protected and perpetuated by guardians such as wise men, priests, sages and even politicians. Giddens (2002:43) argues that *'the hold of tradition prevents society from being inclusive and progressive.'* This has implications and provides a challenge for youth work which prides itself in promoting inclusion and diversity. Perspectives from workers on such challenges are reflected in my study (chapter 5, section 5.6).

Community and parental influences have been noted to have a stronghold on young people's expressions, attitudes and behaviours (Mc Alister et al, 2009). In the Northern Ireland context, many traditions were introduced and became embedded by community influences at a time of hegemonic power and control, which, not only remained unchallenged, but, perpetuated a way of being, and ascendancy of one tradition and culture over another. Vilfred Pareto has noted, in a manner similar to Edmund Burke (political theorist and politician), that human society is held together by deeply rooted sentiments (some of which are shared with the animal kingdom), by psychological needs and customary loyalties (Femia, 2006). Burke himself resisted any dramatic or radical change to society, favouring habit, stability and historical institutions and practices. Such conservative ideologies recognise human imperfections and imperfectability and, as such, tradition and order can provide a sense of identity, social cohesion and reassurance. For

many, such an order is required in Northern Ireland to prevent any disruptive change or a return to the conflict.

Maddison (2011), however, questions such 'unquestioning obedience' and comments on the dominance of majority hegemonic in-groups including the notion of hegemonic silences. She further notes how a dominant group or 'in-group' within a nation, are more likely to ignore or downplay the negative actions of their in-group.

High identifiers – people who invest a high degree of value in a social identity such as 'Australian' – are far more likely to defend a Nationalist sentiment, including through the denial of past atrocities and current injustices (Maddison, 2011:3).

This purposeful disconnection ensures that there is no accountability to historical harms and injustices. Northern Ireland faces many historical enquiries and investigations which will confirm numerous injustices in which many citizens will experience discomfort and pain coupled with a truth recovery process.

My research uncovers how young people perceive community and traditional influences, and how youth work can support young people to understand the significance of such influences.

2.18 Custodians of identity and culture

Karl Marx's expression that 'the tradition of dead generations weigh like nightmares on the minds of the living' (Toll, 2009) has significant relevance to Northern Ireland. The influence of historical narratives and myths predicate modern day lived realities. These are maintained through stories, commemorations, visual displays and leadership which define its 'cause' on such memory. Brewer (2010:143) refers to sociological terms of collective memory and social memory which are understood as '*group memories, shared by a community, to help to bind that community together.*' Brewer further notes how nations and national identities use such collective memories as part of their narratives on nationhood. For example, many Nationalists cite divisive histories from 1169 with the first Norman invasions and the uninterrupted English brutality in Ireland, whereas many Unionists begin their histories with the plantation of Ulster in 1609, playing up the survival of Protestants of British heritage among '*uncivilised and often barbaric Irish natives*' (O Leary and Mc Garry, 1993:54).

Selective meanings and myths are often biased and misleading and can be both divisive and/or bring people together. For example, a Protestant/Unionist myth was that the 1912 Home Rule Bill was an unjust attempt to endanger the religious, economic and civil rights of Protestants in Ireland. On the other side, Catholic/ Nationalists viewed the Home Rule challenge as an illegal defiance by Unionists. Mac Garry (2014) notes how the press propaganda did little to alleviate any perspectives or myths. Youth work, as an educational intervention, can play a vital role in unpacking such myths, without it necessarily becoming a historical or political lesson.

Identity and cultural preservation is further carried by those who act as custodians of their ancestors. Modern day symbols, parades, rallies, anthems and rituals are all invoked to generate such 'communities of feelings' in an effort to stimulate and harness emotions to a political cause (Grattan, 2007:98). The construction and reconstruction of selective narratives and interpretations of the past are thus kept alive through symbolic practices, cultural artefacts, material objects, and cultural and ideological enterprises such as the school history curriculum (Brewer, 2010).

The circulation of customs and conformity brings to the fore the challenge of creating a new present and future when history and traditional wisdom and experience burdens heavily on community perspectives in the current day. In one sense, without this tradition there is the potential for chaos and disorder, and yet, on the other hand, such conservatism engenders a static preservation with little or no consideration, compromise or change. In such contested spaces and contentious areas people often confuse their perspective and certainty with 'absolute certainty'. The challenge of a continuous celebration of cultural superiority challenges the potential for protecting and respecting the rights of 'the other' (Collins, 2017). Grattan (2007) has further argued that once this 'known' or certainty is challenged or undermined, people within communities can become anxious and emotionally withdrawn. Wilson (2013:4) seeks people to be 'critical lovers of tradition' as this supports society be more future-oriented. However, insular thinking and resistance to change implies that people may not in fact recognise there is a problem per se. As Maddison notes, *'those of the 'If it's not broke, don't fix it' brigade will need to be persuaded that it is, in fact, broke'* (2011:168). This exploration and understanding of the sensitivities to identity formation and protection are important for the youth worker in developing any peace related practices. Presenting an initiative which may be perceived as challenging or diluting the community identity can leave the worker exposed and at risk. Young people, in particular, are often vulnerable and open to the influence and

rhetoric of their elder custodians. In turn, they can emerge as the new custodians or torch carriers of tradition and culture.

Ewart and Schubotz's research of 194 young people found that wall murals, flags and kerb painting influenced young people as important markers of their culture and traditions (2004). The Community Relations Council (2010: section G) comment that,

young people in particular have been nudged and nurtured to be the guardians of tradition or defenders of identity. Preserved traditions complement a normalised sectarianism in which young people are often exposed because they act out the messages rather than merely repeat them verbally.

My research study helps to provide insights from young people on the opportunities and challenges to bridging relationships across the community divide. Such influences affect the potential of youth work, and this is reflected through multiple perspectives from a range of practitioners. Wylie (2016) emphasises the collective effort required to deal with the growing paramilitary influence and aggression towards young people.

Peace Agreements within Northern Ireland

2.19 Introduction

Stanton and Kelly (2015:34) highlight that the peace-building field in Northern Ireland 'experienced an exponential rise in activity during the 1990s and 2000's'. This activity is directly aligned to significant peace investments from both International and European spheres as part of a commitment to peace-building through establishing new political and governing structures which commit to non-violence and display leadership across former enemies (Mac Ginty, 1997).

The establishment of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, which received a majority political party support and throughout civic society, was a significant and symbolic agreement which built upon many previous efforts, and which would pave the way for further Agreements. Peter Geoghegan (2008:83) reflects the historical changes of the Stormont government from that of 1920 to 1972 where the Unionist Party exercised an 'uninterrupted hold on political power.' During this time, 'discrimination' became in-built to the Northern Ireland parliament in Stormont where Catholics were excluded from power, making Protestant authority absolute' (Mc Kittrick and Mc Vea, 2001:6).

In the 1990's, the landscape began to change with silent talks between former enemies and the British government, alongside support and investment from the United States and the European Union. All of these influences contributed to the process of political parties signing the 1998 Good Friday Agreement (GFA).

Even though devolved institutions came into play following the GFA 1998, devolution was only implemented between 2002 to 2006 due to a breakdown in trust between the parties within the Executive coalition. After ongoing suspensions of any possible working government, multi-party talks took place in 2006 alongside the British and Irish governments. The resulting St. Andrews Agreement set out to facilitate a return to devolved government in Northern Ireland (a transitional assembly). In 2007, the Northern Ireland Assembly was restored with the formation of a new Northern Ireland Executive (Mc Mahon, 2008).

The Hillsborough Agreement (2010) was yet another significant measure of progression in Northern Ireland with debates and preliminary agreements on policing and justice and regulations on parading. The Hillsborough Agreement also identified a working group to consider arrangements for improving executive functioning and delivery, as well as a working group to progress the outstanding issues which have not been actioned from the St Andrews agreement (13th Oct 2006). However, the agreement has been open to scrutiny with some querying the lack of clarity in areas such as parades (Curran, 2010).

While these political developments progressed, there continued a backdrop of violence with many punishment beatings, shootings and murders (Mc Mahon, 2008). Mc Mahon refers to a 'politics of transition' (2008:9) and further notes,

the early years of the Assembly were a learning experience and in spite of the difficulties, progress was made, legislation passed and a commitment to strengthening democracy and democratic institutions in Northern Ireland continued to grow (Mc Mahon, 2008:38)

2.20 Compromise and sharing

In Northern Ireland, the principle of 'sharing' is a crucial component in the transition from violent conflict to peaceful democracy. Politically this is captured by the constitutional and political settlements of the various agreements: Good Friday Agreement, Northern Ireland Act 1998, St. Andrew's Agreement (2006), Hillsborough Agreement (2010), Stormont House Agreement (2014) and Fresh Start Agreement (2015). Promoting good relations and equality of opportunity are inherent but the concept of sharing has been more

challenging politically and structurally. Strategic frameworks and policy consultations such as *A Shared Future* (2005) and the *Programme for Cohesion, Sharing and Integration* (2010) all provided some direction to establishing a normalised society in which equality, difference, equity, public dialogue and decision-making are core. O' Sullivan et al (2008) particularly note how the 'Shared Future' strategy proposed commitments to dealing with contentious public displays that often reinforce sectarian aggression. In 2013 the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister launched a differing strategy called 'Together: Building a United Community', reflecting the Executive's commitment to improving community relations and continuing the journey towards a more united and shared society. Many of these policies and strategies have failed to explicitly commit and set a vision for cohesion, sharing and integration across all aspects of society. Some in fact would argue that many of these are bureaucratic or technocratic approaches which fail to engage the local or indigenous communities in the shaping and design of them, based on identified need at local level (Mac Ginty 2012, Stanton and Kelly 2015).

In many quarters Northern Ireland has been promoted as a society moving towards a shared future. However, there are signs that it is actually falling back into previous patterns of separation and antagonism. Paul Nolan (2012:13) indicates that,

there are radically opposing views among experts on whether, ten years on, the settlement has reduced or increased sectarianism, as to whether it has crystallised or softened opposing views, and as to whether it has solidified or moderated opposing blocs, or perhaps even begun to transform them (Todd, 2010:88).

In March 2018 Northern Ireland had again experienced a full year of political stagnation with the possibility of a working devolved government once again at risk due to 'red lines' and seemingly impassable core issues which underpin all previous political agreements. Such resistance and failure to cooperate and find workable solutions signifies the level of effort required by elected representatives to work together in effectively governing Northern Ireland.

2.21 The Northern Ireland Assembly: an equality framework

The commitments made to promoting reconciliation and mutual trust in the Good Friday Agreement also included equality legislation such as Section 75 and Schedule 9 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998. These place a statutory obligation on public authorities in carrying out their various functions relating to Northern Ireland, to have due regard to the

need to promote equality of opportunity, for example, between people of differing religious beliefs, political opinions, racial group and between men and women (Community Relations Council, 2010).

The legal context beyond Section 75 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998, includes UK adherence to international human rights standards as well as important domestic human rights, equality/non-discrimination and good relations statutes and criminal law. This is complemented by wider international commitments such as the European Convention on Human Rights, United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, United Nations Resolution 1325, World Programme for Education, and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

The St Andrews Agreement (2006) further committed to actively promoting the advancement of human rights, equality and mutual respect. The Hillsborough Agreement (2010) also affirmed the shared belief in the importance of working in partnership to deliver success for the entire community and the importance of mutual respect, equality and greater inclusiveness.

In March 2019 the United Kingdom is scheduled to leave the European Union through what has been termed 'Brexit'. The implications of this are far-reaching for the peace process and ongoing relations within Northern Ireland and between the Irish and British isles. The power-sharing Assembly needs some degree of certainty rather than the ambiguity presented through Brexit. Land borders and possible border controls echo a 'blast from the past' in which a separation is redefined in separating Northern Ireland and Ireland physically and psychologically. The former American senator who brokered peace in Northern Ireland has warned there could be "serious trouble ahead" if border checks were reinstated because of Brexit (The Guardian: 2018). Many commentators further fear the protection of human rights and equality legislation provided throughout the European Union may be fractured and leave minority groups more vulnerable and open to prejudice and discrimination.

Mc Veigh and Rolston (2007) critique the peace developments in many ways, including the inherent sectarian nature of the make-up of the government and the lack of attention to strategies to address increased racist attitudes and behaviours. In particular, they highlight how the 1998 Good Friday Agreement was embraced more by the Catholic/Nationalist/Republican community than that of Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist community. They highlight the overall disengagement by the Protestant community and

how, for many, the process is viewed as a 'surrender' and that the challenge remains 'selling the GFA to loyalists' (2007:18).

The lack of a working government also leaves a void in governmental budgets and spending with minimal decisions being able to be made with no Minister in place to validate budget allocations. In terms of education and youth work this leaves much uncertainty about the levels of support and funding available to support the sector to effectively plan and deliver on its identified priorities. Mac Ginty et al (2006) conclude how the road to peace has been hindered by both political and psychological intransigence.

2.22 European and American investment

Political unsettlement and a lack of working government in Northern Ireland do little to complement the levels of effort from outside supports and investors. O' Leary and Mc Garry (1993:52) have illustrated, in particular, the significant role of the United States in political, economic and social terms across Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Republic of Ireland.

They played a constructive role in the promotion of the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement and played an even more significant role in the making of the 1998 Good Friday/Belfast Agreement (O Leary and Mc Garry, 1993).

Mac Ginty (1997) highlights how a relationship between Northern Ireland and Ireland has been nurtured over many decades with the Irish government investing much effort to 'attract interest from US administrators in the Northern Ireland issue' (1997:20). In 1977 US President Jimmy Carter made a statement on Northern Ireland making a promise of US investment in the event of a Northern Ireland settlement. Following the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement, further concerted efforts were put in place by newly formed political allegiances in Northern Ireland to seek international support. In the late 1980's the United States bolstered the Anglo Irish Agreement with the International Fund for Ireland, through which development funds for Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland's border counties were channelled. Mac Ginty (1997:6) notes how US President Clinton further increased the 'annual US contribution to the International Fund for Ireland in the 1990's, albeit from only \$20m to \$30m.' Over the years, the United States and the European Union have been the largest donors to the International Fund, each contributing about 40% of total funds. In 2006, the 'Fund' radically changed its profile and priorities with a new emphasis shifting towards social and political support for the peace process (Morrow, 2012).

As well as financial support the region also witnessed significant endorsement from the US President Bill Clinton who ended up visiting more than three times in the 1990's, intervening in the political negotiations and supporting high profile civic events. Mac Ginty notes how 73% of people in Northern Ireland thought that Clinton's contribution to the peace process had been helpful (1997:7). During the visit to Northern Ireland the US President stressed the economic benefits of peace, and warned that any return to violence could jeopardise any new investment (Mac Ginty, 1997). This economic ideological slant is explored in more detail within the next section on debates with peace-building.

In addition to investment and support from the USA, Northern Ireland and the border counties of the Republic of Ireland have also received substantial investment to peaceful progress from the European Union, European regional Development Fund. Stanton and Kelly (2015:34) comment on how such investment has often shown to contribute to larger scale political progress and governance and that,

...less attention has been paid to smaller-scale efforts to build a constituency for peace at what is variously described as the community, grassroots or civil society levels.

My research study provides new insight and knowledge in this area by focussing on perspectives on how grassroots practices through youth work sets out to address sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland.

Section B: Debates within Peace-building

2.23 Having a prescribed model

Stanton and Kelly (2015:36) define a "definitional morass" in regional conflict transformation policy and planning, stating that peace-building in Northern Ireland was negatively impacted because of the absence of a "single conflict transformation model" Buchanan (2011:83). Mac Ginty (2008) however, questions a one-size model being applied from an outside global institution to the local level. Mac Ginty (2008:139) posits that,

internationally supported peace operations (the liberal peace) are promoting a standardisation of peace interventions.

This positional stance reflects a wider critical lens on the role of international peace supporters and their approaches to investments in areas in or emerging from civil war, violence and conflict. Much accusation has been made about liberal-driven, technocratic, bureaucratic, template-style formatting and professionalised approaches to peace-building, which can, in fact, restrict developments and social change at local level (Mac Ginty, 2008; Stanton and Kelly, 2015; Mac Ginty, 2010; Reychler, 2006).

Stanton and Kelly (2015:42) argue that this professionalisation of peace has 'devalued the grassroots work' and even further marginalised the practitioners voice in any strategic or practice based plans, policies and resourcing. Byrne et al (2008) noted that practitioners felt donors were "dictating the scripts."

Mac Ginty (2008) highlights how alternative approaches to conflict resolution and peace-building are limited and less recognised due to the liberal peace highly standardised formulaic and single-transferable peace formats and packages. He notes,

It becomes peace from IKEA; a flat-pack peace made from standardised components....minimising the space for organic local, traditional or indigenous contributions to peace-making (Mac Ginty, 2008:144-145).

Recognising the limitations of global influences to local peace-building, writers such as Mac Ginty (2008) also air similar cautions to wholly endorsing all 'indigenous' and 'traditional' peace-making as being more participatory, locally-owned and having higher chances of peaceful outcomes.

While communities and groups do retain significant creativity and innovation in their peace development and practice interventions, much of the resourcing emanates from wider European and International policy, strategy and funding.

2.24 Global-International: Agenda for Peace

Peace investment and coordination has primarily been orchestrated and planned through collective nation states, such as through the European Union and the United Nations. These bodies act as a directive for non-violence and ongoing relations between and within countries. The most significant development on the world stage has been the United Nations which was created in 1945 post the preceding world wars. The UN Security Council convened with the of heads of state in 1992, recognising that,

The absence of war and military conflicts amongst States does not in itself ensure international peace and security.

To ensure more lasting peace the United Nations endorsed the 1992 UN Nations 'An Agenda for Peace: Preventive diplomacy, peace-making and peace-keeping' report written by the United Nations Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali.

Reychler (2006:2) notes,

the number and magnitude of armed conflicts within and among states have lessened since the 1990's by nearly half.... The progress is attributed to the increase of conflict prevention efforts and the greater number of democratic efforts.

An 'Agenda for Peace Ten Years On' (Feb, 2002) notes how 'An Agenda for Peace' was significant in defining four consecutive phases of international action to prevent or control conflicts: preventive diplomacy including early warning of potential conflicts and mediation; peace-making as in settling disputes such as through negotiation, conciliation, mediation, arbitration; peace-keeping as in deployment of military and or police personnel; and peace-building as in indigenous structures which strengthen and solidify peace. Although 'Agenda' was initially received enthusiastically by UN member States, this enthusiasm waned and many of its recommendations were not implemented. Arguably conflicts and wars have continued, with many UN interventions forcing violent means to achieve their overall ideology and concept while many nation states are not always in agreement on interventions, thus resulting in inaction of any implementation. Lupel et al (2016) argue that,

Universal values are under siege or are being sacrificed in the pursuit of narrow self-interest.

Lupel et al (2016) further note how prevention should be at the centre of the UN's work, particularly before the outbreak of crises. They also emphasise investment in a more people-centered approach that actively engages local populations and civil society and overall greater cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations, civil society actors, and the private sector. They specifically name women and young people as areas requiring significant attention.

While not necessarily aligning to the UN principles and direction for peace, my study has developed a model, 'Developing an AGENDA for peace through work.' It particularly resembles the fourth component of 'An Agenda for Peace' (1992) which aims to nurture local community ownership (involving young people) in building and sustaining peace through a collective and concerted effort. It helps to locate action being initiated alongside young people and other key stakeholders and organisations. This model is discussed in more detail in chapter 6.

2.25 The European stage

Reychler (2006) notes the role of the European Union as a leading international body to affirm the importance of peace-building and conflict prevention, and in contributing to a more peaceful world than has been any time in the past century. Reychler (2006) however, adds three observations. Firstly, he notes the levels of latent violence which remain such as psychological violence, cultural violence, organised crime and other types of violence which are indirect and less visible and which affect more people. Lechler argues that most of the conflict prevention has been reactive in nature, following an escalation of violence with the aim being to limit further escalation. Secondly, he states that if the peace researchers want to make a greater difference, then they must challenge the ways and means of the current practice of peace-making, peace-keeping, and peace-building (Reychler, 2006). Reychler (2006:5) here emphasises having a macro view and encourages greater collaborations between all actors and players in creating an intervention which is 'more integrative, relevant and shared'. Reychler explains key characteristics of an integrative climate as,

expectations of an attractive future as a consequence of cooperation; the development of a senses of 'we-ness', multiple loyalties, reconciliation, trust and social capital...having supportive regional and international environment – neighbouring countries or regional powers – actors who have a positive influence on the peace process.

Thirdly, Reychler (2006) emphasises the need for a better exchange of knowledge between the decision-makers, the practitioners in the field, and the research community. Central to this is inviting actors involved in peace-building to reflect critically on their personal or organisational theories of violence prevention and peace-building, and also making more use of local expertise. This helps to address any potential theory-practice gap (Reychler, 2006).

Throughout all this Reychler (2006) refers to the problematic branding and image of much peace research and practice and prioritises the need for improving the branding of peace and peace research. He specifically notes,

Something certainly must be done to make the concept of peace more attractive. This could be accomplished by formulating clear and compelling definitions of peace; by differentiating types of peace...even more important is the role of peacebuilding leadership (Reychler, 2006:12)

2.26 Reflecting on peace-building investment

Stanton and Kelly (2015:145) express concerns about unscrutiny among practitioners, believing that there is a danger that peace support interventions become 'non-reflexive and uniform.' Lessons learned from previous practices need to be considered alongside agendas and ideologies of those providing the funding to those recipients of the investment.

Reychler (2006) emphasises that practitioners need to operate at micro and macro levels, paying attentions to local and national/international developments. The argument is that keeping sight of the big picture or macro-perspective gives an overview of the necessary peace-building blocks. It enables the peace builders to oversee and coordinate what they are doing. One current challenge of this in Northern Ireland can be observed through the Peace IV programme where the funding streams (through SEUPB) are carefully prioritised into thematic areas, such as 'Building Positive Relations at the Regional Level', 'Children and Young People' and 'Shared Spaces.' At one level, such clarity and departmentalisation clarifies specialist foci of each area. However, projects working with children and young people can cross-fertilise across all of these three areas. Further, projects funded for 'Children and Young People' have been supported by collective NGO partnerships, while local councils and the Education Authority further receive investment in the same area. To date, there has been little effort to join and connect some of this local-regional investment.

Reychler (2006) encourages those engaged in peace-building to reflect not only on where the level of investment resides and its intended direction and approach, but to also pay attention to those carrying out the practice. With specific reference to researchers in the field, Reychler (2006:5) notes how some have 'become cynical with some being burned out and have stopped contributing to the field.' The same analysis can possibly be applied to youth workers (practice and management) and will be discussed more in the following section. Reychler (2006) remarks,

Peace research requires strongly motivated people because it is demanding; has image problems; it transcends academic faculties and depts.; cynicism can inhibit the peace-building process; and transforming violent conflicts can be exhausting.

2.27 Global-Local: Interdependence and Hybridity

Stanton and Kelly (2015) note that as a result of UN developments such as the 'Agenda for Peace,' there is now a broadening scope of practice for professionals equipped with the theories and skills of conflict transformation and peace-building. Critics however, identify concerns about the dominance of one overriding philosophy through a liberal peace. This is discussed in more detail in the next section but Stanton and Kelly (2015:40) notes that,

Some view it as the imposition of a generic and universal model that side-lines local actors, decreasing their ownership of peacebuilding processes.

Much of the emphasis has been on external forces directing and informing the particular agenda. For example, some argue that there has been a move away from peace 'dove-related' approaches to more specific coordination of interventions. Mac Ginty (2008:141) referring to John Paul Lederach (1995), notion of 'elicitive training' rejects the idea of external conflict resolution 'experts' having a monopoly of wisdom and highlights the importance of local inputs in peace-building. Ground level ownership and participation are very much welcomed. Critics such as Cooke and Kothari (2004) have called this "the tyranny of participation" which steers communities towards technocratic and over-simplistic 'solutions' to complex social problems (Mac Ginty, 2008:142). Mac Ginty (2008) discusses the relationship between indigenous peace-making and liberal peace. He clarifies that traditional and indigenous peace-making means dispute-resolution and conflict-management techniques that are based on long established practice and local custom. He further notes that the terms 'traditional' and 'indigenous' are not interchangeable, while there can be considerable overlap.

Traditional denotes that a practice or norm has a heritage of considerable duration. Indigenous suggests that an activity or norm is locally inspired. Crucially, indigenous norms and activities need not be traditional (2008:145).

Mac Ginty (2008) is cautious not to assume that traditional or indigenous peace-making necessarily equates with 'good' as some such methods have failed to prevent violent conflict in many locations. Likewise he highlights that, 'Western-inspired peace-making should not automatically be disregarded as imposed, harmful and culturally imperative.'

Mac Ginty (2010:392) favours a fusion of approaches which have been defined as 'Hybrid Peace' where the relation is based on a two way approach rather than say top-down. He believes that autonomy is rare and that interdependence between local and international actors are common. He notes,

While international interveners (principal liberal peace agents) may devise comprehensive peacebuilding or development strategies, these will become distorted as they contend with the strategies and reactions of local actors.

However, one challenge to this belief can be observed through the most recent Peace IV Children and Young People call in Northern Ireland which had a defined intervention described prior to applications. In this way, applicants were bidding to an already established framework to which they would deliver set targets, results, outcomes and indicators. In this instance it would appear that there had been limited attention to the co-design with local communities, NGO's and the end-users themselves. Four specific areas of inconsistency can be noted. Firstly, other calls within the Peace IV framework did not have such predetermined or set-practice intervention frameworks. Secondly, it questions the level of trust and competence placed on the youth work sector to create its own localised interventions which meet need. Thirdly, it brings with it a full administrative package of support to record, document, reflect and share as though that were not already core to the youth work profession. While supportive this could also be seen as patronising. Finally, the rhetoric of co-design among partners in shaping applications and in involving young people in co-designing the actual components of each of the already defined frameworks is contradictory when the programme framework has not been co-shaped by the sector.

2.28 Liberal peace

As has been suggested from the preceding sections the influence of a liberal peace agenda has gone some way in determining strategies, resources and practices in peacebuilding. Mac Ginty (2008:143) notes liberal peace as the processes and practices of leading states, international organisations and international financial institutions to promote their own version of peace, accompanied by their own 'international financial architecture, support for state sovereignty and the international status quo.'

According to its critics, it reflects the practical and ideological interests of the global North prioritising individualism and the capability of individuals and institutions to reform, complying to the rule of law (Mac Ginty, 2010). Williams (2005) has referred to it as a 'magic dust' in which 'exemplars' are established of what the work should look like.

This contemporary liberal peace (sometimes called the 'liberal democratic peace' or 'Western peace') – is mostly associated with peace promoted by hegemonic forces (Mac Ginty, 2008:143).

It has been argued that the post-liberal (everyday, indigenous, hybridity) commentators have done little to develop explanatory theory or influence policy, which challenges the liberal peace approach. Mac Ginty (2008) outlines the challenge for many NGO's to counteract this liberal peace as projected by leading states. In many cases the often challenge function of NGO's has now been replaced with being co-opted as agents of the liberal peace. Mac Ginty (2008:144) importantly highlights how the liberal peace is not just a framework, but it is also a mechanism for 'the transmission of Western-specific values, ideals and practices' which local agents embrace and in turn transmit further at local levels. This superiority of the liberal peace model has also been named as an 'imperial ideology' (Ignatieff, 2005). Mac Ginty (2010) affirms that the liberal peace has been the dominant form of internationally supported peace-making and peace-building.

Critics of the liberal peace point to its central irony: that it often uses illiberal means in its promotion of liberal values (Williams, 2005). Herein it is often considered as 'aggressive social engineering' embedding compliance powers which does very little to nurture community participation and emancipation. It is argued that conception, design, funding, timetable, execution and evaluation of programmes and projects are conducted according to Western agendas (Cooke and Kothari, 2002).

Mac Ginty (2010) however, airs caution to overestimating the power of liberal peace ideals and interventions. He emphasises the significant role that local actors can have which results in a hybridised peace. Mac Ginty (2010:398) notes that 'it involves the intersection of a series of already hybridised actors and structure.'

2.29 Liberal peace: Bureaucratisation

Many authors argue that the liberal peace ideology has brought both a compliant professionalism and a more bureaucratic 'peace or reconciliation industry' (Stanton and Kelly, 2015:41). Mac Ginty (2012:287) affirms such a view, labelling current approaches as 'technocratic'. He notes that technocracy is taken to mean the systems and behaviours that prioritise bureaucratic rationality and ultimately provides a form of social control (2012).

Mac Ginty (2012) argues that technocracy predetermines the nature of peace-building process, and how this is carried out and by who. This western-driven ideology infiltrates many sectors and industries, including that of youth work where Beck and Purcel (2011:279) warn of 'administrative' intrusive and coercive form of direction. This is discussed throughout the youth work section of the literature review.

This peace and reconciliation liberal-driven industry has specific expectations in terms of funder-led directed interventions, quantifiable outcomes and evaluative impact measurement. Stanton and Kelly (2015:47) refer to the peace-building 'makeover' in which measurable targets and outcomes are valued rather than trusted interventions and idealistic vision.

It can be further argued that the advance of liberal peace and bureaucratisation provides minimal space for reflective practices as the pressure increases to deliver and report on targets and outcomes (Stanton and Kelly, 2015). Many have succumb to the belief and possible reality that there are limited alternatives to funding and subsequent interventions. Mac Ginty (2010:398) argues that the liberal peace approach has become seen as the 'only deal in town'. He argues,

The genius of many commercial monopolies is in persuading the consumer that there is really only one choice.

Despite this reality, many organisations and group retain reflexive, creative and innovative approaches which do not wholly adhere to the directed liberal peace model. Mac Ginty suggests that there are numerous institutions and individual that are 'interested in experimentation and exploring alternatives' (2012:301). Rather than necessarily fully rejecting the liberal peace model and resources some local actors can fuse the approach within their own localised interventions without losing their value base. In fact, Mac Ginty would suggest that many local actors 'exploit peace-building interventions by external actors' (Mac Ginty, 2012).

Section C: Youth work and youth work pedagogy

2.30 Introduction

The preceding sections provide the backdrop to the context in which youth work takes place in Northern Ireland. It has further clarified the intersection with peace-building investment, ideologies and approaches. This section outlines the principles and approaches within youth work, providing some analysis to how youth work interweaves with peace-building approaches.

2.31 Youth Work

Batsleer and Davies (2010) note youth work as having a long and diverse history which has required state-sponsored activity, and larger proportional investment through voluntary effort. While tensions between the two abound, Wylie (2016) has cautioned that *'we can live in the shadow of the other, or we can live with the shelter of each other.'* In this way a collaborative relationship and partnership between the statutory and voluntary sectors can maximise impact with young people.

In Northern Ireland youth work has been identified as an educational intervention since the 1972 Order which made it a requirement that education and youth work contribute to the development and improvement of community relations (Wilson, 2015). In 2011 the Community Relations Equality and Diversity in Education policy (C.R.E.D) further aligned youth work as a vehicle to supporting diversity, with some commentators believing that sectarianism was diluted within this policy alongside other equality issues (Ganiel, 2010; YouthAction, 2010).

Youth work as an educational intervention is often realised through informal, conversational and critical approaches (Batsleer and Davies, 2010). Wylie (2016) emphasises that while youth work has an educational purpose this is primarily about learning – such as learning to grow up. Such educational approaches refute the 'banking model' of education whereby young people often learn about the dominant ideas of society (Freire, 1972). Rather educational approaches can adopt a critical conversational education and problem-solving approach between young people and 'teachers' as equals with unique insights and perspectives. This is significant in how youth work initiates conversations pertinent to ongoing community divisions and sectarian attitudes and behaviours. Such a perspective is best described by Freire (1972) who adopts interventions which encourage questioning and critical pedagogy to advance social change (Batsleer and Davies, 2010:35). In this way Jeffs and Smith (2010) emphasise the role of the youth worker in assisting with the process of 'conscientisation' where young people enter a historical process critically and develop confidence for collective action. Again, this is relevant in how young people form part of a collective change process in Northern Ireland.

2.32 Youth Work in Northern Ireland

Youth work has been developing within the context of a society emerging from many years of conflict and unrest. Throughout this, youth workers have been at the coalface,

and have been responsive to the needs of young people in providing opportunities for informal and non-formal education (Mc Mullan, 2010). Milliken (2015) highlights how many community and youth workers were verbally and physically attacked for being advocates for inter-community engagement during a period of heightened community tensions. Some of these attacks were indiscriminate, while others were being specifically singled out, with some losing their lives.

In the 1970's initial responses by the youth sector were to deal with street and civil unrest by providing diversionary activities and creating safe spaces for young people. Throughout the 1980's voluntary sector organisations, in particular, inspired approaches with young people which attempted to create mutual understanding between communities and develop social change. Often this also included addressing other life issues, such as unemployment and homelessness. The 1990's embraced a new phase, with the advent of peace funding from Europe, which helped to develop a more targeted response at local level to young people's needs. This peace funding brought with it a new plethora of opportunities for young people – some higher quality and meaningful than others (Mc Mullan, 2010).

Throughout the 2000's much of the focus centred on addressing skills development and qualifications among young people, with the anticipated outcome of improved employability. The inherent principle is that employment equates with stability, purpose and contribution, while also preventing a return to disorder and conflict. Others, such as Nicholls (2012), would argue the focus has become more about providing individual services to individual young people. Mason (2015) has further related such intervention as reflecting a new labour narrative which embodies a neo-liberalist agenda and policies.

The development of a Youth Work Strategy for Northern Ireland (2005-2008) and subsequent Priorities for Youth Policy (2012) articulates core values for the youth sector. These priorities are primarily aligned to formal educational priorities which may not always have the scope to confront wider community and social issues. The emphasis on increasing achievement in education would appear to more fore-fronted (Mc Mullan, 2010).

Youth work and the voluntary youth work organisations, in particular, have played a significant role in engaging young people at local level during some of the most difficult times amid the conflict in Northern Ireland. Mc Mullan (2010) notes for the most part, that youth work has been flexible, adaptable, and innovative, and made significant interventions within the lives of young people. Grattan (2009) states, however that youth

work in the 1990's in Northern Ireland avoided the sensitive, challenging and potentially more controversial issues. This fundamentally opposes the philosophical principles of youth work in dealing with social, economic and political issues. Morrow (2004) echoes this sentiment noting,

it can be argued that many communities including those who work with young people try to avoid controversial issues and often concentrate on quick wins and consensus, demonstrating little medium or long term impacts.

While questions may abound about the impact of the work, the reality was that flexible approaches often allowed for responsive programmes which 'protected' young people from the surrounding violence. This flexibility is currently under growing pressure, as many organisations have less ownership and direction in where projects should take place, and what these should entail, as tendered contracts often dictate the required intervention. This reflects the imposition felt by much peace-building work in terms of liberal influences and technocratic expectations.

My research provides an opportunity to review and consider the placing of youth work as a key contributor to addressing sectarianism and separation based on a perspective-seeking approach which illuminates views on the opportunities and challenges throughout the work.

2.33 Youth work pedagogy: core values

Jeffs and Smith (2008) indicate that many people have called themselves 'youth workers' for over 150 years. A wealth of settings and approaches has fused to create youth work becoming mangled with other welfare activities. Jeffs and Smith are keen to create a distinction in which core principles make up the 'real' youth work profession, and which in turn, refute those imposters claiming to be youth work. The removal of any of the core principles imply that the others claiming to be 'youth work' are in fact a fraud to the profession (Jeffs and Smith, 2008:277). Jeffs and Smith affirm the cornerstones of youth work as: the sanctity of the voluntary principle in which young people enter and withdraw as best suits them; a commitment to conversations with young people which start from their concerns and within which both youth worker and young person are educated; the importance of association in which supportive relationships and commonality are core (being friendly, accessible and acting with integrity); a commitment to a democratic practice, where young people can act as equal and active citizens from an early age;

recognising that young people are not an heterogeneous group and that issues of class, gender, race, sexuality and disability remain central; and the distinct role and approach of the youth worker '*whose outlook, integrity and autonomy is at the heart of fashioning a serious yet humorous, improvisatory yet rehearsed educational practice with young people*' (Jeffer and Smith, 2009). Davies (2013) notes that this intervention is not coming from a start point of intended behaviour modification. Core to youth work is the education and welfare of young people where they learn from being part of a group through conversation and building relationships.

My research study provides some insight into young people's and youth workers perspectives on where they believe learning experiences can best take place.

2.34 Challenges within youth work

Youth work is witnessing a number of significant changes and challenges in Northern Ireland as it strives to retain the distinct features outlined above by Jeffer and Smith (2009). Statutory policy and funding has brought many challenges. The 2012 Department of Education Northern Ireland Youth Work Policy 'Priorities for Youth' comes with restrictions and parameters on youth work, namely that the focus priority is 'youth work in education.' While education underpins youth work, the policy focus is aligning to specific formal educational priorities (rather than non-formal), such as reducing the gaps in underachievement, and improving standards and qualifications. If youth work is only aligned to these priorities as stipulated by the Department of Education, the ethos and practices of youth work may fundamentally change. Many voluntary youth work organisations, however, ascertain financial leverage from elsewhere which allows for a more flexible and holistic sectoral approach and intervention (Trimble, 2014). In the period of writing this thesis three smaller, but hugely 'impacting' organisations in working with young people on the margins, have gone into administration and ceased to exist.

Many commentators would query the capacity and remit of youth work in over-extending itself to meet the needs of young people in a variety of settings. Compromising the distinctiveness of youth work and its approach leaves the profession vulnerable to providing solutions to all government priorities, effectively becoming a 'Jack of all trades but master of none.' Batsleer and Davies (2010:10) warn of the nudging of youth workers in '*contrary direction*' which can result in confusion and ineffectiveness. Jeffer and Smith (2010) also emphasise the stretch faced by the youth work profession with ever-widening contexts diluting its nature, processes and practices.

In 'Youth and Policy' (2015:4), Garasia et al reference an open letter from a group of youth workers,

Thirty years ago Youth Work aspired to a special relationship with young people... It claimed to 'be on their side'. Three decades later Youth Work is close to abandoning this distinctive commitment. Today it accepts the State's terms. It sides with the State's agenda (IDYW, 2009).

Beck and Purcel (2011:279) further warn of youth work being directed and inappropriately being addressed through policy and political commitments. They caution the level and detail of the state's involvement in youth work and its practices as *'it risks destroying the work and the benefits it brings.'* They believe that an intrusive state will develop a shift from voluntary participation to more coercive forms; from association to individualised activity; from education to case management; and from informal to formal. Bureaucratic relationships have arguably tipped the balance away from the orientations and practices that have been central to the development of youth work (Beck and Purcel, 2011). Bradford and Cullen (2014) refer to the youth work profession becoming agents of the state, while Mc Keown (2017) raises concerns about the values and practices of youth work when practitioners and organisations feel *'handcuffed to the state.'* Thus, the youth work sector is left balancing an ethical commitment to its vision and ethos, alongside a need to survive and sustain, and hence, veer in directions of funding and alternative practices. My research study provides an evidence base of multiple perspectives on the opportunities and challenges for youth workers and youth work, considering a range of processes which may restrict development.

2.35 Youth work: needs-led approaches

The Community Relations Council (2010) note the need for a better Youth Work Strategy which embodies 'needs-led' rather than 'provider-led' models which do little to support young people. In this way government policy often tends to reflect hegemonic culture which maintains a sense of order and stability, diminishing the possibility of questioning and imbalances which will off-centre society. As highlighted by Grattan (2012), the youth work sector needs to question if youth workers are part of the ideological state apparatus, and, to what extent the youth work ideology and worldview is being driven by policy, rather than organic need and development.

Beck and Purcel (2011), emphasise how modern youth work practices still reflect the ideological position of policy makers and hegemonic needs of powerful institutions, rather than the needs of stakeholders which they profess to support. The current Regional Advisory Group process (RAG, 2016), through its Local and Regional Assessment of Need, have firstly compiled quantitative statistical facts and figures, and subsequently embarked on a more intensive qualitative data gathering process, engaging all relevant stakeholders. Writers such as Beck and Purcel (2011) provide a cautious warning to sectors such as youth work that it needs to remain aligned to its founding principles, and continue to interrogate and question beyond what is presented.

The Commissioner for Children and Young People, Koulla Yiasouma (2016), in encouraging meaningful collaboration, emphasises that,

no one is the boss of anyone just because they fund the work; likewise the statutory sector should not be seen as the enemy to the voluntary sector.

My research study aims to bring together perspectives from practitioners and the needs of young people on how to best address sectarianism and separation, and to thus, enhance community relations. In this way, statistical data and analysis are less prevalent in favour of qualitative narrative and insight. Perspectives, interpretations and shared insights and understanding shape the evaluative analysis.

2.36 Youth work contributing to social change

This section has so far described the core principles within the youth work pedagogy and the challenges in retaining these in a changing climate. It might thus appear that youth work is aligned to a coherent vision, but the commitment and implementation requires further attention. For example, while tackling inequalities are often cited as core to youth work, the Youth Council for Northern Ireland in 1995 (Bell et al, 2010) found that a very small proportion of youth organisations had engaged in work that involved discussions of contentious issues, with only a small number of youth workers taking part in any kind of professional development looking at politics, political education and discussion. According to Mauro (2008), civic education in Northern Ireland adopted a 'minimalist approach' which avoided contentious political issues. Harland (2009) further recognises the challenging task for youth work to address issues with young people in a contested society, particularly noting the presumption that youth workers possess the relevant skills, knowledge and self-awareness. For many practitioners it would appear that inquiry, policy

and political dialogue and generally questioning may be limited. My research findings aim to provide insight into the appetite, and support and training needs among practitioners in dealing with contentious issues within Northern Ireland.

It has often been noted that youth work operates on a continuum ranging from humble relationship-building and personal and social development work, to a more politically embedded social change sphere. Harland, Morgan and Muldoon (2005), however, found that many youth workers reject the idea that 'political work' is part of youth work; a misapprehension that can, and may, have far reaching consequences for future generations, for society and for peaceful and democratic political process. Many youth workers have struggled to comprehend citizenship, and question why citizenship education has become such a priority. The Community Relations Council (2010) highlight though, that such work is important to engage young people in dialogue and democratic decision making processes, and in finding alternatives to conflict and violence.

Youth and community work advocates social change as core to its approach, requiring students, trainees, practitioners and managers to continue a process of critical questioning. Wyn and White (1997) encourage the profession to reevaluate its role in promoting social justice or in entrenching social division. To best approach social change, Beck and Purcell note (2011) that genuine community development and empowerment within practice should reflect four core principles, embracing personal and collective change, as shown below:

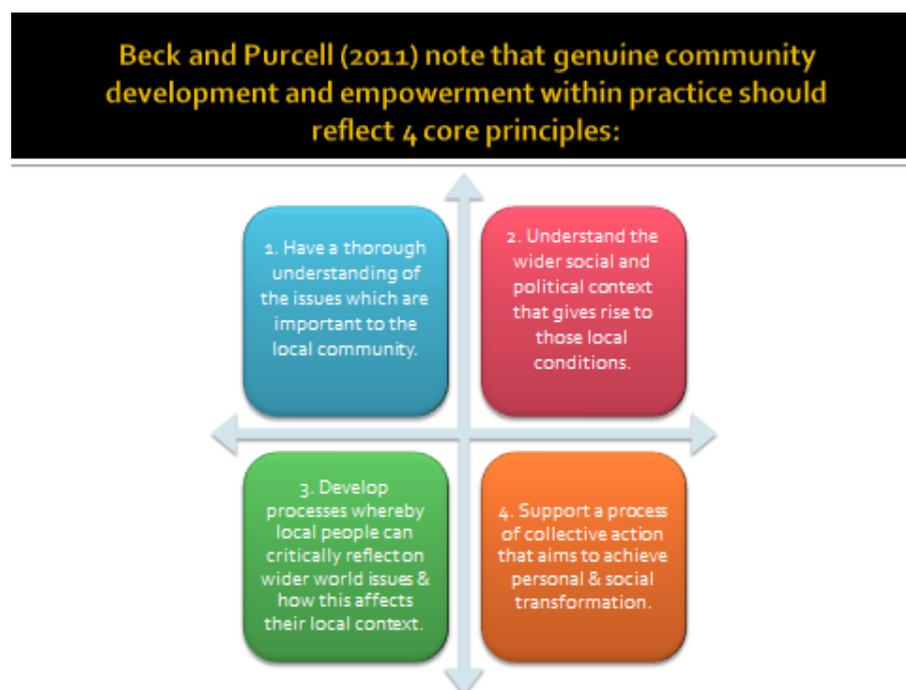


Figure 2.1: Four component community development model

This analysis and application is core to the research exploration within my study. Firstly, the top left quadrants indicate 'need' which can reflect structural influences impacting upon communities, while the lower quadrants indicate processes for action and transformation. Beck and Purcel (2011) challenge youth workers to intentionally pause and question their daily rituals and assumed common sense ways of looking at the world. This requires youth workers in their training to embrace more sociological, political and philosophical levels of enquiry to their repertoire. Such a model and framework reflects my research design and approach whereby youth workers can take an intentional pause to review practices.

Youth workers, it can be argued, need to read the political and policy landscape. Harland (2009:13) referring to the writings of Freire (1968), notes that when the oppressed can reflect upon the extent of their oppression '*they commit themselves to the action of transforming their world.*' This is where youth workers can embrace a wider critical consciousness, and where youth work can be a conduit for transformation and hope.

Milliken (2015:13) notes that,

youth work should not only forge links between communities, but also create an environment within which dialogue could take place around difficult sensitive and contentious issues.

Grattan and Morgan (2007) further emphasise the need for youth work to be more aspirational in its philosophy, policy-making, training and practice in order to contribute to or address local and global issues.

2.37 Youth work: a contributor to peace-building in Northern Ireland

The role of youth work in addressing sectarianism and separation (as part of a peace-building framework) in Northern Ireland is core to my research exploration.

While equality and inclusion are central to education and youth work, it is, however, still possible for many children to make the transition into adulthood without having any meaningful contact or interaction with people from another religion, nationality or race (Department of Education: Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education 2010). The Community Relations Council (2010), considering the contribution of youth work to peace-building, note that it still remains untapped in terms of its potential. They

further express concerns that the verbal commitments to a youth intervention programme are often not backed by any plan of action or resource allocation. Mc Glone (2016) strongly advocates that *'if you don't fund youth work you are handing these kids over to the paramilitaries.'*

Harland (2009) adds to this view by suggesting that the approach has been more organic than strategic. Reflecting on the 'Strategy for the Delivery of Youth Work in Northern Ireland' (Department of Education, 2005), Harland contests that the vision for young people to be *'active citizens in a secure and peaceful society'* (2009:4) is a rather *'woolly vision'* with no pragmatic application. Harland (2009) further stipulates that the youth sector needs to pay attention to the lessons learned from community relations work over 35 years, which would provide a better basis for meaningful contributions.

Stanton and Kelly (2015:37) refer to Kelly's research on Northern Ireland which suggests that there has been little interrogation of what has been learned about change processes as a result of its practical efforts and what may have worked and why. She further notes that routine approaches, methodologies and practices are under-scrutinised, with much practice being unreflective.

Evidence further suggests that there is a feeling of fatigue within the sector towards community relations (CRED, 2013) and that the language of active citizenship might be a better framework for the next phases of youth work in Northern Ireland (Smyth, 2017:2). With writers such as Harland (2009) noting that limited evaluatory evidence exists to demonstrate that community relations and peace-building work are more effective now than in the past, this has incited my research to uncover such claims.

Wylie (2016) notes that youth work practices can provide safe spaces for experiential learning among young people. In this way, young people can have new experiences in which they might not otherwise have, especially with those from the 'other' community. Wylie suggests that young people, firstly, need to have relationships with other people beyond the localised community. Secondly, young people should have a relationship with a trusted adult who can push them and prompt exploratory questions such as 'why' and 'who'.

Jeffs and Smith (2010) further note that tools and mechanisms for impact and quality measurement are generally underdeveloped within youth work. They further note that evidence of good youth work has been largely anecdotal, with occasional documented and evidenced external reviews and evaluations. Again, this validates a need for some

intentional review in this area, and my research provides an evidence base from within side the profession, based on workers perspectives. It captures perspectives on the youth work contribution to peace-building from practitioners and through self-evaluation to consider and identify continuous growth and improvement in this area.

2.38 Youth work dealing with contentious issues

Previously noted writers suggest that much youth work avoids dealing with contentious issues. Osborne (2009) notes this as 'avoiding avoidance', where he refers to difficult or contentious issues often being avoided to prevent disagreement, and maintain harmony. This, he argues, happens at all levels from practice to policy. He further notes that *'avoiding contentious issues may also inhibit the development of significant overall strategic programmes'* (2009:56). Osborne (2009) further advocates the need for huge steps forward for it to be possible to have difficult conversations across the divide, without the sensitivities, concerns and fears that exist currently. He stipulates that less avoidance and more genuine problem-solving is required. Osborne emphasises that *'there is a difference between recognising hard and challenging issues and actually dealing with them'* (2009:57).

Magill et al (2008) notes that the school context has also tended to ignore much of the challenging and contentious issues, based on their research in Northern Ireland, and indeed Bosnia and Herzegovina. They indicate that the majority of Northern Ireland respondents, in the 24-25 year old age group, believed that the 'Troubles' were not adequately addressed when they were at school. The young people also felt they had a responsibility to build reconciliation and wanted a voice in debates about it, and equally felt very strongly that politicians perpetuate divisions rather than showing leadership to overcome barriers. While Osborne (2009) notes the challenge of 'how' to deal with such issues, Magill et al (2008) highlights the use of interactive teaching methodologies and resources to aid a more effective engagement. Wilson (2013:3) particularly emphasises 'residential learning settings' which can help people to meet together and to build lasting relationships. Within an education context it would appear there remains a challenge to both recognising the relevance of the issues, and in dealing with the issues effectively. My stage one research findings with young people also provide insight into how they perceive the relevance of dealing with such issues and the best fit methods for exploration and possible action.

Bell et al (2010) note, however, that there have also been a number of difficulties identified at times with some youth workers' roles in educating children and young people. A survey on 'Teenage Religion and Values' found that some youth workers, who were often volunteers with little formal training and support, felt ill prepared to tackle issues and potential controversies. Milliken (2015:17) highlights that,

neutrality is an illusion and dangerous myth. Not to challenge sectarianism by neutral silence is to endorse and allow it to continue and even flourish. Silence supports sectarianism and is a pro-sectarian stance.

The research findings will capture perspectives from youth workers on how they envision youth work challenging sectarianism and separation.

2.39 An appetite for the work

The legacy of the conflict is arguably the most fundamental aspect that affects Northern Ireland, and yet the relevance, legacy and impact can at times be hard to detect at first sight. Smith and Magill (2009) affirm the need for young people to have greater awareness and sharing about multiple perspectives on the conflict. They emphasise the role and responsibility of educators to contribute to this reconciliation, and believe this is a legitimate task as young people demand it. Smith and Magill further (2009) question the appetite among educators to undertake this work and suggest an assessment of what support educators may need. This perspective is endorsed by YouthAction (2011:4) who state that,

within youth work we need to have an appetite for this work and for embracing and espousing change. It is our choice to pursue a path of fairness, equality and change.

The work of Smith and Magill (2009) make it clear that young people do not want the past to be ignored, nor do they want to dwell on negative aspects of the past. Instead, they want to understand what happened and why, and how to create a more positive future. The alternative is to advocate silence and avoidance. Wilson (2015:10) emphasises that within a peaceful and equal society that there is no place for breeding hatred and violence towards others and that,

this means that each of us, as practitioners, does not work in a manner that ignores such actions between young people or airbrushes their link to our violent past.

Mc Cully (2004:27, cited in Bell et al, 2010) acknowledges that dialogue in an informal setting, however, can actually become embroiled in never-ending '*circular arguments*'. Youth workers require skills to support young people to elaborate in an un-leading way and to help young people remove the 'fuzziness' and cyclical debates on conflict and sectarianism (Harland, 2011). In this way young people can be supported to become co-investigators alongside youth workers in the search for improved understandings. Further, by meeting with young people from other communities they can move beyond circular discussion to more interaction, which provides a new basis of perception and insight. Kinaesthetic models of learning, such as visiting interface divisions and wall murals, can provoke new and additional perspectives which provide a more informed understanding of the conflict.

The challenge for all education providers would appear to be finding ways to broaden young people's understanding of recent Northern Irish history. Bell et al (2010) suggest that this should be carried out in a way that encourages greater recognition of the complex ways that past events unfolded, and how they continue to play a significant part in current day society.

Through peace education interventions, youth work can support young people's collective conscience and action as a contagious behaviour which others find difficult to resist (YouthAction, 2011). It is educative in that young people's experiences, knowledge, understanding and skills development form a crucial component in the possibility of change. It operates at the individual, interpersonal, community and policy level (Lederach, 2005). By such collectivity, an energy emerges which can transcend conflict to stimulate social action and change (YouthAction 2011). However, as Milliken (2015) highlights, there would appear to be few youth workers with the expertise and function (within the statutory sector) to support the implementation of community relations. Milliken (2015:54) believes that the youth sector has distanced itself from addressing community relations issues noting that, '*as it had been in 1969, community relations youth work is once again reliant on philanthropic and charitable donations.*' My research findings review the realities of claims of disengagement and limited skills and practices in this area (chapter 5, section 5.7).

2.40 Youth work: connecting young people through contact (border-crossing)

Batsleer and Davies (2010) highlight that youth workers can create possibilities for transformation, such as in breaking down borders between young people in Northern Ireland. Coupled with critical dialogue and reflection, educators can collaborate with young people in creating conditions for 'border-crossing'. Reflecting on the EU Youth for Europe programme within Scotland, Batsleer and Davies (2010:38) note,

by creating conditions for young people to learn about difference, they become border crossers, in that crossing social and cultural boundaries through the youth exchange facilitated their understanding of other perspectives.

Much literature about Northern Ireland would indicate, however, that such cultural exchange is limited, and that many youth projects have operated to date within a single identity framework, with limited or no contact and dialogue with those identified as being from the 'other' community (Mc Alister et al, 2009; Morrow, 2004). However, elements of 'bridging and linking' are crucial for peace-building in which genuine engagement can alleviate barriers and help to build bridges. O' Sullivan et al (2008) emphasise that there must be the potential for real or genuine acquaintance, if genuine benefits are to come about. They particularly note the centrality of interaction and getting to know each other as individuals. Various examples exist of young people from different communities being together in activities and shared initiatives. These are often spaces such as music, drama, sports or generic youth participation and decision-making. These can be noted as peace-keeping activities as opposed to peace-making or peace-building (Smyth, 2007). The level of contact work between young people, which purposely and undeniably confronts sectarianism and separation, has largely been unknown in existing literature. YouthAction (2011) indicate how approaches can be both intentional and ad-hoc. Interestingly this sporadic and/or planned approach reflects that of the violence experienced across Northern Ireland which emanates in a similar vein (CRC, 2010: Chpt2 1B). YouthAction, however, emphasise the need for planned and purposeful peace programmes which proactively counteract possible violence and which support young people to explore and understand their role as change-makers. Milliken (2015) comments on how initial community relations programme are often assumed to have been effective, and had some impact in changing attitudes and behaviour. In this way, my research contributes knowledge and insight on perceived realities of this impact as expressed by both young people and practitioners.

Mc Alister et al (2009) have indicated the inadequacies of some youth work initiatives addressing community relations. While children and young people were often critical of cross-community projects, this related particularly to trips, activity-based initiatives and

specific events. Such activities had been carried out with minimal preparatory work, involved little integration between young people and had no follow-up for further contact. According to those interviewed, such projects had limited opportunities to learn about cultural differences and similarities and had limited impact in building links or good relations with 'the other community'. Mc Alister et al (2009), subsequently, have the view that one-off events or short-term projects have had no discernible change in communities, based on their research findings.

Such perspectives might imply that a more purposeful contact, based on dialogue, understanding, sharing and learning is needed rather than superficial 'contact' in which actual prejudices are heightened rather than lessened. Young people are keen to build relationships across different backgrounds, with this taking place in either fun social mixed environments, or through facilitated educational learning environments (Community Relations Council/YouthAction, 2014). Young people generally feel that some initial work and exploration is needed to be carried out before being 'thrown into' meetings with different groups and cultures. However, they have also noted that integrated approaches are important as this *'helps build friendships and relationships and helps understanding'* (YouthAction, 2013). Many favour an enhancement of inter-community relationships which act as a bridge for understanding and creating new bonds between young people of difference (YouthAction, 2013). Morrow (2017) emphasises the 'spirit of the encounter' in which openness and respect are paramount when 'being alongside others.'

Salmond (Cohen, 2012) emphasises the 'joy of difference' or appreciation of the 'gift of the other' in inter-mingling between communities and people of varied identities. By young people being exposed to contact with one another they can learn to acknowledge the 'gift' of the other. On recognising the gift of the other they can then begin to understand and learn to embrace difference, whether religious, cultural or other. The planned and facilitative role of 'leaders' cannot be underestimated as 'young people thrown together and forced apart from the 'known' can lead to provocation and threat' (Hughes, 2013).

2.41 Youth work demonstrating impact

The literature findings would appear to indicate that while youth work may have a history of engaging young people in reconciliation practices it has been more limited in its current attempts to have impact in this area. Batsleer and Davies (2010) highlight how various

Ministers for Youth since 1998 have described the youth sector as 'patchy' and 'unsatisfactory'. However, Wilson (2015:5) asserts that *'the daring and ground-breaking youth work practice...is not acknowledged enough by Government and wider civil society.'* It can be also viewed that such work which does exist, tends to go under the radar. My research study attempts to present a perspective-based review and assessment in the field of youth work, community relations and peace-building. In this way, perspectives from insiders within the profession can self-assess the current picture and identify continuous areas for improvement.

As noted by the Youth Service Sectoral Partnership Group (YSSPG, 2009),

youth work has its part to play... helping build fair and just communities concerned with civil rights, equality of opportunity and able to accept and welcome differences in people.

My research study seeks a foundation of evidence which may support the case for youth work as a key contributor to addressing sectarianism and separation.

2.42 The challenge for youth work

As cited by YouthAction (2011) the challenge for youth work is to purposefully create and support dialogue and reflection among young people which helps them to explore, deal with, and to some degree settle 'the past', without poisoning their attitudes. Mc Mullan and Redpath (2012) argue that youth work is often too discrete, and that perhaps now is the time to promote the scope and actual impact of the work. Jeffs and Smith (2010) highlight how vision and leadership is required among managers who now need to possess a greater sophisticated analysis of the social, economic and political environment in which they can connect national and local priorities to organisational priorities without losing out on core principles and values. The impact of this work can contribute to supporting young people, communities and the sector to be inspired and flourish. Wilson (2015:1) summarises the goal,

In 2015 we need to promote a vision and practice of a youth service locally that supports our young people ...to change the nature of this separating society into a shared one...

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework (theories, models and policies)

3.1 Introduction

The theoretical framework chapter identifies theories, models and policies of peace-building and reconciliation by local and global writers. The purpose of this chapter is to identify key concepts, theories, models and policies which can support understanding and application of the two research questions: the perspectives from practitioners in how youth work addresses sectarianism and separation and, secondly the perspectives from young people on how the conflict affects their lives. The theories, policies and models are intertwined throughout to provide a more analytical understanding of what concepts and terms have been used throughout the literature review in relation to conflict resolution and peace-building in Northern Ireland.

The chapter, firstly, considers the situation of Northern Ireland as a post-conflict society or, as one which is in a process of conflict transformation. It goes on to describe the theoretical concepts around community relations, reconciliation, integration, contact and boundary or border-crossing and the opportunities and challenges these present in a society coming out of conflict. The chapter further outlines recognised models of peace-building which I believe are transferrable to my research study and which I can build upon and develop as a result of my research findings. These models support the research study by making sense of the issues identified in the literature alongside the research findings. The chapter directly informs the recommendations in chapter 7 where these models of peace-building are inter-connected with my research findings to create an evidence-informed model of youth work in addressing sectarianism and separation.

Through an evaluative research approach, my study attempts to provide an evidence base of what practices are taking place, at what level and with what outcomes and impact. To date little evaluative work has been done in this area, and, as Smyth (2007) highlights not only is there a relative absence of evaluation, but also lack of research into youth work practices in relation to societies emerging from conflict (Morrow, 2013:13). This theoretical chapter brings together regular, or commonplace, features from the literature review which specifically connects to the research investigation and research findings.

3.2 Post-conflict society

Brewer (2010:3) highlights how many peace processes focus on reaching a political agreement rather than necessarily applying the effort to heal 'damaged relationships.' Those who have been historically divided require transformation of social relationships and constructive engagement within a so called 'post-conflict' society.

Bell (2000:1) notes that reaching a peace agreement is a '*beginning and not an end*', especially in moving beyond the use of conflict to a democratic society – a process rather than an end in itself. The Northern Ireland peace process and agreement of 1998 is often regarded as a negotiated settlement by the international observatories on peace and conflict. According to the Peace Research Institute Oslo, this has become a growing trend, noting that in 1989 only 10% of civil wars ended with a peace accord, but that this has since increased to 40% (Nolan, 2014).

Fitzduff (2006) in 'Community Relations Work - Fit for the Future?', however, emphasises that conflicts tend not to end, but that they change in their out-workings. In Northern Ireland, for example, the change from violence to politics came as part of an orchestrated series of conversations between militant groups and political institutions over many years, culminating in the 1998 Good Friday Agreement (GFA). As Fitzduff notes, this change led to more opportunities for sharing and cooperation. Beyond the GFA (1998) Northern Ireland settlement there have been further trajectories in which 'talks' and agreements have emerged, such as the 2014 Stormont House Agreement. Brewer (2010:42) emphasises the importance of good governance to the possible success of peace processes. He argues however that,

good governance brings with it liberal democratic notions of governance, free-market economic principles and the hegemony of the West – and in particular the United States – in defining what constitutes peace.

This liberal peace approach has been discussed in the literature review and raises many questions about locally owned solutions to locally-defined issues and needs by local people in Northern Ireland. Mac Ginty (2008) refers to more flexible and hybrid approaches in a post-conflict society rather than a formulaic, standardised and imposed package. The Northern Ireland government remains inactive as of May 2018 and such political inactivity can breed further frustration and anxiety among local communities. Brewer (2010:29) warns that 'fragile peace processes are more likely to descend into renewed conflict.'

While the literature referred to Northern Ireland as a society that is post-conflict the accuracy of this is questionable as conflict is ever-present. A more preferred term may be that Northern Ireland is a society which is emerging from conflict and which is undergoing transformation. Collins (2017) notes that such a definition or term is problematic as the reality indicates a society emerging from violence and one which continues to live with violence. Lederach and Maiese (2003) define the current thinking in peace-building as conflict transformation rather than conflict resolution. They emphasise that it is about going beyond the resolution of particular problems to having a fundamental respect for human rights and non-violence in all aspects of life. Conflict transformation also recognises two core common ideas: firstly, that conflict is normal in human relationships and, secondly, that conflict is also a motor of change. In this way people can use their experience of conflict to collaborate on transformational journeys towards peace. How youth work best addresses the conflict and its lingering impact, and how it can support young people and local communities in creating a peaceful society, is of particular relevance to my research study.

Fitzduff (2006), in considering a post-conflict society, also refers to conflict transformation and reconciliation, in which she identifies three core reconciliation elements. Firstly, 'equality of opportunity,' whereby everybody has access to education, training and learning. This must be an active promotion to ensure people from high levels of deprivation from 'other' communities all have similar opportunities to improve their life chances. As cited in the literature (section 2.10) poverty, poor health and inter-generational unemployment restrict the life opportunities and chances for many young people in Northern Ireland, particularly interface areas and areas of multiple deprivations. These areas have been impacted most significantly by the conflict and tend to experience a more habitual daily experience of separation and restricted mobility. This 'equality of opportunity' reflects a liberalist political philosophy where writers such as Rousseau would advocate the need to take charge of your life, often through self-development and education (Heywood, 2007). However, social contexts and deep-rooted social issues often create barriers to such individualised ambition (Perkins, 2016).

Fitzduff, secondly, notes 'improved mobility' in which people have the ability to move around to work, socialise and benefit from infrastructural services and support. This also reflects a liberalist perspective in which people can celebrate moral, cultural and political diversity. As noted in the literature, this presents a key challenge to such communities living in 'bubble syndromes' (Hargie et al, 2006) or in areas of 'bounded contentment'

(Roche, 2008) where the prospect of being more mobile and crossing into new areas is not the norm.

Finally, Fitzduff notes 'safety' highlighting the importance of safety at the destination point as well as the journey there. Many people do not feel safe beyond their defined zones or sectarian parameters. Mobility often comes with careful and well considered personal, relational and community safety implications. Again liberal thinkers such as J.S. Mill in the 19th century presented the 'prevention of harm' as core to society and human development and in which people can be both self-regarding and other-regarding. Smiley (1992) citing Harris (1974) highlights how harm and hurt are not necessarily caused by natural forces but rather the result of 'human agency.' Where harm exists, society cannot flourish. The sectarian parameters noted by Fitzduff (2006) limit real movement to avail new friendships and opportunities as murder, violence, bullying and intimidation remain a reality for those who do. Writers such as Harris (1974), highlight how such harm and hurt can indeed be prevented, and how humanity has a moral responsibility to resist applying suffering to others. However, Smiley (1992) in discussing 'preventability' recognises that this is not always a personal characteristic or behaviours but something that is influenced by social and political norms. Freedom from harm has been challenging in Northern Ireland when the region was in a sustained conflict where harm and hurt were commonplace and normalised.

For those outside of Northern Ireland it can be seen as any other region where the differences between the competing identities are not always so blatant or obvious. As noted within the literature life in Northern Ireland, however, operates a subconscious (and conscious) mode of 'sussing' out of the 'other', where needing to know the identity of the 'newcomer' is all too apparent.

The framework presented by Fitzduff for conflict transformation and reconciliation indicate the challenging factors which preside over any interventions. They further provide recommendations for inter-sectoral approaches which confront structural separation and the limitations this brings with it.

3.3 Community Relations

Community relations can be seen as an umbrella term for many of the other concepts which follow such as reconciliation, contact, cross-community and integration. The term is

important to clarify in relation to my thesis as it encompasses the core aspects of tackling sectarianism and separation in my research exploration.

Community relations, as a term, rose to prominence as the intensity of the conflict and community division in Northern Ireland became more apparent in the 1970's. At this time communities were becoming more polarised from one another, with relations between the Catholic and Protestant communities being at an all-time low. This divided and unstable society presented a particular challenge to youth work which, through its inception, valued principles such as tolerance, diversity and understanding. Hughes and Knox (1997:354) highlight that the aim of community relations is ultimately to *'promote meaningful interaction between Protestant and Catholics at the inter-group level.'*

Brewer (2010) affirms how civil society, in particular, has been central to peace-building in their intermediary role between the state and grassroots organisations. Stanton and Kelly (2015:35) note how civil society actors and organisations in Northern Ireland have engaged in a diverse array of peace-building actions and that this 'level of community-based activity has not diminished.'

Many volunteers and non-governmental organisations attempted to protect young people from the intensity of the violence. In 1970 John Malone established the 'Schools project in community relations' which was recognised as one of the first education and community relations programme to be supported with public funds (Milliken, 2015). This initiative attempted to focus on cross-community contact and integration between young people from different religious backgrounds. Circulars from the Department of Education throughout the following decades, including the Department of Education (DE) Circular 'The Improvement of Community Relations: The 'Contribution of Schools' in 1982 further placed emphasis on both schools and youth work (identified as an educational intervention in the 1972 Order) to,

help children to learn to understand and respect each other, and their differing customs and traditions, and of preparing them to live together in harmony in adult life (Milliken, 2015:20).

Some argue that community relations can be seen as a superficial and 'soft' cross-community activity with more resonance to the middle class, than those living in polarised and marginalised communities (Hall, 2001). Lederach (1997) also highlights the important role that middle class ranking leaders can play especially in acting as a bridge between the elite and the grassroots.

As the realities of a divided society became more apparent, community relations became more fore-fronted in both formal education and youth work. For example, in 1987 the

publication of 'Policy for the Youth Service in Northern Ireland' placed community relations firmly on the youth work agenda where promoting greater understanding of diverse traditions and encouraging cross-community involvement were central to the core curriculum. Community relations moved from being a marginal activity to a core component with the youth work curriculum (Milliken, 2015).

The approach of community relations is influenced by the hypothesis that cross-community contact can assist in improving relations and a respect for cultural diversity (Hughes and Knox, 1997). Originally the view was accepted that inter-group hostility and consisted largely because each group (Protestant and Catholic) held inaccurate negative stereotypes or prejudiced attitudes toward the other group (Hughes and Knox, 1997). By coming together through 'contact' it was assumed that individuals would recognise that they are essentially the same. However, they also suggest that this contact should not only be about similarities, but be about recognising what divides them.

Hughes and Knox (1997) raise questions about this contact hypothesis as it is, firstly, based on the premise that prejudice is a lack of ignorance or understanding, and secondly, that individual impacts through 'contact' do not necessarily infiltrate back in the normative community. Thus, much of the challenge of peace-building work really demands a multi-layered approach involving all stakeholders within the society. Contact and integration are further explored in section 3.5.

Since the first public statement of 1982, Community Relations policy has continued to develop and evolve in line with the changing political, economic and social environment within which education operates (both in formal and non-formal settings), as well as changes in the curriculum which offer more opportunities for children and young people to learn about difference. Throughout the 1990's and 2000's interchangeable terms with some slightly differing emphasis, also emerged in the education and youth work lexicon such as Good Relations; Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU); Equity Diversity and Interdependence; and most recently Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED).

Regardless of policy, Grattan (2009: 83) affirms that,

youth workers must engage in a real and meaningful way with how young people make sense of their world, society and community, as well as their emotions of fear, anger and hatred.

Hughes and Mc Candless (2006:162) argue, though, that much of the problem of the community relations approach is that it is often left to be solved by local communities, while the state distance itself *from the contribution it may have made to the perpetuation*

of the conflict. In this way some can see it as a way of the government relinquishing its responsibility.

That said, the commitments from the Northern Ireland, British and Irish governments to promoting reconciliation and mutual trust have been well evidenced in the Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement, including Section 75 and Schedule 9 to the Northern Ireland Act 1998 which recognises the importance of respect, understanding and tolerance. The St Andrews Agreement (2006) further committed to continue to actively promote the advancement of human rights, equality and mutual respect (Department of Education: Community Relations, Equality and Diversity in Education consultation, 2010).

3.4 Reconciliation

Reconciliation is frequently referred to in the literature. The concept and practice of reconciliation needs further attention within my research study as it forms the backbone of the research investigation to addressing sectarianism and separation. The literature review reflects a reality of continued division and separation, so the challenge of reconciliation needs to be better understood.

To experience 'others' is at the very root of the Greek word for reconciliation, "allos", "the other" (Wilson, 2016:3). Wilson further notes how reconciliation is about overcoming hostile otherness and *'carries with it both relational and structural dimensions.'* Morrow (2007A:4) notes that reconciliation is when people make decisions and work together on issues of politics, economics and culture. He notes, *'but the critical and vital element, which makes all the difference, is that, it is something we do together.'*

Throughout the conflict, and following the Peace Agreement of 1998 and subsequent agreements, many people were not necessarily active in galvanising action for peace, but rather standing aside for others to take up the mantle. Corrymeela Community (2013) have remarked that many people, if not most, acted as bystanders, not doing anything particularly good or particularly bad. Social psychologists have assessed this bystander phenomenon among human behaviour and have noted of particular importance three core elements. Firstly, people can withhold from intervening due to the presence of others, thus adopting a bystander approach – a diffusion of responsibility. Many people in Northern Ireland have been cautious of intervention due to potential repercussions. In fact many peace activists such as Mary Healy who voluntarily organised a peace march as part of the wider 'Peace People' movement in 1976, was subsequently presented with life-

threatening warnings. Power of the social influence can be immense as individuals monitor the behaviour of those around them to determine whether or not and how they should act. Secondly, people tend not to help the outsider, but are much more likely to help people within the in-group. The significance of 'us' and 'them' or 'in-group' and 'out-group' are described in section 2.14. To be seen as helping the 'other' can be seen as a betrayal to your community. Thirdly, many people are frightened of not behaving in a correct and socially acceptable way. At the other end of the spectrum of inactivity many activists work as cultural-separators and possibly exploit and rekindle many of the sectarian issues. Wilson (2013:4) affirms the importance of promoting actions which project a message that change is possible.

Radford and Templer (2008:74) refer to three principal coping strategies that people adopted at the height of the conflict: *'denial, distancing and habituation.'* In this way some people lived with a daily reminder of sectarianism and separation, whereas others denied or remained indifferent to the intensity of the conflict, often seeing as not present in their community or area. Yet all the while the conflict was affecting neighbouring villages and towns. Wilson (2013:4) in discussing key restorative learning tasks highlights that people need to *'understand the present-day dynamics...that can feed mutual antagonism and fear in everyday life.'*

A core part of reconciliation is recognising and notating that there is, or was, a problem. The community's response or way of dealing with this problem is worthy of assessment. Using an imagery of a non-Aboriginal house in Australia looking out on the world, Veena Das (Cohen, 2012:62), describes four windows on different people's perspectives: *'the window of indifference; the window of denial, hostility; a window of acceptance; and another window of acceptance.'* The curtains of window 1 (indifference) are probably never fully drawn, with small amounts of light for people to develop generalised perceptions. He emphasises that this indifference should be distinguished from mere ignorance, but rather a controlled denial or deliberate blindness. While window 1 presents passivity about that kind of denial, the denial through window 2 is deliberate and directed. It is a denial in that the actual onlooker may have contributed to the problem. In fact the analogy would imply that the people looking out the window view themselves as the original settler, and thus, morally right in their views and actions. Windows 3 and 4 (acceptance) on the other hand, display a more fully drawn curtain and opening of windows, in which people start to see, and feel, a different perspective. They start to understand the experience of the other and to reach out to make connections, rather than maintaining a distance (cited in Cohen, 2012:62-92). The legacy of the conflict in

Northern Ireland can be considered through this analogy whereby curtains being fully drawn are essential for a purposeful investment in creating and sustaining peace. Wilson (2013:3) argues that building relational spaces and places for discussion and possibilities are minimal when people live with separation, silence and avoidance. He emphasises that for young people in particular they need to be,

brought into experiences where new relationships with those different to them bring them into a more open and hopeful way of living.

'Working as partners' and 'doing things together' (Morrow, 2007A:4) requires a level of trust and co-operative relationships. The building of such relationships would appear to be central to the reconciliation and peace-building process. For example, Lederach (2005) refers to 'webs of relationships' which can stimulate social energy with a purposeful direction. Lederach and Maiese (2003) in exploring conflict transformation and reconciliation prioritise face-to-face relationships across the full spectrum of society including social, political, economic, and cultural relationships. Relationship-building is not solely about polite engagement and encounter, but also about a healthy and vibrant clash of differences carried out in a non-threatening manner (Maddison, 2011). In this way relationships embark on an understanding of other perspectives which recognize individual and collective hurt, pain and suffering. Such processes further provide a space for deeper investigation into root causes or contributing factors. Central to any understanding of reconciliation appears to be that it is a process, rather than an end outcome.

Rupert Brown (Hewstone and Stroebe, 2001:490), discusses the importance of shared and desired goals among groups who have been in conflict. He argues that these 'superordinate goals' are goals which can only be achieved through groups acting together rather than any single group on its own. Intergroup conflict he argues can be addressed through cooperation and 'where formerly antagonistic relationships can be transformed into something approaching mutual tolerance' (2001:509).

However, dealing with the past in Northern Ireland remains one of the most contentious and unresolved issues. The importance of creating new connections and experiencing the 'other' is a fundamental component of the restorative task so that people can be at ease with different others (Wilson, 2013:4). Building positive relationships with the out-group can require an acknowledgement of hurt and suffering while taking a risk to bridge the divide. Within any reconciliation process (between individuals, groups or communities) there needs to be, firstly, recognition of the problem or the conflict that has existed and

/or emerged. This requires an acceptance that violence and conflict has taken place and continues to affect everyday opinions, attitudes and behaviours (passive and active). By firstly naming the issues, people can begin to understand the formation of their interpretations of the 'problem'. Mick Beyers (2009:49) highlights the notion of '*dealing with the past*' as being seen as reflecting a '*Pandora's box*'. Many people can be resistant to acknowledging and dealing with the past, believing that discussions on the 'past' will do no good for the present or indeed the future. Scrutiny, 'finger-pointing' and blame may emerge as history is unpacked with truth recovery revealing levels of police/army/paramilitary collusion and possibly unlawful and inhumane government tactics. The complexity of truths, facts and popular versions of history make the process of reconciliation a sensitive and painful process.

Hamber and Kelly (2004) defined five core elements of reconciliation which, together, support the reconciliation and transformation process. These are: building positive relations; working towards substantial social, political and economic change; acknowledging and dealing with the past; developing a shared vision of an independent and fair society; and achieving significant cultural and attitudinal change within society (Cooperation programmes under the European territorial cooperation goal, 2016:10). Such a definition is important to my research as it helps to locate how youth work positions itself to such a commitment. These elements are referred to in the following sections.

In defining reconciliation processes, concepts of healing and acknowledgement have also come to the fore, with complementary concepts of truth, justice and mercy inherent within reconciliation (Lederach, 1995). Maddison (2011:179) has noted the importance of such acknowledgement as a catalyst to progression, noting that,

Our willingness to admit that we 'are a part of, rather than apart from, the woundedness of our world' opens up the capacity for us ...to learn and grow.

Such a sentiment involves compassion, forgiveness and a new start which all form part of Lederach's concept of 'mercy.' This is further supplemented by the pursuit of restoration of rectifying wrongs, through justice and judicial inquiries for truth. Lederach (1995) emphasises that transformative peace-making and reconciliation embrace both mercy and justice. Herein reconciliation can begin to take place.

Lederach, thus, argues that reconciliation involves the identification and acknowledgment of what happened (truth), an effort to right the wrongs that occurred (justice) and forgiveness for the perpetrators (mercy). Brewer (2010:141) affirms how the process of

peace requires a careful balance between the need to know what happened in the past and moving forward and encouraging the people to see the 'truth' from someone else's standpoint. He notes,

This allows people to know about the past in such a way as to avoid keeping them locked there (2010:141).

Nolan (2014) notes that for some, the need for justice is paramount; for others the main quest is to discover the truth of what happened to their loved ones. Wilson (2013:2) warns that each side must acknowledge their part as opposed to sole demands on the 'others' to acknowledge theirs.

The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust challenges much of the current Northern Ireland policy in the area of reconciliation and sharing. They accuse politicians and aligned policy of side-stepping reconciliation issues in favour of broader equality of opportunity and inclusion issues. They believe that the process of reconciliation is abandoned in favour of 'mutual accommodation' and 'intercultural society' (Ganiel 2010). While these are admirable goals, they, do however, dilute or ignore the realities of a divided society based on structural sectarianism and separation. Ganiel (2010) has subsequently warned of a potential 'benign' apartheid. At the heart of much policy, including the most recent 'Together Building a United Community' (TBUC, 2013) is a move from separation to 'sharing' with a more questionable commitment to integration. Such policy direction has implications for what is prioritised and, hence, funded in youth work. Equally, such mixed messages at policy and political level do little to reassure civil society about commitments to addressing structural sectarianism and separation. The work of community and youth organisations, for example, may struggle to implement ground-level interventions which focus on sharing and integration without support and investment at a policy and political level. Wilson (2013:2) suggests that grounded practices and relational work is made much easier when supported by wider institutional structures. In this way civil society and political institutions promote trust as a 'societal imperative.' Former member of the Legislative Assembly, Conall Mc Devitt (2011, Social Democratic and Labour Party) commented, '*do we have courage to put our division at the top of the agenda? We can't live in separation but equal*' (UTV live, 27th Jan 2011).

The process and components of reconciliation can be unknown or misunderstood as Billy Hutchinson, leader of the Progressive Unionist party in Northern Ireland, (2012) cited '*people need to know what reconciliation means*' and that this will include an exploration of concessions and gains to be had (see section 2.3).

My research is particularly concerned with how reconciliation processes and practices are reflected through youth work. The study assesses how youth work can be a conduit for bridging such division and supporting reconciliation processes, reflecting the views and attitudes of young people's lived experiences.

3.5 To integrate or not to integrate?

As has been shown in the literature review (chapter 2C, section A) the way of life in Northern Ireland is often to protect self and community, and wherein integration or meeting with others is often limited or non-existent. O' Sullivan et al (2008) note that if the members of a divided society are to live together and make their society work, then clearly there must be some sharing. They note that living together means that the lives of people from different communities will inevitably intersect. The extent and quality of this sharing is more difficult to identify. Sharing is at the forefront of many funders and policies such as Education (the Sharing in Education initiative), and the European Union Programme for Peace and Reconciliation funded initiatives, which come with a focus on 'shared spaces'. The commitment to both sharing and integration at governmental level, and indeed at community level, are more difficult to decipher. Birch (2000) reinforces the need for leadership requiring '*a muscled heart for equality. Wise leadership never takes refuge in silence*'.

In terms of educational and youth work policy priorities, it would appear less convincing that integration is named as a core concern or approach. When the Northern Ireland Draft Programme for Government (2011-2015) was published, there was no reference to integrated education and some referencing to shared education. Likewise, the 2013 OFMDFM document 'Together: Building a United Community' Strategy focuses on the terminology 'sharing' as opposed to 'integration'. The lack of an apparent commitment to integration provides an uncertain message from local government and those creating policies.

The Department of Education in Northern Ireland (2014) committed to a 'shared education' philosophy backed up with a £25 million investment while the integrated education sector had a £100,000 reduction in funding (Integrated Education report, 2015). This shared education model involves schools sharing resources, and, in some cases, children and young people attending the same 'physical' school building, where more sustained interaction can occur, even if the young people are being taught in separate areas of the school based on their religious affiliation. Critics argue that this

education is misleading, and, in fact, perpetuates the divide through its blatant apartheid model within the school. Such a model of shared education has proven to be unsuccessful in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the years following the Yugoslavian conflict. In fact, the shared education model has now been deemed illegal in the Western Balkans (Crownover, 2013).

While the rhetoric of sharing is currently commonplace, the literature has shown that the realities remain whereby many children inhabit very different social worlds. The wider picture reflects a place with separate and different loyalties, religious traditions, nationalities and cultures and customs. Sharing requires an affirmation of similarities and differences and creating areas of common interest. It is ultimately based on trust and willingness to compromise. However, sharing can be laden with shared threat, where assessment of safety and loss are at the forefront. Morrow (2007B:7-9) encapsulates this when he cites,

people will not take jobs if they are not safe to move around the city, town or village....we cannot bring jobs to the Crumlin Road unless people are safe to access them.

Likewise, youth work has a duty to protect the welfare and safety of young people, and yet, youth work is being challenged to consider how it has the confidence to take risks in bridging inter-contact between young people from the two competing identities/communities. The realities of children and young people living in polarised worlds, is further intensified by potential community repercussions as noted in the literature (chapter 2, section 2.16).

The case for a shared agenda throughout institutions and structures in society sounds plausible in its intention. Shared spaces can in fact be un-neutral: they can present a cultural dominance over another where others remain silent in their challenge for risk of offending and causing disturbance. This 'social grammar' was referred to by Gallagher (2003).

Within a shared space no exclusive claims should be marked. Equally, however, compromises need to be made to allow individual or groups to celebrate their own culture and which also allow new cultural expressions to be incorporated. Morrow (Community Relations Council, 2010) presents a positive outlook in which shared spaces can have meaning and rather than sharing being seen as a vacuous concept,

it means a place where everyone can go, live, work, play and do their business.....and young people being on the pitch is actually a critical factor of whether it is working or not.

That said, young people solely being together in shared activities has also been noted as limiting in terms of impact with requests for more meaningful contact cited throughout the literature. The Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (2012) indicated that 87% of respondents agreed with the assertion that better relations will come about through more integration (Cooperation programmes under the European territorial cooperation goal, 2016:10).

3.6 Contact

Contact hypothesis has been recognised as a central intervention in reducing inter-group prejudice (Hewstone and Straube, 2001). Here contact between-groups is coupled with groups working on common goals.

The new Peace IV programme in Northern Ireland (2014-2023) highlights 'contact' between children and young people as one of four core priorities, particularly in *'enhancing their capacity to form positive and effective relationships with others of a different background'* (Cooperation programmes under the European territorial cooperation goal, 2016:3). Evidence would suggest that much youth work focussing on peace-building and community relations has focussed less on 'contact' and more on what is termed 'single identity' work (McAlister, 2009; Harland, 2009). Smyth (2007) questions the value of youth work approaches which have focussed less on contact and more on what is termed single identity, emphasising that this can avoid and often reinforce existing prejudices.

Salmond advocates for inter-mingling across ethnicities and identities in which the 'joy of difference' and the 'gift of the other' is emphasised (Cohen, 2012). This can potentially reflect an act of embrace, an exchange of presents or simply attending an event of 'difference'. In short, this represents people emerging from their cocoons to inter-mingle and feel joy, learn about and appreciate each other. Such a 'joy of difference', it can be argued, reassures those who fear cultural dilution. Wilson (2013:9) notes that,

an openness to the different other as a gift is a reality for some but not yet a societal norm.

However, many people in Northern Ireland do, in real terms, fear an erosion of culture and hence resist coming together for any inter-cultural contact. In fact, many cultures within Northern Ireland are more likely to interact with cultures outside of the Northern Ireland jurisdiction such as Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales, as this is deemed less

threatening and more acceptable within the local community. This has arguably been the case for much youth work practices in cross-community or cross-border work.

In some other areas affected by war, conflict and division the focus on inter-ethnic contact is less of a priority. For example, in the Kosovo peace-building experience, 'multi-ethnicity' currently is not a vision that is shared, and while 'side-by-side' living is universally accepted as the current reality and realistic goal, there is fear that accepting this could feed calls for cantonisation, division and further conflict. The Collaborative Learning Report (CDA, 2006), notes that a more realistic vision might include 'co-existence' and 'European development'.

Allport's much cited 'contact hypothesis' (1954), helps to explain how meaningful contact may help to reduce tensions and prejudices between groups experiencing conflict (Hargie & Dickson, 2003). Intergroup contact theory (Allport, 1954) has been one of the most powerful theoretical approaches for improving out-group attitudes in mixed societies, with research showing extensive evidence that positive intergroup contact does reduce intergroup prejudice and also affects a range of other dependent measures (Hewstone 2009).

The level and quality of this contact has been widely disputed, with some arguing that 'contact' is core to building relationships and reducing levels of mistrust, while others suggest that 'contact' must go further than relationship-building to supporting a healthy and vibrant clash of differences (Maddison, 2011). Again, in the case of Kosovo, it has been evidenced that the impact of such contact was limited in part because initial inter-ethnic engagements, such as sports competitions and youth camps were generally not built upon or expanded. Resources were also withdrawn or reduced when some success and impact had been shown (CDA Collaborative Learning 2006).

The Managed Contact Theory (Co-operation Ireland, ND), expands the contact theory to include a 'managed/facilitated' interaction by project facilitators, before, and after, the contact meetings. In this way facilitators provide the background planning and preparation to ensure the contact is meaningful, and will lead to long term significant relationships. Facilitated meetings of this nature incorporate young people learning more about the process, exploring their own identity and community and then exploring their counterparts in a pre-contact phase. The contact phase is not a 'chance' meeting but is well planned and carefully controlled. The final phase is Issue Based Collaboration (IBC) where the two groups work on common issues and priorities and further develop and

implement solutions. Co-operation Ireland notes, *'it is during the IBC that real integration and understanding is achieved by collaboration and cooperation.'*

In chapter 2, section 2.40 Batsleer and Davies (2010) commented on the practice of 'border-crossing' (Giroux, 2005). They highlight that socially and culturally constructed boundaries and borders can be deconstructed through educational interventions. For example, youth work can be a site of border and boundary transformation in which possibilities for learning are created; socially constructed norms can be interrogated through dialogue to generate new insights and understanding; and whereby learning and new relationships can incite collective action for change. Batsleer and Davies' reflections on Giroux's (2005) critical border pedagogy assert that youth work can support young people to challenge their understandings of historical differences, as in Northern Ireland, and from this create opportunities for actual inter-community engagement and understanding through border-crossing which can ultimately lead to new identities for modern society. Reflecting on practice examples of youth exchanges Batsleer and Davies (2010:43) summarise the impact of the process and methods by young people noting that,

workers...asked thought-provoking questions, posed problems without giving answers and challenged them to think, to learn and grow in confidence, in areas beyond their existing boundaries.

The Peace IV programme (2016) refers to various theories of change and note two specific theories aligned to its priorities for peace-building in Northern Ireland. These are *'individual change theory'* where transformation from conflict to peace occurs through a critical mass of individual minds, attitudes, behaviours and skills. Secondly, they note *'healthy relationships and connections theory'* which focuses more on the removal of physical separation, division and isolation as well as eradicating prejudice and discrimination between polarised groups (Cooperation Programmes under the European territorial cooperation goal, 2016:9).

Hewstone and Straube (2001) have indicated some caution to assumed changes in attitudes through the contact hypothesis, especially noting limitations to other members of the groups. However, the extended contact effect (Wright, Aron, Mc Laughlin-Volpe and Ropp, 1997) has emerged to show that intergroup attitudes and relationships can be less negative even when there has been no contact between the groups. The argument proposes that,

(when) one's fellow in-group members have close friendships with out-group members (this) can help to reduce prejudice towards the out-group (Hewstone and Starube, 2001:509).

Christ et al (2010) highlight research by Wright and colleagues (1997) which demonstrates how extended contact can improve out-group attitudes. Wright et al highlight that by even observing a positive relationship between members of the in-group and out-group should reduce negative expectations about future interactions with members of the out-group. They further note how this lack of interaction or contact also reduces any possible intergroup anxiety. Importantly they acknowledge how, in many cases, inter-group contact is challenging or limited due to there being no avenues or opportunities for such contact. They note,

although this segregation limits direct face-to-face contact to being low, or even non-existent, residents of all neighbourhoods can still experience extended cross-group friendship (Christ et al, 2010:1663).

In their study of Germany and Northern Ireland, Christ et al (2010) found that Catholics and Protestants, who had no or only little direct contact with members of the other religious group profited more from extended contact than did those who had a larger amount of direct contact. They concluded that, 'both extended and direct contact can lead to stronger out-group attitudes' (2010:1670).

3.7 Impact of inter-contact and integration

Contact theory is one thing, but the realities and impact of such contact is another. Aspirations and realities can remain poles apart. For example, Dr Peter Shirlow's research revealed that 68% of 18-25year olds in Belfast had never had '*a meaningful conversation*' with anyone from the 'other' community (Breen, *Sunday Tribune*, 2005). The Newry Mourne and Down Youth Work Plan (2017-2019) further indicates that 47% of young people have never been involved in cross-community contact or peace-building work (2017:2). This provides an indication of the challenge remaining to promote integration, meaningful contact and shared dialogue among young people.

In terms of contact through the formal education system, Mc Grellis (2004:20) notes from her longitudinal research, that those who attended integrated schools (the majority of whom were from middle class backgrounds), had a positive experience in which they could meet and make friends with their peers from other communities and backgrounds. Some, however, felt that the system was not very effective in addressing issues around

difference and division. Issues pertinent to conflict, identity and contention were often 'glossed over'. Wilson (2015) referred to this as 'air-brushing' (section 2.28). In a study of university students in Northern Ireland, Hargie, Dickson and Nelson (2003, cited in Mc Grellis, 2004:21), found similar evidence as that of post primary integration where, inter-group friendships were made, but again there was a significant 'consolidating patterns of in-group socialising' and polite avoidance of 'potentially divisive topics.'

In the case of post primary integrated schools, Mc Grellis (2004:22) highlighted how such schools were cautious and fearful of increasing tension. Mc Grellis, in fact, notes perspectives from young people which indicate that debate and political exchange was often suppressed. Avoiding the issues in this way, questions the ability of integrated schooling to fundamentally address issues linked to identity and division. Mc Grellis' research was also presented at a roundtable discussion in 2009, where it was noted that young people who attended integrated education cited a desire for their children to attend a good school rather than an integrated one (Joseph Rowntree meeting, Sept 2009). Unfortunately, this does little to advance the case for integration within the schooling system.

Comparing the trend data from the Northern Ireland Life and Times survey (adults) and the Young Life and Times survey (16 year olds), it is notable that there is a large difference in the preferential attitudes of adults and young people in relation to sending children to a mixed religion school (integration). The trend suggests that adults are much more likely to state a preference for sending children to a mixed-religion school (Hansson et al 2013). Community Relations Council (2010) has previously indicated that parents had a preference to educate their children in a mixed religious, integrated and shared environment. Yet, in 2012 only 7 per cent of the school population was enrolled in integrated nursery, primary or post-primary schools (DENI, 2013). Furthermore the lack of aspiration among young people in advocating for mixing in education causes further questions about their desires for mixing in other areas of life.

In terms of young people's wider attitudes, Schubotz and Robinson (2006) noted that 16 year olds were more pessimistic than those aged 18 years and over about improvements in community relations over the next 5 years. Despite having access to cross-community projects, and not being exposed to the most turbulent periods of the conflict, the 16 year olds were not only more pessimistic about the future of community relations, but also showed less support for inter-faith mixing (Schubotz and Robinson, 2006).

With young people appearing to be less in favour of integration, and less optimistic about enhanced relations and reconciliation between the two competing communities, much concern exists about how young people envision a society which is not separated and where sectarianism can be eradicated.

3.8 Models of peace practices

The following section funnels the discussion to frameworks or models of peace-building which posit the engagement of all actors within the Northern Ireland community, whether this is political representatives, young people or minority groups.

It is important to locate some models in this area as it provides a foundation from where to make assessments on the contribution of youth work to peace-building. It also provides those within the youth work sphere with a tangible framework from which to review, evaluate and develop organisational commitments and practice-based interventions to addressing sectarianism and separation. These models have been chosen because of their relevance to my research study and I will distil some key elements from them which support my findings and also help me to build a complementary model.

Lederach (1995:11) also suggests that peace-building and reconciliation are achieved through a balanced practical know-how and in having a vision. While noting the importance of activism, which involves speaking out for change, he further emphasises that this does not necessarily mean that the person or people have the necessary technique and skills. He further notes, *'on the other side of the coin, having the technique and skill does not necessarily provide the vision.'*

Thus, despite the learning to be gained from international exchange and good practice, there are cautions in transferring models from one sphere to another. What works for civic activism in jurisdictions emerging from conflict, such as the Balkans or Cyprus, are to a great extent culturally relative and determined by the international and organisational bureaucratic structures from which they have emerged.

That said, the following 4 models of peace-building are selected, as I believe they are easily transferrable and applicable to the youth work setting in Northern Ireland. Some explicitly stipulate approaches for overcoming division and separation which involve full community approaches, while others provide a more psychological change in the 'state of mind' and attitude of those living in Northern Ireland. These models provide a framework

for my research findings to connect with, and to build upon, in developing a complementary model.

MODEL 1 - Smyth

Smyth (2007) notes the emergence and coexistence of three distinct forms of peace related youth work in Northern Ireland which he defines as peace-keeping, peace-making and peace-building.

Smyth considers the **peace-keeping** stage to be particularly characterised by 'diversionary' youth work which he suggests has a tendency to lead to cross-community contact, exemplified by summer schemes, outings and sporting competitions with short term contact between youth clubs.

Peace-making youth work, it is suggested, requires a higher level of specific training for staff as it often features in depth, facilitated discussions of a difficult nature in programmes such as those with local history and cultural components to allow for a deeper understanding of diversity and sectarianism.

And, in the third point of his typological triangle, Smyth points to **peace-building** which he defines as democracy-building youth work.

These 3 components are central to potential youth work approaches in addressing sectarianism and separation. The review of literature indicated how much youth work tended to provide peace-keeping activities, but as noted by Grattan (2012) and Harland (2009) and Youth Council (Bell et al, 2010), there was less work at the peace-making level in addressing contentious issues. The literature would appear to support this stance as many writers further questioned the capacity of the workforce.

The third element peace-building in supporting young people within a democratic and civic action framework are also noted as insignificant by the literature and research findings. These areas require ongoing investment as young people, and wider society, have been learning how to interface with local devolved government. The literature review noted one key focus of youth work as being a commitment to a democratic practice, where young people can act as equal and active citizens from an early age.

MODEL 2 - Morrow

In Digging Deeper (A report into the Lurgan town collaborative youth project 2011-2013) Morrow (2013:12-13), noted the critical factors in developing a collaborative approach to peace-building:

- The clear demonstration of need by the articulation of young people and stakeholders and the evidence of public events (**Need and demand**).
- The drive, vision and commitment of individual leaders in youth work focussed primarily on the expressed needs of young people (**Vision and commitment**).
- The support and engagement of key strategic organisations and community leaders (**Buy-in**).
- The willingness of local youth workers to work with rather than against a collaborative project (**Co-operative and collaborative culture**).
- The alignment of the work with the priorities of a significant funding agency (**Opportunity and supply**).
- The willingness of people in Lurgan at this time to seize opportunities as they presented themselves in informal and formal settings (**Entrepreneurialism**).

This model is significant, firstly, due to need and demand being identified by the local community. As noted in the literature, Beck and Purcel (2011:8) have referred to a term called the '*administrative approach*' in which bureaucratic approaches have monopolised service interventions based on statistical analysis of need, rather than a combined and more organic needs identification.

Secondly, the vision and commitment of youth work leaders to address such need has been deemed questionable in the literature, showing a 'minimalist' prioritisation of dealing with such contentious issues.

Morrow emphasises both the vision of leaders and the full engagement of all stakeholders within society. If the two components named above by Morrow are applied within the youth work setting, the other components of collaboration, opportunity and entrepreneurialism might follow more effectively.

MODEL 3 - Lederach

John Paul Lederach (2005:34-39) identifies 4 levels at which peace-building work should work: individual, interpersonal, community and policy. The first 2 elements form part of a human capital investment, with the latter two an investment in social capital. The 4 levels, (individual, interpersonal, community and policy), which Lederach identifies as central to peace-building, are significant to the space and way in which youth work functions.

Within this model Lederach also notes 4 core components that inter-link in supporting practices in peace-building, reconciliation and reconstruction. These are:

1. centrality of relationships (listening, understanding, appreciative enquiry);
2. practice of paradoxical curiosity (scratch beneath the surface);
3. provide a space for creative acts and;
4. the willingness to risk.

While youth work can be noted as primarily supporting the personal and social development of young people, the literature has further challenged youth work to operate at a social change level, which involves engaging with the wider community and a policy level. In reviewing and assessing the contribution of youth work to addressing sectarianism and separation, this model presented by Lederach provides an indication of how youth work can impact beyond the individual and inter-contact opportunities. His approach provides a more complete civic education model.

MODEL 4 - Geoghegan

Geoghegan (2008:14) names and emphasises the concept of '*sectarianism*' at the heart of '*the Northern Ireland problem*'. He defines this as a complex interaction between religion and politics, and between theology and competing ethnic nationalisms, in which ideas about religious difference are used to infer political identities in Northern Ireland. He further notes three distinct levels at which sectarianism manifests and thus can be addressed.

- Firstly, at the level of ideas: such as stereotyping and negative feelings towards out-groups;
- Secondly, as individual or collective action where sectarianism is expressed through harassment, including verbal and/or physical abuse; and

- Thirdly, at a structural level, which involves discrimination and bias in areas such as employment and in the creation and conduct of political institutions.

From this perspective reconciliation and peace-building cut across personal, relational, structural and cultural modes. Hence, models of peace and reconciliation need to consider at which juncture they intervene and consider how they connect to the full picture. Becoming part of the solution requires a transparent commitment in which others can recognise a similar approach or intervention, and/or recognise where clear gaps require an intervention.

3.9 Models linked to literature

Reflecting on each of the four models it is useful to assess how these interface with the literature.

The elements of 'need' in Morrow's model indicate the importance of bottom-up approaches, informed by local actors (Mac Ginty, 2008). As Reychler (2006) has noted this is about having a macro world-view which helps the local context to better consider lessons learned elsewhere and to adjust approaches accordingly. The community development model proposed by Becks and Purcel (2011) in the literature also shows how local communities need to be able to identify not only their issues and needs, but to have a contextual understanding of what has contributed to these local conditions, and to have a collective world lens to be more effective in collective efforts for change. The model presented by Geoghegan (2008) affirms how an understanding of the need must be considered at the ideas, action and structural levels to best know where to infiltrate and how this can be joined up to address the underpinning problems.

The 'entrepreneurialism' identified by Morrow (2013) reflects the theory proposed by Mac Ginty (2008) which advocates for a mix of local and indigenous approaches alongside the global liberal peace infiltration. In such instances communities and groups are not waiting to be directed but rather being proactive in seeking opportunities which may not be so confined.

Smyth's (2007) peace-keeping and initial contact reflects the writings of Allport (1954) and Hewstone and Straube (2001) which emphasises the potential of contact in reducing intergroup prejudice. Christ et al (2010), however, note that not all in-group members need be in 'contact' with out-group members. They posit that even the mere existence and knowledge of other in-group members being in contact with out-group member's

helps to reduce intergroup prejudice. It could be argued here, though, that sometimes, in-group members refrain from any public declaration of their engagement in any such intergroup activity. This is often due to potential community repercussions and the importance of safety as noted by Fitzduff (2006). Considering this, contact would appear to be an important factor for individual change as opposed to collective or group attitudinal change. However, the outcomes of such contact can help to alleviate or infiltrate the insular worlds that many inhabit, defined in the literature by Hargie et al (2016) as 'bubble syndromes' and by Roche (2008) as 'cocoonment' and/or 'bounded contentment.'

Superordinate goals (Hewstone and Straube, 2001), which are desired and attained by intergroup cooperation, indicates how contact is based on shared working and 'doing things together' (Morrow, 2007A). This shared desire is needed to enhance between-group attitudes and trust-building. This further reflects the 'co-operative and collaborative' culture identified by Morrow (2013). These partnerships are based on relationships and entering a partnership with a positive spirit and being willing to risk. The Lederach model emphasises much of the approach through an investment in human capital based on individual and interpersonal components. Having a lens in this area helps to support the 'buy-in' of all groups and partners as noted in Morrow's model (2013)

The buy-in and ownership noted by Morrow (2013) in turn affects the potential for exploring the more difficult and sensitive issues (Smyth's 'peace-making', Lederach's 'paradoxical curiosity' and Geoghegan's 'ideas'). This is significant in highlighting the need for deeper exploration and how youth work can possibly address sectarianism and challenge attitudes and behaviours. The effective learning and exploratory 'spaces' (Magill et al, 2008; Wilson, 2013) are central to the levels of trust and contribution which can be made by contributing groups and individuals. As noted in the literature by Harland (2011) these spaces and conversational areas need to be non-cyclical and 'fuzzy' but be meaningful and constructive.

The work of Smyth (2007) in relation to peace-building provides an important focus on action, and namely collective social action. This is further complemented by Lederach (2005) who emphasises social capital (alongside human capital) in which community and policy actions become more prevalent.

Each model has a significant transferability to youth work. The model proposed by Smyth (2007) typifies how youth work could be operating at 3 complementary levels; Morrow (2013) proposes an evidence based intervention which involves collaboration from a wide

range of stakeholders; Lederach (2005) proposes a model which involves wider community and political approaches as well as core elements which involve curiosity and inter-group contact; and finally Geoghegan (2008) presents a specific view on sectarianism and where intervention can happen at personal, community and structural levels.

Bringing together the four models of Smyth (2007), Morrow (2013) Lederach (2005) and Geoghegan (2008) alongside key components from the literature I have created a synthesis of where the core emphasis may lie. This brings into play the reflective 'plan, do, review' cycle to ensure that learning takes place and that action is ongoing and developmental. This echoes the perspective of Stanton and Kelly (2015) who advocate for more practice-theory reflexivity and where practitioners,

step outside their day-to-day delivery pressures ...to discern, reflect and consolidate their implicit knowledge about what has informed their judgements and deliberations.

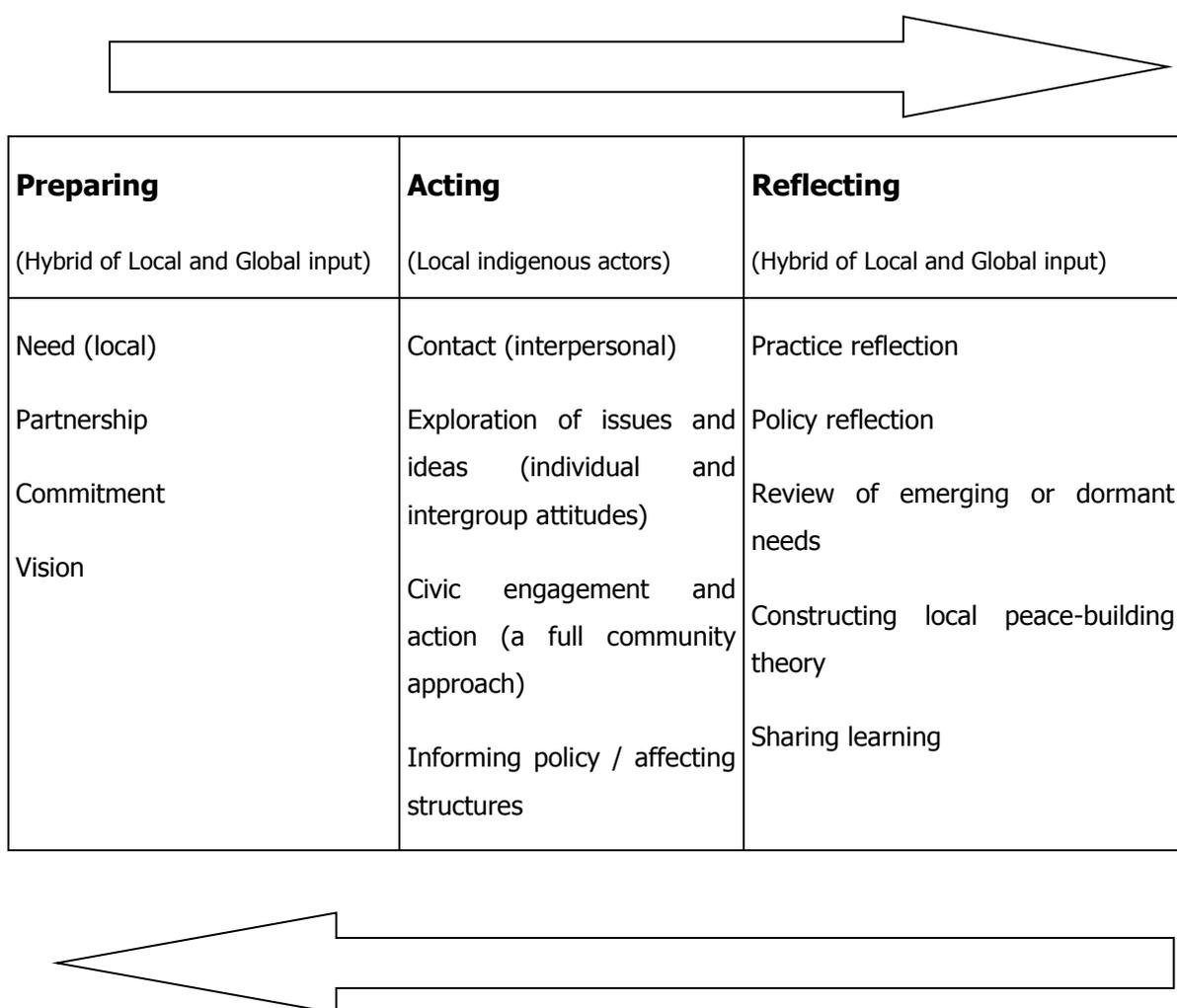


Figure 3.1: Synthesis of models

3.10 A Global Youth Work Model

Batsleer and Davies (2010) present a specific youth work model model called 'global youth work in practice' which shows a basic illustration of critical thinking and action as opposed to being unquestioning and inactive (see figure 3.2 below).

Global Youth Work (GYW) model

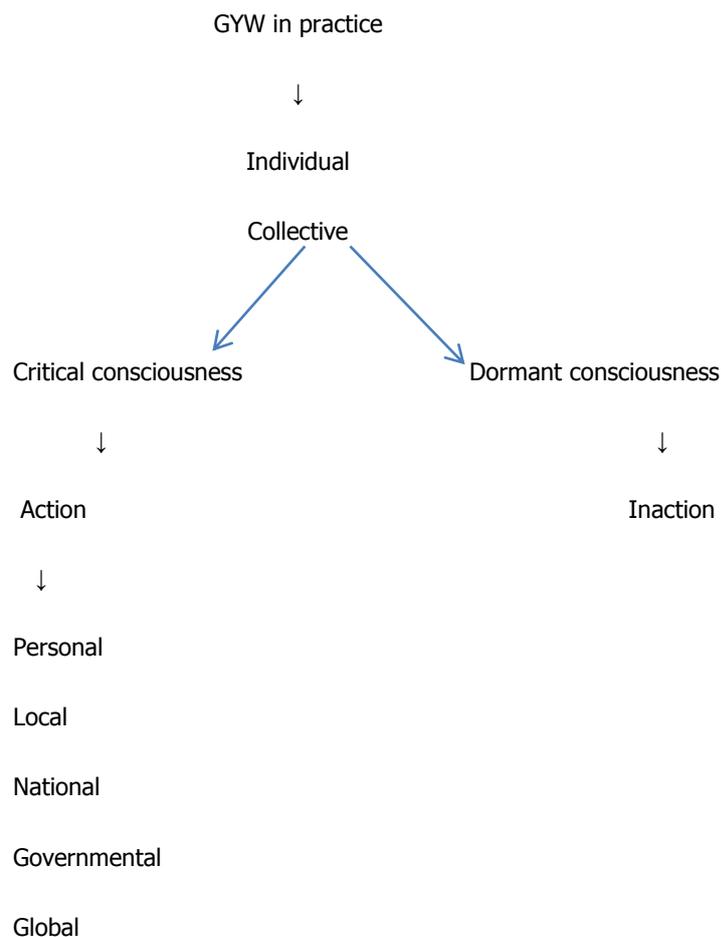


Figure 3.2: Global Youth Work Model

Batsleer and Davies' (2010) model, depicted in figure 3.2, demonstrates that global youth work can start with either the collective or individual engagement of young people, with a purposeful intention in provoking critical consciousness. Most importantly the process starts from young people's realities and a path is part planned and organically shaped by the young people themselves. Young people through processes of individual or group reflection and critical dialogue can begin to connect thought, care and empathy to action

at a personal, local, national or even global level. The model also recognises that many people have gained some awareness, but this fails to ignite further action (dormant consciousness). Rather than necessarily seeing this as not having impact, or having limited impact, it can in fact be something that is reawakened in the future, similar to a 'sleeping volcano.' Veena Das (Cohen, 2012:62) talked about 'windows of denial' and 'indifference'; Corrymeela Community (2013) refer to 'bystander effect'; and Radford and Templer (2008:74) comment on 'denial and distancing'. It would appear that a purposeful focus needs to remain on addressing the conflict rather than a complacent or inactive effort to address this.

This model reflects that of Gramsci's theory of hegemony and critical consciousness wherein he argues that many citizens have succumbed to the inevitable and status quo, rather than embracing more socially and politically efforts for social change (Gramsci 1971, cited in Ryle, 2008). Batsleer and Davies emphasise the need for facilitated processes in which people, such as young people, can develop their curiosity and hence understandings about social issues and their inter-connections to structural dimensions.

While the global model of Batsleer and Davies highlights both individual and collective processes it is the collective and social solidarity that is most at risk as *'the drives to individualisation are the most powerful drives in contemporary societies'* (Batsleer and Davies, 2010:157).

The Global Youth Work model complements much of that by Morrow, Smyth and Lederach which suggest action across multiple spheres of life and with multiple actors and contributors, whether this be young people, funders, community representatives, businesses or international groups and organisations.

3.11 Clarity of concepts

In this chapter I have explored a range of concepts that emerged within the literature review that are relevant and applicable to the research findings, conclusions and recommendations.

Through the exploration of the theoretical models, I have been able to locate key concepts and themes which relate to my exploration on sectarianism and separation. 'Contact' and 'Integration' are directly relevant to my focus on addressing separation. 'Reconciliation', on the other hand, is often more about attitudes, especially in recognising

that there is a problem, and actively working to reduce religious/political prejudice and discrimination (sectarianism).

Figure 3.3 below illustrates the priority concepts which form the basis for the discussion of findings within the evaluative framework to review and assess how youth work addresses sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland.

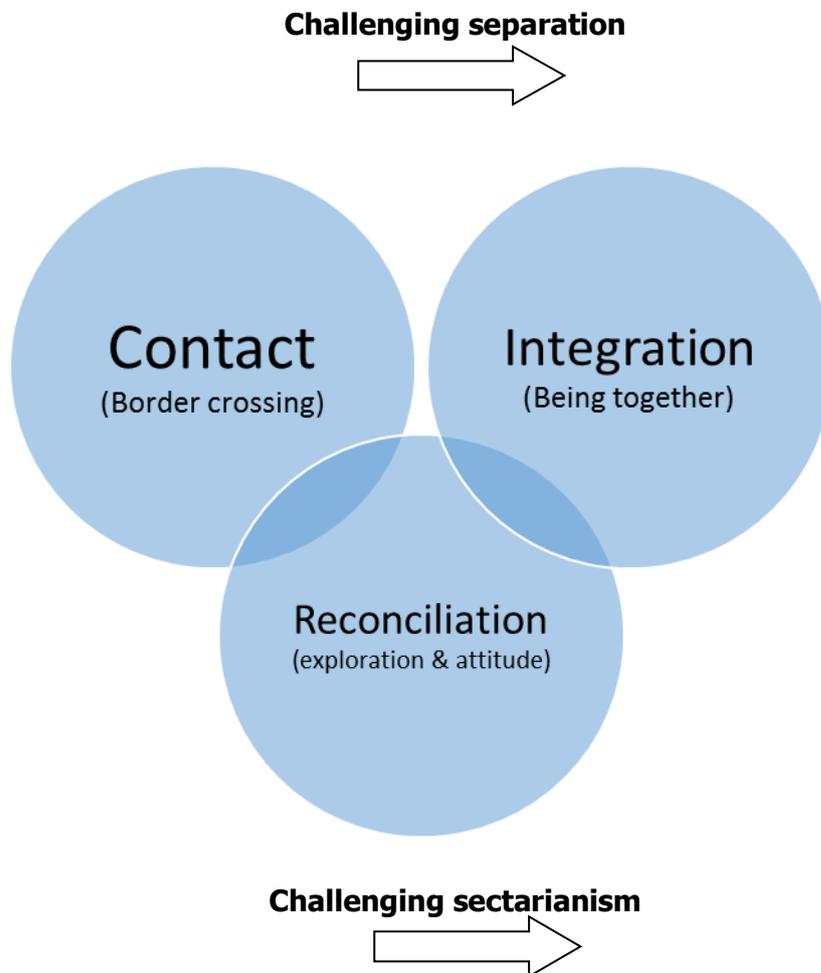


Figure 3.3: Priority concepts

These three specific concepts have been chosen as they reflect the focus of my study in considering perspectives from the youth work profession in addressing sectarianism and separation. 'Contact' specifically relates to first encounters between young people from different religious and national identities; 'integration' refers to meaningful engagement in reducing separation; and 'reconciliation' reinforces the need to address prejudice and discrimination based on religious/political identities (sectarianism).

The concept of 'contact' helps to assess the level of interaction between the divided communities; 'integration' helps to understand what meaningful encounters and engagement take place to help break down 'separation'; and 'reconciliation' clarifies the

need for past acknowledgements, a continued effort to deal with ongoing contentious issues and preparing for the future, altogether breaking down sectarian stereotypes, attitudes and behaviours.

Contact (border-crossing) has building effective relationships at its core. This emphasises the formation of positive and effective relationships with others from different backgrounds. These relationships are the catalyst to reduced mistrust and prejudice. The contact is carefully planned and managed. As discussed by Hewstone and Straube (2001) this direct contact can have a ripple effect on the attitudes and behaviours of others in the community who may not have exposure to such intergroup contact.

Integration (being together) focusses on shared spaces in which different others work as partners in a collaborative manner. The level of contact is regular, meaningful and sustained. Issues are collectively explored and actions are put in place to support democracy building youth work.

Reconciliation (exploration and attitude) centres the attitude and willingness of different others to want to come together and appreciate the gift of the other. The spirit of the encounter helps the process of understanding, making concessions and developing a shared vision through working as partners and doing things together.

3.12 Conclusion

All the models discussed have merit and application to my research study. Each perspective implies that the requirements and context of the particular conflict need to be named with subsequent action at human and social capital levels. However, as Radford and Templer (2008) indicate, not everybody embraces or understands such relevance. In considering coping strategies, used during and post-conflict, they note that people experienced one of the following: denial, distancing and habituation (2008:74). In this way some people live with a daily reminder of sectarianism and separation, whereas others deny or are indifferent to the realities of division and conflict. This can present a challenge for youth work in varying ways. For example, if young people find themselves in denial or distance from the conflict it can be challenging for the worker to engage the young people in relevant programmes or initiatives. Additionally the worker may actually be the person in denial, and thus lack the appetite to firstly, understand the relevance and secondly, have the motivation to enact programmes. In this way youth workers may be open to accusation of distancing themselves from such work.

The citation of youth work as a border pedagogy (Batsleer and Davies, 2010) is once again worth revisiting as this clearly sets youth work as a catalyst for a fairer and more equal society where inequalities and discrimination such as sectarianism can be challenged. Terms and concepts have changed slightly over the years, but regardless of a unified lexicon, youth work can play its part in eradicating sectarianism and separation.

The challenge to fore fronting border-crossing within youth work is that much policy which impacts upon youth work in Northern Ireland is not necessarily prioritising such physical and mental contact and integration. In this way youth workers need to balance work that responds to policy priorities but yet also provides authentic and relevant border-crossing for young people through education, employment and social contexts.

Policy can have elements which support peace-building interventions through youth work. For example, the Education Authority Regional Youth Development Plan (R.A.G, 2015), aligned to the Department of Education Priorities for Youth Policy (2013), incorporates an outcomes-based reporting framework which defines outcomes into two broad strands: the individual and the wider community/society. The development of such a framework should support the youth work approach to have proportionate investment in individual outcomes, such as reduced prejudicial views and improved understanding of difference. Alongside this youth workers should be able to plan and prioritise wider community outcomes such as increased mobility among communities of difference and more inter-generational understanding and sharing about the conflict.

Harland (2009) suggests that youth work should consider the lessons from community relations and peace-building work during the past thirty-five years. In this way, my research findings, incorporating a review and assessment, coupled with the models presented, provide a framework for youth work to progress in the area of peace-building. In light of my research findings and the subsequent development of a framework for peace-building through youth work (Developing an Agenda for Peace through Youth Work), I was able to apply my understanding of the literature and theoretical models to correlate with core elements of my model.

Chapter 4: Research methodology

Introduction

This chapter justifies the interpretive methodology employed in my study and how this is aligned to a qualitative perspective-based evaluative framework. It describes two distinct stages of the research process, involving primary data gathered from young people and secondly the main focus of the study with practitioners. I describe my rationale for employing the specific research approach and my understanding of the research instruments being adopted to gather the data. This is complemented by attention to data management in the research preparation, data collection and subsequent data analysis. The chapter closes with professional reflections or reflexivity in which issues of positionality and bias are explored.

4.1 Aim of the research

The aim of this research was to review and assess the contribution of youth work in addressing sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland employing a perspective-based evaluation. A specific evaluative framework (section 4.4) was employed to capture perspectives from practitioners on current youth work practices and priorities. From these qualitative insights, I was able to make an assessment on the contribution of work in addressing sectarianism and separation.

The research questions were:

- RQ1: What are practitioner perspectives on how youth work addresses sectarianism and separation?
- RQ2: How relevant do young people feel that sectarianism and separation is within their lives?

In order to answer the two research questions I have gathered data from both young people and practitioners and used an evaluative framework (Suchman, 1967) for analysis which helps to locate perspectives and insights across three specific domains:

- Perspectives on **effort** across policy, strategy and practice;
- Perspectives on **effect** in terms of impact;
- Perspectives on **processes** which support or restrict development.

These three domains help to provide a framework for presenting an analysis of the findings in line with an established evaluative model.

Table 4.1 below provides a summary of the research design linked to the methodological approach:

| <i>Sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland – perspectives from the youth work profession.</i> | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|--|
| <p>A qualitative research approach:</p> <p>-Exploratory research reflecting a subjectivist epistemology.</p> <p>-A generic interpretivist framework /theoretical perspective in which participants perspectives of their lived experience inform an evaluative assessment.</p> | | | | | |
| <p>Stages throughout:</p> <p>-literature data review and analysis.</p> <p>-stage 1 research with young people (2009-2013) – findings from young people to stimulate dialogue at stage 2 and subsequent analysis of this data to inform answers to RQ2 -Focus group with young people.</p> <p>-stage 2 research with practitioners/professionals (2012-2014) Focussed workshop discussions with practitioners.</p> | | | | | |
| Stage | Research Question | Approach | Method | Initial analysis | Further analysis |
| Stage 1 | RQ 2 How relevant do young people feel that sectarianism and separation is within their lives? | Finding out the lived experiences of young people (perspective). This helps to ascertain how young people might experience sectarianism and separation and how they interpret or understand the conflict and its impact on their attitudes and behaviours. | 4 focus groups with 39 young people in total (primary data). Data from additional YouthAction peace dialogue events with young people (secondary data): Section 4.9 differentiates primary and secondary data. | These perspectives were PARTLY themed alongside secondary data into priority categories which were used to stimulate debate among practitioners in stage 2. | A retrospective decision was made to analyse the primary data gathered from young people as this data were one of the key elements throughout the stage 2 deliberations. These findings were subsequently coded and themed for presentation in the thesis. This data has been used in the findings and conclusions sections. 2 overarching themes with 4 sub categories are presented in the findings: 1)Impact of the conflict (external impacts); 2)Agents of change (internal motivators). |
| Stage | Research Question | Approach | Method | Initial analysis | Further analysis |
| Stage 2 | RQ 1 What are practitioner perspectives on how youth work addressessectarianism and separation? | Evaluative review by youth work professionals and others with a vested interest in youth work and peace-building. | In addition to a pilot interview and a pilot focus group with YouthAction staff and volunteers (9 participants) this involved gathering multiple | From this I can conclude as per my evaluative approach 1. Perspectives on effort | 4 overarching themes are presented in the findings: 1) Need identification; 2) Finding relevance; |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|---|
| | | This reflects a model of self-evaluation or critical reflective practice in which participants review the strengths and limitations of existing practices; they review the impact at personal, community and societal level; and they identify areas for improvement (self-evaluation). | <p>perspectives:</p> <p>5 focussed workshop discussions workshops with 87 participants;</p> <p>Workshop 1(Belfast) 'Issues and perspectives from young people';</p> <p>Workshop 2(Belfast) 'Issues facing young people';</p> <p>Workshop 3(Belfast) 'Contribution of youth work';</p> <p>Workshop 4(Newry) 'Contribution of youth work';</p> <p>Workshop 5 (Derry) 'Contribution of youth work'.</p> | (policy, strategy, practice). 2. Perspectives on effect/impact. 3. Perspectives on processes. | <p>3) Recognition of complexities;</p> <p>4) An appetite to address the issues.</p> |
| <p>Reflection:</p> <p>As the researcher I can make comments on the evidence provided without having a definitive bias. I am able to comment on the links between literature findings, what young people have identified and how these correspond with youth work interventions and priorities.</p> | | | | | |

Table 4.1: Research design and methodological approach

4.2 Interpretivist paradigm

The research design and methodology was one that was based upon perspectives from practitioners and young people in how they made sense of the contribution of youth work practices in addressing sectarianism and separation. As such, the research is located within an interpretive paradigm, which seeks to explore experiences and the participants *'views or perspectives of these experiences.'* (Gray, 2009:36) Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991), cited in Walsham (1993), affirm how interpretive studies involve people in recognising their own subjective and inter-subjective meanings within their lived worlds, whether personal or professional. Interpretive researchers, thus, seek out meanings from what participants have said in order to understand the social reality of individuals.

This research approach was favourable as it implied a truthful reflection and discourse from the research participants that I believed to me more ethical, suitable and in-line with my research aims. A more positivist paradigm may have provided more quantifiable and a hard evidence-base of data but I felt that this approach would have limited deeper

understandings and insights for the requirements of my study. Chapter 7, section 7.2 provides a review of the research limitations, including recommendations for further insight and research.

Through an interpretivist approach my research uncovers experiences, perceptions and attitudes from thirty-nine young people and ninety-six practitioners who have been actively involved in peace-building practices within youth work. Their narratives, obtained through co-operative inquiry, provide insight and in-depth understanding on youth work as a contributor to peace-building. These lived experiences that have articulated past and current practices enabled the research study to report within an evaluative framework in terms of effort, effect and processes.

4.3 Inductive approach

The research journey began in 2009, amidst a growing policy and funding arena in which the youth work profession (and other sectors) were being asked to demonstrate measurable outcomes and impact (Jeffs and Smith, 2010; Wilson, 2015). Measurable outcomes are more commonly associated with normative research that aims to answer specific questions with usually quantitative data such as tests and objective numerical data (Parlett and Dearden, 1977). As my study progressed, the temptation to prove, verify and demonstrate impact lessened, in favour of discovery and exploration. Furthermore, the youth work sector has been saturated by outcomes-based accountability and impact-based measurement through intensive monitoring and hard evidence-based demonstration. Being more inductive in my approach is more in line with an interpretivist paradigm and my ontological view as the researcher (Gray, 2009).

An interpretivist approach is concerned with the subjective meanings people have about a situation which they use to understand their world. In other words, this is about how individuals make sense of the world around them (Bryman, 2008, cited in Gray 2009). Within my research study, it was firstly important to gather multiple perspectives and meanings about how the conflict may have affected young people. Likewise, multiple perspectives and versions of youth work realities were sought from practitioners in stage two. An interpretivist approach, therefore, seemed a more appropriate way forward in determining the range of perspectives of youth workers (and young people) about sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland.

4.4 Illuminative evaluation

While my research study adopted an interpretivist methodology, seeking perspectives from practitioners about how youth work addresses sectarianism and separation, I believed that it was also useful to approach this from a perspective-based evaluation. Herein, the findings and data analysis could provide insights from within side the profession, and from which conclusions could be made aligned to a structured evaluative framework. Rather than adopting a potentially intrusive evaluation approach based on investigation and hard evidence, the evaluative approach and philosophy that I have adopted infers trust and openness among those research participants involved, embracing a reflective practice and self-evaluative stance (Gray, 2009). An honest process of review, sharing and suggesting, replaces a focus on evidence-based practice. Gray (2009:290) notes this form of evaluation as 'illuminative evaluation', which takes a much more flexible and open-ended approach. Rather than focus on measurement, it seeks the views and multi-perspectives of the research participants. Illuminative evaluation, Gray (2009:290) argues, adopts a '*communal awareness*', review and understanding on a theme or programme, rather than emphasis on micro outputs and results. In this way, my research brings together multiple perspectives on the role and contribution of youth work in addressing sectarianism and separation.

As Quinn Patton (1990:119) notes, this form of evaluation is located within a transactional model derived from 'subjectivist epistemology' that tends to be naturalistic. This approach highlights how understanding derives from an inductive analysis of open-ended, detailed, descriptive, and quotational data gathered through direct contact with people connected to the programme or area being evaluated (Quinn Patton, 1990). My research study embraces perspectives from those providing the service (practitioners) and supported by data supplied by the key stakeholders (young people). In this way Research Question 1 is informed by practitioners and Research Question 2 informed by young people.

Suchman (1967:133) notes the goal of evaluative research as providing useful information for programme development and '*planning a guide for practical action*'. Herein, my research sets out to consider the function of youth work in dealing with one of Northern Ireland's enduring problems – the legacy of the conflict. Specifically, the evaluative approach seeks to assess the contribution of youth work in addressing sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland through an interpretive, perspective-seeking approach. The findings of the research will inform a set of conclusions and recommendations for further growth and development in this area.

4.5 Making the case for an evaluative research approach

A qualitative study within an interpretivist paradigm was adopted to best gain insight into the multiple perspectives of the issues under investigation (Quinn Patton, 1990). Perspective-based insights and self-evaluation by practitioners provide a deeper understanding and provide an indication of areas for improvement and ongoing progression. To further help provide a framework for reporting on the impact of current youth work practices and priorities the illuminative form of evaluation was deemed relevant and appropriate to enable such an assessment (Gray, 2009).

Some writers such as Morrow (2004:5) have argued that many working with young people *'try to avoid controversial issues and often concentrate on quick wins and consensus, demonstrating little medium or long term impacts.'* Mc Alister et al (2009) support this view as they found that many cross-community youth projects had actually limited impact in building links or good relations with 'the other community'. Such critical perspectives have supported my appetite to carry out an evaluative research study in which the youth work sector itself, can take time for honest reflection and deliberation on its interventions, impact and direction in relation to addressing sectarianism and separation. Rather than research being done on the sectoral participants my research approach embodies a closeness with the participants through a 'with-them' approach (Quinn Patton, 1990:46). My research positionality as a professional ally and youth worker are discussed in section 4.21 outlining considerations to values and researcher proximity.

Suchman (1967) suggests an all-embracing evaluation which deals with the idealised objective or ultimate purpose – what you hope to accomplish as a social outcome or action, rather than necessarily a defined set of milestones or activities. Within my research study this ultimately relates to the outcome of peace-building, namely in addressing sectarianism and separation. An illuminative study reflects a multiple-perspective approach which emphasises communal awareness and understanding about a programme rather than focussing on specific measurement (Gray, 2009). Gathering multiple perspectives is important herein as Wylie (2016) notes, *'without data I am only another person with an opinion.'*

Suchman (1967) highlights a range of functions and outcomes from evaluative studies. In relation to my study these include: understanding the extent to which youth work initiatives are contributing to peace-building; recognising strengths and limitations of current practices in order to suggest changes and amendments; and making core

recommendations to youth work policy and practices. This research exploration further provides a better understanding of motivations and incentives among youth workers to engage in this work and to articulate the opportunities and challenges across the work. In fact, Suchman (1967) emphasises the link between staff motivation and their belief in the project impact or effectiveness. The research stance of this study, therefore, embraces a self-critique among participants based on a professional reflective overview, rather than an evaluative study that searches for micro-outcome based evidence aligned to particular projects. My approach challenges the current administrative and bureaucratic approach of having to 'prove' and to 'show' evidence of effect and impact.

Suchman (1967:11) provides a stance for understanding the rationale for evaluative research in which knowing is often coupled with judgement. He remarks,

...to ask the question "Why?" also underlies his drive to discover "What good is it?"
Evaluation of utility is intrinsically interwoven with the development of knowledge.

This quote sets the scene for my overall research aim as such an approach affords a purposeful review of current practices among practitioners about the perceived impact of youth work and how effective it is in addressing sectarianism and separation.

This evaluative study is not located in assessing one specific programme, or one specific administration or organisation, but rather broadly considering the full spectrum of youth work in addressing sectarianism and separation. The evaluative research approach provides an opportunity to review the strengths and limitations of current day practices through self-reflection of those involved in the planning and delivery of programmes. The form of illuminative evaluation adopted accepts the professional integrity of research participants through truthful and honest review and judgement on their own practices (Gray, 2009). Mc Alister (2016) has argued that the honesty of the practitioner and service-user voice should not be delegitimised by possible other dominant discourses in research. In line with a subjectivist epistemology, participants in my study construct their own meaning from a deep 'unconsciousness' (Gray, 2009:18). Participants reflected on their experiences and understanding of youth work, its role, and subsequent impact in addressing sectarianism and separation. As noted by Parlett and Dearden (1977:46) the task of the researcher, in this instance, was not to favour or dispute the perspectives, but rather to,

clarify a number of related issues that have to do with the operation of the scheme in practice, its philosophy, its perceived advantages and disadvantages, and its intended and unintended consequences.

Suchman (1967) notes that, evaluation studies may provide a range of functions, including how a programme reflects on its strengths and limitations, in challenging the 'taken-for-granted' assumptions about the programme of work, developing new procedures and approaches, and in developing a critical attitude among staff and field personnel. With research indicating that there is fatigue in the area of community relations, my research study attempts to gain better insights on the appetite and morale among workers in this area of youth work, and, where relevant, suggest changes and recommendations for continued development of practices. As noted by Suchman (1967), evaluative research determines the extent to which current programmes are meeting the challenge of a rapidly changing world. In this way, my research study assesses how current youth work and peace-building programmes are matched to the realities of young people's lives and lived experiences based on practitioner perspectives. This is presented within the evaluative framework posed by Suchman, which focusses on perspectives on effort, effect and processes.

4.6 Evaluation aligned to needs

Evaluation requires an assessment of need to ensure that programmes and interventions are subsequently matched to those needs. Needs-identification can be complex and involve multiple players in defining such need. Morrow (2013) emphasises the importance of needs identification and articulation by all relevant stakeholders in his 'Digging Deeper' peace model. In the case of my research, the literature review shed insight on political, social, economic and historical factors, which contribute to an overview of needs. By not relying wholly on secondary data analysis to assess need, the primary research data collection with young people provide direct needs-identification from the lived experience of the young person. The evaluative research study, further, considers needs from practitioners based on their experience and understanding.

Within the youth work profession needs-assessment and associated practice intervention go hand-in-hand. This needs-assessment can often be a blend of quantitative statistical datasets, alongside qualitative data gathering. For the most part assessment of need relates to the generic and targeted needs of young people. Ultimately, this need is utilised to inform or guide policy and associative funding distribution. However, too often the perspective of the practitioner (often with unique observations, insights and understanding) can go unrecorded and overlooked as part of needs-assessment. My

research attempts to blend the voice and perspective of both young people and the practitioner.

4.7 Evaluation model

Using an established three-part model of evaluation (Suchman, 1967) the research explores perspectives on the assessment of 'effort', assessment of 'effect' or 'impact', and assessment of 'processes' within youth work in addressing sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland.

The three categories noted by Suchman (1967), represent the various '*criteria of success or failure*' according to which a programme may be evaluated (1967:60). In terms of effort, this evaluative research study examines the effort (prioritising) at a policy, strategy and practice level to address sectarianism and separation. In terms of effect, it examines the actual impact and limitations of youth work practices as perceived by practitioners. Finally, the study presents an understanding of some of the processes that either enhance or restrict effective youth work interventions in this area. This is described within the findings chapter and helps to inform a framework for presenting a summary of findings and in making core recommendations for future policy and practice.

4.8 Overview of the research process

Within the youth work profession needs-assessment and co-design with young people are often cited as central to the subsequent service or practice intervention. In this way funders and practitioners can work '*with end-users of services, as well as other stakeholders, to understand 'lived experiences', ...to arrive at the most appropriate response*' (United Youth, 2016). Thus, the young person is at the centre of planning, and in effect are partners in their learning and development. This is relevant within my study as the research process actively sought the perspectives of the end-user (young people). In this way, the end-user voice (attitudes, experiences) could be explored among practitioners in making their self-evaluative assessments.

My research study was primarily concerned with how youth work addresses sectarianism and separation through a practitioner's perspective (96 practitioners/professionals). A secondary lens was also focused on how the conflict affects the lives of some young people (39 young people), and subsequently this data was used to stimulate discussion

among the practitioners. This data was so rich that I decided to analyse it and incorporate it within the research findings. Appendix 1-4 shows an overview and detail on the research sample and composition.

4.9 Primary data / Secondary data

The research design involved consideration to a combination of primary data collated from both practitioners and young people at two distinct stages. It was also substantiated with a secondary data literature review.

Stage one data collection with young people (supplementary to my study) involved both primary data (39 young people), and secondary findings accessed through consultations and project evaluations at YouthAction Northern Ireland. This secondary data analysis incorporated approximately 480 young people whose views on community relations and peace-building were presented at various dialogue events and workshops. This data is relevant and applicable as it forms additional perspectives from young people in line with the research area of inquiry.

The primary data collection which I refer to is that which was specifically organised and carried out in my role as a researcher. All data collection with the 96 practitioners in stage two was carried out in this way, as well as supplementary feeder data with 39 young people (appendix 3 and 4 provides an overview of the data collection sample).

4.10 Research - young people (aged 16-25yrs) – Stage 1

This initial research with young people was carried out to provide some primary data that would be later used as a stimulus for discussion in my main fieldwork study with practitioners in stage 2.

The stage 1 research (2009-2013) focussed on the perceptions of 39 young people aged 16-25yrs about their lived experiences of the conflict, sectarianism and separation. These data were collected through four focus group workshops as detailed below:

- Workshop 1 Belfast (12 participants)
- Workshop 2 Derry (12 participants)
- Workshop 3 Enniskillen (11 participants)
- Workshop 4 Newry/Armagh (4 participants)

| | Location and type of data-collection method | Numbers | Gender | Religion |
|----------------------------|---|--|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Stage 1 (primary) | Focus group Belfast, Derry and Enniskillen (workshops 1-3) | 3 workshops involving 35 young people (community leader apprentices) | 19 female 16 male | 20 Catholic 15 Protestant |
| Stage 1 (primary) | Focus group Newry and South Armagh – facilitated at Downhill Youth Hostel (workshop 4) | 4 young people (community leaders) | 2 female 2 male | 2 Catholic 2 Protestant |
| Stage 1 (secondary) | Dialogue events and Creative workshops carried out by YouthAction staff | 480+ young people | | |
| TOTAL | | 39 young people (primary) 480+ young people (secondary) | | |

Table 4.2: Data collection in stage 1 with young people

The young people targeted were those that were already connected to practices at my work-based organisation (YouthAction N.I.) in which the group composite were already recruited and selected on a 50-50 religious identification, where possible. As discussed in chapter 3 such contact can be unavailable or challenging for many young people but this programme was based on apprenticeship employability training. The young people were also aged 18-25years, which provided more autonomy from any possible community, family or peer pressure.

The first 3 focus group workshops (Belfast, Derry and Enniskillen) were aligned to a training programme involving young community leader apprentices. I was able to fit in with their training schedule to devise a specific workshop addressing conflict, sectarianism and separation. To best gain perspectives from the young people I used creative stimuli (Stringer, cited by Gray, 2009) to help them connect with the subject matter, and to prompt some recall about their lived experiences. For example, a 'legacy' stories resource (audio and visual) was adopted to stimulate young people to locate their feelings and attitudes. This resource provides short stories and dialogue from a range of 'players' and

victims/survivors who have been affected directly and indirectly by the conflict. In this way young people could consider what was experienced (textural description), and how it was experienced (structural description) (Campbell, 2011, A: Section 18), and from this make comparisons with their lived worlds. Each workshop lasted about 2 hours and the discussions were recorded through note taking.

The final focus group workshop took place during a residential with four young voluntary leaders aged 16-18yrs (Newry/Armagh) with one of my team members. The importance of the setting (residential), coupled with core youth work approaches, enabled a conducive space for honest reflections and sharing (figure 4.1). A work colleague had invited me to join with the residential to enhance opportunities for the young people to explore significant issues relevant to the conflict. To aid the discussion I devised a selection of findings from the literature and other secondary data. Such techniques were used as a stimulus to prompt young people's reflection and dialogue, and to recall their lived experiences (Gray, 2009:323). Young people were gently encouraged to consider their lived realities, in a way which incorporated lower level prompting, and which helped the young people to feel at ease. The workshop lasted 1.5 hours and data was recorded throughout using Dictaphone, which was placed in the centre of the group (see appendix 18 for a sample transcript of this focus group).

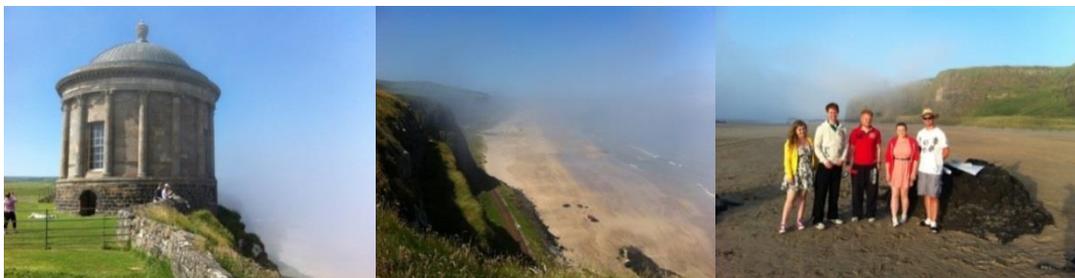


Figure 4.1: Setting for the workshop with young people (Downhill, 2013)

These workshop spaces provided the opportunity for young people to reflect on their personal experiences, opinions, understanding and their feelings and emotions. The focus initially was on participant description rather than researcher interpretation (Campbell, 2011, B). By sharing their experiences and insights, the data from the young people could act as stimuli for the youth work practitioners' perspectives of their role. However, this data proved to be so rich in detail that a retrospective decision was made to analyse the data. This provided another dimension to the work and a better understanding of the phenomena of life for young people growing up in Northern Ireland. This also aligned with an evaluative-based approach based on needs identified by the 'end-users' themselves.

My positioning as Assistant Director within the organisation may have had some impact on the levels of comfort and data that participants would share. However, I had existing professional connections with each of the groups which counteracted some of the positionality issues. The impact of 'positioning' is further discussed in section 4.21.

While the stage 1 research process with young people forms important data for the stage 2 process with practitioners, it does not however form the core element of my research design. Thus, the research process is mostly explained from the stage 2 practitioner perspective in line with my research title: Sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland: a perspective-based evaluation on the contribution of youth work.

4.11 Research – practitioners/professionals – Stage 2

Stage 1 findings from young people provided the evidence base of attitudes, behaviours and experiences which were the catalyst for, and informed, the deliberations among practitioners in stage 2. Supplementary secondary data from literature (unanalysed) also served as a prompt for discussion among the participants.

Stage 2 took place between 2012 and 2014, and involved a total of 96 participants. The research participants were a range of professionals (policy makers, academics & youth work practitioners) with inside experience and/or understanding of youth work and peace-building. They were encouraged to deliberate on the perceived needs of young people obtained in stage 1, and to explore how these are addressed within youth work, based on authentic self-assessment of their practices in this area. This qualitative reflection attempted to gain a more detailed understanding and depth to current realities, priorities and practices within youth work.

In total, there was one pilot interview, one pilot focus group (section 4.12) and five focussed workshop discussions as listed below:

- Pilot Workshop Belfast (8 participants)
- Pilot Interview South Tyrone (1 participant)
- Workshop 1 Belfast (12 participants)
- Workshop 2 Belfast (14 participants)
- Workshop 3 Belfast (20 participants)
- Workshop 4 Newry (14 participants)
- Workshop 5 Derry (27 participants)

Full details on the locations and process involved in each workshop are detailed in Appendix 6.

4.12 Pilot study

I carried out a pilot focus group with 8 professionals and a one-to-one interview with one other professional (appendix 8 and 9). These were accessed via YouthAction staff and projects. Firstly, a pilot focus group took place with 8 workers and students in my organisation in February 2011 (appendix 8 provides the detail of this focus group). The key learning from this was that I had too many questions, and that I needed to maintain a focus on how youth work addresses the legacy of the conflict. On receiving an email from one of the youth workers involved in the focus groups, she suggested that she had points that she wanted to clarify following the focus group. As such, we agreed to pilot a further one-to-one interview in which she would have the opportunity to clarify her perspective. A pilot interview, subsequently, took place with the youth worker in March 2011, over a period of 1.5 hours (appendix 9 provides the detail of this interview). This pilot interview was broken into 9 sub headings and involved an exploration of current programmes, the key elements within such programmes, the impact of such work and the appetite among workers to engage in peace-building youth work. Following the interview I asked the youth worker to reflect on the process and provide me with some feedback. The key suggestion was to use a similar process, but that the focus group was more appropriate as some of the questions were challenging within a one-to-one interview. Feedback from the pilot participants resulted in a refined approach to improve the data collection for the main fieldwork. Reflective learning also indicated that the use of Dictaphone would be more effective than solely note taking for the main fieldwork data collection.

To summarise, the pilot interview was set up to test the interview questions in line with the overarching research study. While considering one-to-one interviews as a method of data collection, feedback from the interviewee suggested that focus groups would enable more substance, whereby participants were able to share and build upon one another's views. Furthermore, questions that are more specific were adopted to better align with the overarching focus of my research study.

4.13 Creative stimuli to assist exploration

As noted by Stringer (2007) the researcher is justified in using visual stimuli to promote discussion and encourage emotional responses. From my practices at YouthAction Northern Ireland, I had witnessed the impact of a creative interactive art peace exhibition (appendix 14) which was developed by young people. Due to the visual impact that the art exhibition had, I felt that this creative mechanism could enhance my stage 2 main fieldwork data collection with practitioners by inviting them to interact with it and glean insights from it. I decided, subsequently, to use this interactive art as a catalyst for discussion within stage 2 of my data collection, aiming to draw out participants' emotional responses and to nurture feelings, opinions and beliefs to be shared. I added primary data perspectives gathered in stage 1 of my research to the exhibition alongside some additional secondary data that I had uncovered during the research process (literature review). These findings were visually displayed within the exhibition to support research participants to consider youth work priorities in the area of peace-building. This exhibition intended to locate the essence of the experience of the research participants and effectively prompt emotional responses to the needs and expressions of young people. Stringer (2007) recognises how stimulation can be employed within research to maximise participant responses. Denscombe (2010:352) further notes, *'the discussion in a focus group is triggered by a 'stimulus'...the stimulus can be something introduced by the moderator at the beginning of a session.'*

The stage 2 data collection, thus, adopted citations by young people in stage 1 (alongside literature insights) to stimulate emotional reactions. This approach echoes that of Comte (cited in Barbalet, 2002:17), who argues that the impulse to act comes from the heart. Herein, human action relates to emotional impulses that can be channelled or shaped in different ways to motivate moral action. Reactions and feelings to views and perspectives from young people thus stimulated thought and reflection among practitioners about practices meeting the needs of young people.

The exhibition provided the foundation of 'needs' from young people on which research participants (practitioners) were incited to respond and to grow their perspectives and outlooks. These included:

"We're not really living in peace; we're still quite separate." (young person)

'Only 1 in every 4 of the young people involved was able to maintain any lasting friendships across the divide'. (Roche, 2006)

'Youth Council found that a very small proportion of youth organisations had engaged in work that involved discussions of contentious issues work ...' (Bell et al, 2010 adapted from Democratic Dialogue, 1997:69)

The findings from young people, and other writers, were central to creating emotional responses, and providing the catalyst for professional review, and an assessment of needs and practices. Research participants were literally invited to experience the lived world and insights of young people (appendix 21 shows sample evaluations from research participants).

The exhibition was utilised as the backdrop for 3 consecutive fieldwork data focus groups which took place over the mornings of 22nd, 24th and 26th July 2013 in Belfast. The following 2 workshops in Newry and Derry did not use the interactive workshop.



Figure 4.2: Interactive art exhibition (research focus group)

4.14 Research methods/techniques: focussed workshop discussion (reflective of focus groups) – Stage 2

For the purposes of my study I chose to adopt focus group workshops as the method that would provide the most insight; later these were identified as focussed workshop discussions. Denscombe (2010:4) clarifies research methods as being

the equivalent of a microscope when used by a scientist, a thermometer when used by a medic, or a telescope when used by an astronomer.

In effect, these all provide a mechanism for data collection.

As this research was embracing a subjectivist epistemological stance, the research instruments were chosen to provide interpretation and subjective narratives and perspectives. Focus groups are particularly useful for research which attempts to gauge a broad feeling or perspective by the participants (Denscombe, 2010). Alternative

instruments, such as questionnaires, were considered, but I felt that these would not support reflective assessment and dialogic process in the same way that a group process would. Focus groups are particularly useful for participants to share, consider, explain, deliberate and show a divergence of opinion and perspective. Denscombe notes,

...the benefit of the discussion and interaction, questioning and reflection, is that it reveals the reasoning and underlying logic used by participants (2010:353).

While my data collection approach followed the traditional focus group method, higher numbers attended some of the workshops which might appear unconventional as a focus group. To this end, I have renamed these as focussed workshop discussions which use a focus group approach.

As an experienced group worker and facilitator, the focus group method of data collection very much reflected my strengths in group work processes and facilitation. Denscombe (2010) emphasises that role of the researcher within a focus group is to facilitate the group interaction. Focus groups or focussed workshop discussions, in my research process, reflected a similar model: creating an atmosphere of trust; clarifying purpose and expected outcomes; observing and infiltrating where conversation dominance can take place; utilising methods which are interactive; nurturing an enthusiastic and dynamic sharing of information; and reviewing the process through feedback and evaluation.

Each focus group lasted between 2-3 hours in total. This allowed time for participants to talk informally over some light breakfast or lunch, and to provide some time for introductions. This planned approach was also considered to enhance trust and co-operation among the focus group members. This echoes Denscombe's (2010) sentiment whereby participants are less likely to speak if they feel suspicious or threatened. The sample is discussed in section 4.16.1

The 5 focussed workshops in stage 2 were intentionally prepared to support a sharing space that was conducive, including music playing on arrival, refreshments at the start and some group introductions. While the research topic and approach was serious in its nature the 'induction' process of laughter and bonding was important to alleviate any apprehensions and anxieties (appendices 12 & 13 show the song playlist and breakfast menu).

As the focus group facilitator it was equally important to pay attention to not only the set-up in creating a comfortable and trusting environment, but to also support research participants to feel comfortable and confident throughout the actual dialogue within the

focus group. In this way, my facilitative style nurtured contributions from all group members and attempted to manage any group member dominance.



Figure 4.3: Room layout for research focus group

The detail of each focus group approach is outlined in Appendix 6.

4.15 The interview questioning (within the focussed workshop discussions)

Stage 2 focus group interviewing with practitioners had a deliberate focus on 'the contribution and impact of youth work,' through a perspective-seeking approach. The questioning in stage 2 was carried out in a manner that demonstrated curiosity and a level of depth of enquiry. Kvale (1996, cited in Sewell) defines qualitative research interviews as '*attempts to understand the world from the subject's point of view, to unfold the meaning of people's experiences.*' The questions that were used to guide the exploration included:

- *How does youth work contribute to peace-building?*
- *What pedagogy and action takes place within youth work to address sectarianism, create sharing and build integration?*
- *What makes an effective community relations (peace-building) youth work initiative? What are the core elements, philosophies, and practices?*
- *Is peace-building a priority within youth work?*

Appendix 15 provides a transcript of focus group 1 with practitioners.

As the approach was evaluative, the guiding questions above were developed in a way to provoke thought and deliberation. The questioning was also more organic and allowed for further prompting to ascertain more depth and insight. Views and perspectives from participants were acknowledged throughout with clarity sought on occasions to ensure

understanding and to reduce any misinterpretations. This approach is echoed by Sewell (ND) who comments that,

interviewers have the flexibility to use their knowledge, expertise and interpersonal skills to explore interesting or unexpected ideas or themes raised by participants.

Some authors (such as Brenner, 1981) argue in favour of a highly structured interview approach, insisting that the interviewer stick to the exact wording and order of each question, in an attempt to achieve a standardized prompt. This approach also has the advantage of ensuring all the questions are asked, and of facilitating very close data analysis closely aligned to each question. Smith (1995), preferring a semi-structured approach, acknowledges that a more interactive and somewhat conversational approach may yield more extensive data, and therefore, accepts a certain amount of digression and reordering of questions in the interests of establishing rapport (Mercer, 2007). The latter was the approach adapted for my data collection. While the interview questioning was part conversational, comments by research participants were not left hanging but explored to alleviate any ambiguous interpretations.

The research participant comments and responses were also paraphrased in places for clarity and were probed for more depth of response. Examples include:

Participant:

“The adults aren’t being honest about what’s going on. So let’s just forget it.”

Researcher:

“Honest about what things?”

Participant:

“We were told that we weren’t welcome in that area any longer. This was from adults, the gatekeepers, not from young people.”

Researcher:

“Who and how do they tell you? How did you respond to this?”

In this way, the research process maximised the benefits of open-ended questions and nurtured depth of explanation. Rather than embracing a provocative position, or as being seen as an expert in the subject, my role was more aligned to facilitation and deeper

enquiry and questioning. As a researcher, I felt that I offered encouraging nudges to provide further exploration and understanding. Positionality is discussed in section 4.21.

Attention to group work techniques, such as smaller group discussion, and personal reflective notes, also provided alternative or complementary ways of ensuring that all participants had a say/voice (appendix 24 provides an example of participants written notes). This provided a forum for those who may have felt less able to express their perspectives, and, indeed, for others to affirm theirs.

4.16 Accessibility – PRACTITIONERS

In addition to the pilot focus group and one-to-one interview, the main fieldwork data collection involved 5 focus group workshops with 87 workers and volunteers, taking place from July 2013 - April 2014 (appendix 4 provides an overview of the sample involved).

The sample for stage 2 involved three geographical sites:

- Belfast (East Northern Ireland) @ 3 focus group workshops (46 participants)
- Newry (South East Northern Ireland) @ 1 focus group workshop (14 participants)
- Derry (North West Northern Ireland) @ 1 focus group workshop (27 participants)

While there were 3 targeted geographical sites the research participants who contributed often reflected a regional geographical spread, rather than being site specific. In this way, research participants were often regionally based, but attended particular geographical research sites of convenience.

By the 5th focus group (in Derry) it became evident that similar feelings and views were being expressed, in which no new or additional data seemed to be emerging. As Denscombe (2010:113) notes, *'It is only when the new data seem to confirm the analysis rather than add anything new that the sampling ceases and the sample size is 'enough'.* In this way, the field appeared saturated, indicating that no further data gathering was going to present any further significant data, and thus, supported a closure on the overall data collection.

4.16.1 Sample

Participants in the stage 2 focus group workshops were voluntary, and thus, participants attended through choice. The sample involved a deliberate targeting of contributors who

had a variety of experiences in the field of youth work and peace-building. This sample was accessed via existing and established contacts either that I knew through my practices in this area, or, that I had read about as part of the literature review. In this way, the theoretical sample is a form of non-probability sampling, in which the researcher has chosen participants with a particular experience, knowledge or expertise. This representative, purposive sample was thus, intended to provide the insight, experience and understanding that were required for the exploration throughout the study (Gray, 2009: 152). The make-up of the participants were to some degree typical of the youth work population in Northern Ireland, but also incorporated well-known and established academics and writers on young people and the conflict. I knew some through my professional experiences and others were unknown, but I was familiar with their knowledge or experience in this area of work. Each potential research participant received a letter of invite to attend (appendix 5), and I maintained a database of confirmed responses.

I paid particular attention to the information that was forwarded in advance to research participants. In preparation for the focus groups, I created a safe working environment for the data collection process. At the outset of the focus group interview, I presented myself as a researcher rather than practitioner for the purposes of the study. Throughout the focus group discussion interview, I maintained control and yet restricted intervention at times to allow for more organic and improvisatory opportunities. I employed active listening skills throughout and affirmed participants through thanking them at the end of the focus group for their contributions.

4.17 Data collection

The main data collection involved 87 participants through 5 focus group workshops. The process was designed to be iterative, in which the focus would continue to sharpen to uncover perspectives about the contribution of youth work in addressing sectarianism and separation.

The 5 focussed workshop discussions (focus groups) are broken down as follows:

- Workshop 1-3: Three breakfast focus groups (Belfast) held on 22nd, 24th and 26th July 2013.
- Workshop 4: A workshop held in Newry in October 2013.
- Workshop 5: A workshop held in Derry in April 2014.

Workshops 1-3: BELFAST (July 2013, YouthAction N.I.)

Workshops 1-3 were held at YouthAction Northern Ireland, 14 College Square North, Belfast, and involved a light healthy breakfast (appendix 12). For each of these workshops the visual art exhibition was presented as an ongoing prompt and visual stimulus for research participants. The Dictaphone was placed centrally throughout all the focus group workshops to capture the dialogue. Each of these workshops had a slight variance in their focus as they progressed from a discussion about the needs of young people to the efforts of youth work practices and the structural processes which often inhibit progress. Some participants attended all three of these breakfast workshops while some of the workshops involved different participants

The first breakfast workshop (22nd July 2013) focused on the theme of 'Issues and perspectives from young people' with the method being the interactive peace art exhibition and follow up discussion. The specific exploration was 'What are young people saying about conflict, violence, sectarianism and peace-building in Northern Ireland?' The backdrop of the creative interactive art exhibition was the key tool to elicit responses from the participants at this further workshop (appendix 14). The participants were invited to interact with the exhibit and to identify 3 core observations which they felt were significant from it. This then led to a facilitated and shared dialogue with key prompts such as: *What was most affirming? What was most shocking?* This focus group allowed for free dialogue with occasional prompts to ascertain the feelings of the research participants.

The second breakfast workshop (24th July 2013) focused on the theme of 'Issues facing young people' – informed by secondary data analysis. I believe this was a unique way of keeping secondary data alive within an ongoing conversation rather than simply providing a literature analysis to my study. The specific exploration was 'What needs to happen at the structural level to address sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland?' I utilised the 'table of free voices' methodology based on a list of developed questions which participants selected to participate in based on their preference. The methodology involves all participants having a say through a timed focussed conversation (10 minutes) on one of ten themes, such as education. These themes were identified from the literature review which identified some core issues that were appropriate for further deliberation and aligned to the overall research focus. Participants were asked to

volunteer to be part of an inner circle discussion on the themes they felt most relevant to their knowledge and practice. The method involved these inner circle discussions where participants were active contributors to the dialogue. These contributors were observed by an outer circle of participants who listened to the core issues being debated and subsequently fed in their observations and insights following the core dialogue. The framework for the discussion draws upon the wider impact of the conflict on the lives of young people, such as housing, education, politics and community separation/influence. This workshop was envisaged as beneficial as it sets the perspectives from young people within a wider context of external impacting issues.

The third breakfast workshop (26th July 2013). While the first two workshops considered primary and secondary data of need in relation to the lived experience of young people third workshop focused on the theme of 'The contribution of youth work' which reflects the overarching research exploration. The specific exploration was 'What contribution can youth work make to young people, communities and wider society in Northern Ireland?' This third staged focus group centred the concentration to the role of youth work following a recap on key findings throughout the week. It allowed the participants to review and deliberate on the effectiveness of youth work practices addressing sectarianism and separation.

Workshop 4 - NEWRY (October 2013, Bagenal's castle)

The Newry focus group workshop, involving 14 people, took place from 10.00am -1.00pm on 4th October 2013 in the serene setting of Bagenal's castle. This focus group workshop was framed in a manner that kept the lens closer to the contribution of youth work in addressing sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland. Based on analysis of the core concepts and coded categories from the Belfast focus group transcripts, selected areas and themes were used for the Newry workshop. These themes were identified to maximise the amount of possible data collection in core areas related to the actual research exploration. The key exploration was to explore perspectives on how youth work contributes to peace-building.

Workshop 5 - DERRY (March 2014, Guildhall)

The Derry focus group workshop was laid out with 4 large circular tables in which 27 participants engaged in dialogue over the 3 hour focus group workshop. The workshop intentionally embarked upon a professional review on the role and contribution of youth work. This event was hosted and sponsored by the Mayor of Derry City Council, and

supported by the Good Relations Department of the City Council, validating the significance of my study.

The initial part of the workshop comprised a presentation of some elementary and secondary data findings to which participants were provided with a recording sheet to make any key observations (appendix 11 shows the recording sheet). This sheet also included a few probing questions in which participants would make personal notes, deliberate in small groups, feedback in group based discussions and submit their notes for complementary evidence of findings. Such methods and techniques were used to maximise the perspective of each participant. For those who may be less vocal it provided an alternative or complementary vehicle by writing key notes on a recording sheet.

(See appendix 6 for more detail of the main fieldwork data collection)

4.18 Data management and analysis

I opted for thematic analysis principles and practices within my study as it is a method '*for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data.*' (Braun and Clarke 2006:6).

4.18.1 Literature review data

While it might be suggested that an inductive study is enhanced by not engaging in the literature prior to analysis, others suggest that it can enhance the analysis as the researcher is more sensitised to more 'subtle features of the data' (Braun and Clarke, 2006:16). In my research design and process the literature data was used to stimulate debate (along with primary data from young people) during the stage 2 explorations among practitioners. The literature review and analysis also guided the research concept and design as an evaluative piece of work.

In the first instance, the literature review accumulated an abundance of information and data which needed collated and themed into relevant components. This process involved a wide reading of both 'The Troubles' - conflict in Northern Ireland, alongside multiple youth work referencing. Much of the information gathered related to previous research (quantitative and qualitative), as well as theoretical perspectives from history, sociology, politics and international studies. Due to the breadth of the information available, I had to be actively diligent in capturing the core components that would help make sense within

my study. As I read the literature, I highlighted the key components that were most relevant to my research study, which resulted in 200+ pages of notes. I then started to read these pages and extract both the areas of most relevance, and the commonalities presented from various writers. From this, I made linkages and correlated overlapping or inter-connected datasets. To aid this process, a traditional 'cut and paste' technique was used, in which all the data was glued onto large sheets of card according to common themes. Through focussed reading, some key words, phrases, categories and possible themes were pinpointed and highlighted. Coded categories began to emerge through this process such as, for example, 'impact of separation'. Appendix 16 provides some key literature data which I extracted from my full literature reading. This was the first funnelling of the data into broad categories. Appendix 19 shows how this was further sharpened, especially in keeping data aligned to the research exploration and two research questions. Each dataset was then coded with a number or letter. Once this task was completed, the draft data was refined. Not only was this data management process helpful to formulate more coherent literature analysis, but it also provided data that could be used as a prompt in the stage 2 primary data collection process with practitioners.

4.18.2 Stage 1 data

The stage 1 data collection with young people was initially intended, solely, as a catalyst for deliberations by participants in stage 2 of the data collection. Rather than ignoring this core data in my findings and conclusions, I made a retrospective decision to include these perspectives by young people as they offered important insights and thus, added value to the findings of the overall study.

The stage 1 data analysis involved carefully reading working notes and a recorded transcript from the focus group consultations (39 young people). Appendix 18 provides a transcript of the consultation with 4 young people.

The process of transcription, while it may seem time-consuming, frustrating, and at times boring, can be an excellent way to start familiarising yourself with the data (Riessman, 1993).

In addition to this primary data and transcriptions, I had direct access to further secondary data from consultations with young people through my own organisational practices. These were not deliberately planned as part of my study but they provided further useful insights on the lived experiences of young people. Together, this data was presented collectively in one overarching document in an unstructured format.

A process of diligent reading and withdrawal of key data subsequently took place. This data was selected based on areas where the most emphasis and substance lay in relation to the research question 2 'How relevant do young people feel that sectarianism and separation is within their lives?' This helped to funnel my analysis into two principal streams:

1. Impact of the conflict (external impact)
2. Agents of change (internal motivation)

In this way, the data was aligned to either of these streams and, subsequently, other data that was either less relevant, or irrelevant, to the specific focus of my research was discarded.

Appendix 19 shows a process of data analysis.

4.18.3 Stage 2 data

In terms of the stage 2 data collection this was diligently transcribed, involving over 9 hours of direct transcription, resulting in 53 pages of core information. This was supported by a fellow worker who agreed to be a rapporteur in maintaining a note of four of the five focus group workshops (focussed workshop discussions). Appendix 17 provides an example of sample rapporteur notes aligned to researcher transcription. All 5 of the stage 2 focus groups involved an evaluation sheet which provided further solitary recollections and sharing for participants (appendix 10 and 21 show an example of this). The 5th workshop also utilised a thoughts recording sheet in which participants could keep notes throughout, and offer these up at the end of the workshop (appendix 11). These reflection and evaluation sheets provided as much valuable data as the main transcribed shared dialogue process. They provided data that participants maybe had not had the opportunity, or did not want to share in the larger group discussion. Attention to this evaluative method provided an additional space and place for data to be expressed and captured.

Qualitative research tends to be linked with the idea that data analysis cannot be hived off to a period after the data collection has been completed. In effect, the analysis commences at the earliest stage of research and continues throughout the whole time of the investigation. Denscombe (2010) notes how qualitative research tends to be associated with data analysis during data collection, while Braun and Clarke (2006:15)

further argue that the data analysis can start during data collection where *'the analyst begins to notice, and look for, patterns of meaning and issues of potential interest in the data.'* This was very much the case in my stage 2 research data analysis where I transcribed, read, and coded data following each episode of data collection so that I became more familiar with the data and possible meanings and patterns being present. I also applied reflexive notes to keep the key elements and thoughts fresh (see appendix 20) and referencing key notes from the back up observer/rapporteur (see appendix 15 for example of transcript from workshop 1). By scribing and transcribing this data personally, I was able to remain close to the data. I read each of these components and began the process of thematic coding.

Data analysis also involved careful differentiation between what data was important and relevant, and what was not. Upon completion of writing up each workshop transcript, the process required further interrogation. Data, for example, on parental views on peace-building were indeed interesting to read, but, were not specifically aligned to my research investigation. Constant questioning becomes a mantra as you read the text (why, what, why, how etc.) and transcripts (Gibbs, 2010). *'Analysis involves a constant moving back and forward between the entire data set.'* (Braun and Clarke, 2006:15) This inquisitiveness in both the data collection and data analysis resides central to the approach.

For example, the raw data transcription below shows the direct conversation that took place.

"I wouldn't so much always hear it as, you would always know – yes, that's probably their parents talking – especially those among families where **sectarian views at an early age...sectarianism is learned. Home is definitely one of the places where there is learned.**"

"Cross-community groups meeting with others distant from where you lived. **To stay in touch it wasn't particularly realistic.** Work needs to be done on interfaces where people are living right next to them in close proximity – trying to improve lasting relationships. A less blurring of lines where communities can start to come together. At times of high tension it is very easy to revert back into old ways of thinking. **It takes a long time to change an attitude** – to change an upheld value no matter where that has come from."

I began reading through each line of this data and marking which insights were of most relevance (bold) to the research exploration. While much of the direct data was interesting, it was not all of direct relevance. The task was to pinpoint the exact data that correlated to the specific research exploration and questions. The parts that are embolded then became a significant code of reference. Core phenomena codes and marking those of most significance provide a framework to isolate the core data.

During the data analysis the researcher may recognise a 'lacuna' in the research and, thus, need to go back into the community for more fieldwork (Campbell, 2011 C: Section 38). For example, by the 4th focus group in my stage 2 data collection, I realised that more emphasis and testing of views could be placed on naming the actual contribution of youth work to peace-building, hence, a 5th focus group workshop was established. This focus group provided further data, and confirmed much of the data previously gathered. At this point, no further illuminations were emerging.

4.18.4 Data analysis

Stage 2 data analysis involved a total of 373 codes being identified and named. Table 4.3 shows an example of how this process was managed.

| Code | Primary data quote | Associated theme | Additional primary (axial coding) | Supporting literature reference |
|-------------|--|----------------------------------|--|--|
| 1. | ... sectarian views at an early age...sectarianism is learned. Home is definitely one of the places where there is learned | Learned sectarianism | 4,8 <i>NB These were my coded references where another similar code or theme was emerging</i> | Chapter 2.11 |
| 2. | To stay in touch it wasn't particularly realistic | Realism of lasting relationships | 14,100,103 | Chapter 2.29 |
| 3. | It takes a long time to change an attitude – to | Changing attitudes | 22,40, 145, 148 | Chapter 2.23 |

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| | change an upheld value no matter where that has come from | | | |
|--|---|--|--|--|

Table 4.3: Sample of data coding and categorising

A process of '*horizontalisation*' involved identifying significant statements that were taken from the recordings and transcripts to describe what the participants experienced (Campbell, 2011 A: Section 22). These were then placed into thematic clusters of meaning. In reading back the transcripts, common words, phrases and sentiments were grouped into larger chunks. This open coding process helped to identify where the most emphasis lay. For example, various similarly connected statements led to the creation of a category labelled as 'Superficial interaction.' The concepts which substantiated this categorisation included: "they are coming together only because there is funding", "on trips there is no proper interaction", and "these interactions are superficial where they are designed around a football game." In terms of the properties and dimensions of this category, some elements emerged in which participants cited that this interaction was only a first step, whereas, others cited it as the normal occurrence. Using axial coding processes this category also had an inter-relationship with a category labelled 'Proper interaction'. This category contained concepts which incorporated "examples of young people coming together through volunteering." In this way, categories had interconnecting webs of data. The most significant categories emerged rather than occasional themes or categories which were interesting, but cited by few, and on limited occasions. As Braun and Clarke (2006:10) note, '*researcher judgement is necessary to determine what a theme is.*' In this way, the categories of 'Superficial interaction' and 'Proper interaction' merged to be part of a super code called 'Addressing Separation' as in shown in appendix 16.

Braun and Clarke emphasise that this initial coding analysis is important for grouping the data. However, they also note that, '*the coded data differs from the units of analysis (your themes) which are (often) broader.*' (Braun and Clarke, 2006:18).

While the coding process produced a set of 11 core categories which relate back to the overarching research question, 'Sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland – a perspective-based evaluation on the contribution of youth work', it became apparent that some of these were more heavily populated and substantiated than others. Appendix 19 shows my hand written notes of how this process was partly conducted. Herein, categories were not full proof in telling a narrative, and, in fact were inter-related to other

areas. Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasise that what is important is that the theme capture something significant in relation to the research question.

As Braun and Clarke (2006:19) further note, some candidate themes are not really themes (e.g. if there are not enough data to support them, or the data are too diverse), while others might collapse into each other (e.g. two apparently separate themes might form one theme). Other themes might need broken down into separate themes.

Through this process, I was able to select 4 core themes where most emphasis lay and which incorporated other sub-set categories. This is shown in table 4.4 below:

| Initial 11 categories | | 4 core themes |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Identifying need | Transferred to theme 1 | 1. Understanding need |
| 2. Relevance | Transferred to theme 2 | 2. Finding relevance |
| 3. Addressing separation | Transferred to theme 3 | 3. Recognition of complexities |
| 4. Appetite for the work | Transferred to theme 4 | 4. An appetite to address the issues |
| 5. Pitching peace work | Transferred to theme 2 | |
| 6. Confronting sectarianism | Transferred to theme 3 | |
| 7. Youth activism: participative democracy | Transferred to theme 2 | |
| 8. Reviewing practices | Transferred to theme 2 | |
| 9. Engaging methodologies | Transferred to theme 2 | |
| 10. Models of peace-building | This was not | |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| and application to youth work | allocated a theme as it referred more to secondary data collected | |
| 11. Youth work linkage | Transferred to theme 1 | |

Table 4.4: Core categories and themes

Keeping in mind the research exploration 'Sectarianism and Separation in Northern Ireland – a perspective-based evaluation on the contribution of youth work,' the 4 themes provide a narrative which firstly, outlines how the profession defines 'need'. Secondly, how it initiates approaches which are relevant and get buy-in from young people. Thirdly, the challenges of changing attitudes and creating meaningful contact. Finally, in assessing willingness of practitioners to engage in the work regardless of barriers and hurdles. The 4 themes further reflect the evaluative research framework which explores the assessment of effort, the assessment of effect and the assessment of processes as noted in section 4.1.

These themes were refined throughout to capture the essence of what the data was saying, and to help prepare the full narrative with '*a coherent and internally consistent account, with accompanying narrative.*' (Braun and Clarke, 2006:22)

4.19 Ethical considerations - Young people

Ethical approval to conduct research with young people in my organisation at YouthAction was sought from the Senior Management team in writing, making it clear on the purpose and outcomes of the research. Ethical approval was also confirmed from the University of Southampton, updated through regular progress reports, and discussed at the Mphil/PhD upgrade.

4.19.1 Informed consent and ongoing consent

The thirty-nine young people that engaged in the research were, firstly, part of current YouthAction practices. Thirty-five of these were aged over 18 years, with the other four being aged 16 years and over. The thirty-five young people were employed in an

apprenticeship capacity, while the other four were participants in a youth work programme, to which they had received parental consent to take part in all aspects of the programme. While this consent was in place, young people were also made aware that they could withdraw at any point if they considered the content, or process, to be delicate and sensitive. Young people were fully aware of the duty to care provided by YouthAction in maintaining their welfare and safety in all its programmes.

The stage 2 process with practitioners involved voluntary engagement to participate in the research with safety parameters outlined at the start of each focus workshop discussion.

4.19.2 Confidentiality and anonymity

Each of the 4 focus groups with the young people highlighted the purpose of the research investigation and assured the participants that would be afforded anonymity and confidentiality as far as possible. They were informed that the data collated was primarily for research purposes but might also enhance future practices. I also assured young people that any data would be stored safely with no names, or identifiers, aligned to the data shared as per the Data Protection Act (1998) for storing data securely. In line with organisational procedures, the young people were made aware that any disclosures or disclosures of illegal behaviours might require follow-up and appropriate reporting.

Throughout the stage 2 data collection with practitioners I also clarified how confidentiality and anonymity would be applied and that, as far as possible, participant responses would not be identifiable to a particular person or organisation.

4.20 Trustworthiness in my qualitative research / qualitative validity

This research study embraced a qualitative interpretivist approach to encourage reflection and to gain rich in-depth data. As with all research, it is vital to ensure that the study and work is academically sound. Many contestations of qualitative research, in particular, are that it is open to subjective interpretation, and is often charged with lacking reproducibility. This accusation often stems from those favouring a quantitative stance. Gray (2009) emphasises the idea that reliability and validity were originally developed in a

quantitative tradition, and are rooted in a positivist paradigm, and are not necessarily transferrable to the qualitative realm (Gray, 2009).

There is no objective reality which can be discovered by researchers and replicated by others, in contrast to the assumptions of positivist science (Walsham, 1993).

That said, regardless of stance rigorous research should ensure diligent attention to having a credible study in which the findings are dependable, trustworthy and transferrable.

Positivists generally often question the trustworthiness of qualitative research, perhaps because the concepts of validity and reliability cannot be addressed in the same way in naturalistic work. Nevertheless, several writers on research methods, notably Silverman, have demonstrated how qualitative researchers can incorporate measures that deal with these issues (Shenton, 2004).

| Traditional criteria for judging quantitative research: | Alternative criteria for judging qualitative research: |
|--|---|
| Internal validity | Credibility |
| External validity/generalisability | Transferability |
| Reliability | Dependability |
| Objectivity | Confirmability |

Table 4.5: Criteria for judging quantitative/qualitative research

Source: www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/qualval.php

4.20.1 Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that '*ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness – accurately recording the phenomena under study*' (Shenton, 2004:63). This means that the results are credible or believable from the perspectives of the research participants, who contributed, and reflect the reality expressed.

To support a credible research study I had put in place some mitigating conditions. As noted by Shenton (2004), factors such as trusting relationships, genuine willingness to

participate, rapport, iterative questioning, and researcher skills and experience can all aid a more credible research study.

Within my study, credibility is enhanced by a number of key factors. Firstly, the intentional detail to establishing a working climate for stage 2 data collection which supported people to build relationships and to some degree bond. The setting was purposefully constructed with music playing and a use of interactive methods in which participants had creative ways of engaging in the discussion (word-storm on flipchart, timed dialogue, world café themed discussions). The use of an interactive art exhibition contained a blend of academic and empirical data, and a sample of stage 1 research quotes that were used to provoke a reaction from research participants. In addition, each focus group interview lasted approximately 2-3 hours which provided sufficient space for quality deliberations and sharing. The use of key questions provided the necessary prompts to maintain focus rather than a free meandering.

The research strategy and methodology embraced a self-evaluative review by research participants on how youth work addresses sectarianism and separation. The evaluative approach required voluntary contribution rather than mandatory investigation. Rather than using an investigatory or intrusive approach, the research is based on moralistic truths by research participants, rather than scientifically-proven evidence, thus reflecting that of an illuminative evaluative approach. However, as Denscombe (2010:193) indicates, *'the data from interviews are based on what people say rather than what they do. The two may not tally.'* With this in mind, it may have been more appropriate to apply an ethnographical approach to this study, in which observation could take place over a longer period, and possibly present a different reality. This forms part of the methodology review and recommendations (chapter 7, section 7.2).

Credible research can be scrutinised on the basis that the researcher has opted for a research area that has personally and/or professionally affected them, in such a way that they set out to prove or test something in a favoured or biased way. As Quinn Patton notes, *'no credible research strategy advocates biased distortion of data to serve the researcher's vested interest and prejudices'* (1990:55). My research study has been approached with an objective view (as is possible), as I was not convinced, one-way or the other, on how youth work was addressing sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland. However, as some authors note (Orlikowski and Baroudi, 1991), the researcher can never be truly value-neutral. Likewise, Smith (1983) affirms that, *'Complete objectivity and neutrality are impossible to achieve...researchers are not divorced from*

the phenomenon under study' (Walsham, 1993:slide 8). To counteract accusations of bias I have documented a reflexive section on researcher positionality (see section 4.21).

4.20.2 Transferability

Transferability is often described as the applicability of findings in one context (where the research is done) to other contexts or settings (where the interpretations might be transferred) (Qualitative Inquiry in Daily Life).

In other words, this quality assures the degree to which the results can be generalised or transferred to other contexts or settings. Shenton (2004) suggests that it is the researchers' responsibility to provide contextual information about the research fieldwork site to enable any reader to make such a transfer.

To assist with transferability, I have described a clear research design set within a specific demography (Northern Ireland), and across a particular profession (youth work). The sample of young people and professionals reflect a range throughout Northern Ireland, incorporating Eastern, Southern, Western and North Western parts of the region. Further, I have described a clear research design and process, which enables the potential 'sender' or 'sending context' to better contextualise the processes involved in data collection and data analysis. In analysing and presenting the data I have also paid careful attention to not qualifying that "all" people in the region believe that...", but rather using words and statements, such as, "some participants" or "many participants."

The transferability of any research attempts to show that, even though each participant has a unique experience, the findings are also representative of the broader population. Shenton (2004) warns that researchers can develop a preoccupation with transferability. Ultimately, the results of a qualitative study must be understood within the context of the particular characteristics of the organisation or organisations and, perhaps, geographical area in which the fieldwork was carried out.

4.20.3 Dependability

One of the problems with observation is that researchers may see different objects, phenomena and human behaviours when observing the same event (Gray, 2009:417).

Within academic research, it is standard that good quality research is consistent from occasion to occasion, and from researcher to researcher, while noting any significant

changes that may have occurred in the setting. In this way, Shenton (2004:71) highlights that,

if the work were repeated, in the same context, with the same methods and with the same participants, similar results would be obtained.

Some researchers, however, argue that research replication or duplication is impossible because the research relationship, history and locations of participants differ from study to study (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011).

Dependability in my research was verified in a number of ways including triangulation (researcher notes, rapporteur, evaluation feedback), immediate translation of data, data collected from varying sites, reflective appraisals and evaluative feedback.

One of the tools for data collection in my study was the use of the focus group, and focussed workshop discussions, through interview questioning. Even with semi-structured and predetermined questions, interviewer bias is always a risk - does the interviewer ask the questions in the same way and with the same tone of voice with all respondents? (Gray, 2009) In other words, what must be avoided is the 'interviewer effect'. While the research investigation objectively opens up an analysis of multiple perspectives on the contribution of youth work, there was always the potential of participants adopting a defensive stance. This was not apparent in the 'mood' of each research site.

By adopting triangulation of methods of data collection such as, Dictaphone, rapporteur, evaluative feedback, and through written comments and notes, further supported a dependable (and credible) approach. As in appendix 26, I used 'thought pages' for smaller groups to make key notes which can be used for wider dialogue, or simply left for me to incorporate after the workshop. Shenton, (2004:67) also notes that,

...the investigator should seek to evaluate the project...as it develops...through a reflective commentary, part of which may be devoted to the effectiveness of the techniques that have been employed.

My research invited feedback through evaluation (written and verbal) at each of the focus group workshop, and was tightened based on pilot interview and focus group feedback (appendix 21). The data analysis and thematic coding which took place further supports dependability.

4.20.4 Confirmability

Confirmability relates to the steps taken to validate that the data presented is the result of participant perspectives, rather than that of the researcher (Shenton, 2004:64). Miles and Huberman (Shenton, 2004:64) considers that, '*a key criterion for confirmability is the extent to the researcher admits his or her own predispositions.*' Within section 4.21 I provide a professional reflection, which considers my researcher positionality in relation to the context of the research, and my proximity to the research area.

As mentioned in section 4.19.1 the use of a rapporteur aided the process of confirmability by marrying up my transcriptions with his recorded notes (appendix 22). Guba and Lincoln (1989) affirm the importance of data being confirmed or corroborated by others, whether this be through primary data contributors, or by referencing authors within literature (*Qualitative Inquiry in Daily Life*). As some of the research participants in stage 2 were attending more than one focus group (especially the 3 sequential breakfast focus group workshops), they were able to validate and confirm my summative assessments that I presented at the following workshop. For example, appendix 6 provides a summary of the first workshop which was presented back to participants at the second workshop.

Interpretive research may be accused of being the researcher's interpretation of the interpretations (or constructions) of other compatriots (Walsham, 1993). As far as possible, the data analysis, through thematic coding, demonstrates a systematic approach to data presentation, which has limited the potential of researcher bias.

4.21 Professional Reflection

4.21.1 Research positionality

Acknowledgement of positionality and self-reflection of the researcher is critical for qualitative research methods and research processes (Denscombe, 2010:178). Due to the researcher's positionality along various dimensions of race, class, ethnicity and religion, they can be open to criticism of bias and subsequent impact on the research process. Similarly, the research participants may also respond aligned to their own social positions, professional status and inter-power dynamics between others such as in a focus group workshop research method. In this way, research positionality can affect both the researcher and the research participants, and thus, the credibility of the research findings.

Davies (2003:99) notes that, '*our social positions impact on the knowledge we produce. Even those staring down microscopes often see what they want to see.*'

The researcher is conscientious and conscious to take every effort to alleviate such possible influences, thus counteracting this bias, or potential of bias.

4.21.2 Positionality – The context of the research

As my research was being undertaken within Northern Ireland, there are obvious sensitivities and complexities that need careful consideration, especially as issues can be raw and sensitive for many people. In such contexts like Northern Ireland, the researcher can be perceived as non-neutral, where suspicion can often arise about the research intention, and end usage.

Coming from Northern Ireland, and having over 20 years' experience of community relations and peace-building work, I understood the nature of the sensitivities and challenges that this may bring. Personally, I have lived through, and experienced, both the conflict and the peace settlements since 1998. I have experienced both sectarianism and separation, and regularly observe how this carries into current day realities. As a youth worker and peace advocate I am, firstly, interested in understanding how young people perceive and experience this sectarianism and separation, and secondly, how youth work intervenes to address such division and prejudice. My positionality is, thus, approached from a professional stance, some key elements of which are highlighted in the proceeding sub-sections.

4.21.3 Positionality with young people: stage one

The young people within my study were mostly apprentices on a YouthAction Community Leadership programme. The three sites of Belfast, Derry and Enniskillen involved a cross-community mix. To collectively explore and review the relevance of the conflict on their lives was for most a rare and unique opportunity to do so. The other small group of four young people (peer researchers) were already on a peace-building programme so the subject matter and comfortability were less pronounced.

Denscombe highlights how the researcher's identity can be influential especially in dealing with sensitive issues (2010) and thus my positionality in terms of my political/religious identity may have had implications within the research. The research topic and subject matter (sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland) has obvious delicacies within Northern Ireland life. As a researcher (and practitioner), I would be possibly be viewed as having a specific ethno-political identification, and to be holding particular views on the

histories within the Northern Ireland conflict. However, this was not a particularly inhibiting or significant factor as the focus in stage one was on the young people sharing experiences with one another in a safe and controlled environment. I shared some small insights from my experience at regular intervals to help the young people to feel comfortable in sharing. This sharing was less about that of the researcher but about providing a creative and supportive space for young people to listen to one another and create synergies about their lived experiences.

The research process was set in an engaging manner which used resources to prompt dialogue. This helped young people to reflect on situations where they experienced negative attitudes or behaviours from the out-group, or indeed from the in-group for having contact and experiences with the out-group. The approach was one not based on blame and scapegoating but about collectively sharing everyday nuances and stories about how the conflict remains to have an impact. In this way, research participants could feel comfortable and not feel obliged to declare unwilling stories and experiences which may lead to embarrassment or even a 'personal defensiveness' (Denscombe 2010:179).

4.21.4 Positionality with practitioners: stage two

This research, while being approached from a professional standpoint, can still carry with it some personal positionalities that may influence the level of engagement and disclosure among research participants. It is not possible, nor necessarily advisable to, to change our personal attributes but what we can do is create an encouraging climate in which people put aside possible differences as is possible and to invest in a professional reflection and dialogue.

The level of discussion in this stage two research with practitioners was based on perspectives of how the profession of youth work intervened in the lives of young people in addressing sectarianism and separation. The conversation was not geared towards research participant's personal stories as the exploration was centred on the practice-based intervention.

I did however put in place a range of factors to counteract or alleviate such influencing. This included: being and behaving as a professional practitioner and researcher in which any historical or political emphases were parked to ensure an unobtrusive and persuasive research stance; framing the research question from an objective point of view of other writers rather than that of the researcher; clarification of the youth work approach in

creating the best possible lives and opportunities for young people through youth work; presenting my standpoint as neutral and that the process was self-evaluation of the youth work profession in terms of effort and impact; creating a healthy working space among the research participants; and that the research exploration was aligned to much of the views captured by young people in stage 1 of the research, rather than that of the researcher.

4.21.5 Positionality: Values of the researcher

Denscombe (2010:237) remarks on differences between quantitative and qualitative research, noting that the former is more likely associated with researcher detachment, and the latter with researcher involvement. As such, Denscombe highlights how,

the researcher's background, values, identity and beliefs might have a significant bearing on the nature of the data collected and the analysis of that data.

In academic research, especially where subjective interpretation is the focus, it is vital to limit the level of researcher bias and value judgement, as common-sense assumptions which, if not minimised, may in fact blinker the research. Denscombe (2010) emphasises that the values of the researcher need to be side-lined (bracketed off), so that the experience is described through the perspectives of the participants, rather than that of the researcher. Some (Geertz 1973) would argue that the data collected from others are really the researchers own '*constructions of other people's constructions*' (cited by Walsham, 1993:slide5). Gray (2009:24), however, highlights that, '*the scientist must interpret in order to achieve deeper levels of knowledge and also self-understanding.*' Rather than observation of non-objective fact, my study favours interpretation rather than explanation.

Conventional advice to researchers would be to adopt a passive and neutral stance to minimise any research impact or value-laden influences, including dress and manners, and in remaining neutral and non-committal on perspective and statements throughout. The researcher listens to, rather than preaches, being careful not to provoke hostility, or create defensive responses (Denscombe, 2010). That said, the role of a researcher could, indeed, be to provoke dialogue, and to provide a challenge function. This provocative stance should be made clear to participants, highlighting the enquiry process, rather than a particular belief held by the researcher. As far as possible, I remained neutral, but clarified that I would be using multiple perspectives from literature, and the primary data from young people, to stimulate thinking and dialogue.

In my stage 1 research with young people, I presented some views and quotes from other young people to help elicit their views and perspectives. Likewise, in stage 2 with workers I used secondary data referencing, and primary data from young people, to nurture balanced perspectives, which did not necessarily reflect that of my own. In this way, I was not revealing any of my own thoughts and perspectives, but rather sharing thoughts and insights of young people. The insights from young people and other research were thus, used to prompt reflection and conversation.

Within my study, rather than being viewed as an expert in the subject area, my role was more aligned to facilitation and deeper enquiry and questioning. Stringer (2007), notes that the researcher is a catalyst for achieving change by stimulating people to review their practices and to accept the need for change. The study was presented as an opportunity to review practices and, through various stimuli, consider the voice and needs of young people. Regular referencing to issues identified by young people in stage 1, maximised the opportunity for participants to open up and share perspectives during stage 2.

The research exploration and evaluative approach could potentially be perceived as having a leaning in a particular direction, by simply opening up the opportunity to review practices. However, the research approach was presented as a space to have open dialogue and reflection, and to support further development of practices across the sector. It was introduced as an opportunity to take stock and acknowledge positive growth and development, alongside naming limitations and challenges. This forms the backbone of an evaluative research framework.

Referencing the views of young people was employed to support impartiality on my part as the researcher. However, Northern Irish society is often committed to locating a person's ethno-political identity through a deeply embedded 'sussing' out that takes place. In his book 'The Politics of Legitimacy' (1976) anthropologist Frank Burton explained how sectarian stereotypes transcend daily life in Northern Ireland, operating as a practical and necessary social skill to be able to "tell the difference" between Protestants and Catholics (O' Rourke: date unknown). Telling the difference is based on the social significance attached to name, area of residence and school attended, which is often employed to ensure safety, especially if in the company of the out-group. In this way, even non-biased researchers are most likely being categorised and may in fact, be categorising themselves. This has the potential to impact on credible and trustworthy findings, all of which are explored in more detail in section 4.20. The fact that the main fieldwork research centred on the role of the youth work profession, rather than the personal experience of life in Northern Ireland, helped to alleviate some of these potential research

dilemmas. My positioning throughout was clearly professional, and this was understood by all research participants, both in terms of how the research was framed, and in my facilitation.

4.21.6 Positionality: Insiderism

This research investigation was located within the profession of community youth work, of which I have 20 years involvement and experience. A research study of this kind can be vulnerable to 'insiderism positionality.'

Mercer (2007) identifies three specific insider dilemmas: informant bias, interview reciprocity and research ethics. In this, truth and honest expression may be hampered. However, with such liabilities, 'insider research' also has assets with much evidence of positive impact of the approach. Within my research the relationships with some participants already existed, whereas, others were new. Throughout the process I treated everybody the same, and showed equity of interest across all participants.

In terms of ethics and bias, the researcher also needs to consider what to tell potential participants, both before and after they participate in the research. Powney and Watts (1987, cited in Mercer, 2007) argue that research benefits from interviewees being fully informed from the start, of what the researchers and the interviewees are trying to establish. In addition to an informed letter of invite (appendix 5), I also provided a brief summary of previous deliberations at the start of my 3 staged breakfast focus workshops, so that participants were in tune with the thinking and understanding to date (appendix 7). This could have been misinterpreted as my actual positioning, but it was made clear that it was the voice of research participants (practitioners who were also in the room), and who could qualify such a stance. More realistically, Bulmer (1982:243, cited in Mercer 2007) contends that *'all field research involves giving misinformation, less than full information or even mild deceit to some extent.'* I believe that the information given was succinct, and helped to provide the context and background without researcher-guided bias.

4.21.7 Researcher proximity to the investigation

It was important to assess at the outset of the research my proximity to both the knowledge and practice realms. Using the Johari window technique (see table 4.6), as noted by Gray (2009), I was able to locate my stance with the lower right quadrant in

which the work was familiar (youth work and peace-building), but the knowledge (peace-building theories and models) was, in part, unfamiliar. This affirmed that the project was not too risky, and not based on full insiderism. Having significant practices, therefore, did not necessarily equate with a familiar knowledge of writings and insights in this research area.

Docherty (2005) in exploring reflective peace research distinguishes three types of personal theories: "Baby theories", "Teenage theories" and "Big Grown-Up theories". The first are our gut level theories that guide behaviour, the second are theories based on practice, and the third are well-grounded theories based on systematic research. With reference to my research and practice-theory understandings I believe that were somewhere between 'baby' and 'teenage'. The research study would provide me with much needed space to reflect on the theories and models underpinning my practices.

Stanton and Kelly (2015:45) emphasise the importance of reflective practice especially in an era of sustained pressures and relentless demands.

Practitioners have to step outside their day-to-day 'delivery' pressures to set aside time to pool their collective knowledge together, to discern, reflect and consolidate their implicit knowledge about what has informed their judgements and deliberations.

The table below (4.6) shows how I locate my positioning with familiar work (peace-building youth work) with unfamiliar knowledge (no reference point to underpinning theories and models of peace-building and its application to youth work).

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Unfamiliar work Familiar knowledge | Unfamiliar work Unfamiliar knowledge |
| Familiar work Familiar knowledge | Familiar work Unfamiliar knowledge |

Table 4.6: Research risk assessment using Johari window

Each position or social stance has advantages and disadvantages with distinctive assets and liabilities.

Unruh (1983), in describing the structure of social worlds, notes four categorisations which can be transferred to the research world: strangers, tourists, regulars and insiders. Rather than being a 'stranger' on the outer edge of youth work and peace-building with

little familiarity, or being a 'tourist' with some basic insight, or being an 'insider' who has a 'lived familiarity' (Mercer, 2007:2) I located myself as a 'regular' with much experience and integration within the world of youth work. Again, referring to the Johari Window (table 4.6), the 'regular' stance would complement my level of experience in the subject area, but with limited knowledge in theoretical underpinnings of peace-buildings. This reflected the interpretive and perspective-based evaluative approach where I would develop fuller insight and understanding based on the perspectives of those with extensive experience in the field of youth work and peace-building.

4.21.8 Profile and Informant bias

Bryant and Charmaz (2007) emphasise how the social positions of respondents also influence how they conduct themselves and their responses during the interview. It is sometimes assumed that there is an asymmetry of power in research interviews, with researchers seen as more powerful than interviewees (Kvale 1996, cited in Floyd & Linet, date unknown). The researcher sets the agenda, determines the parameters of the research, asks the questions and analyses what is said. Others emphasise that respondents also exercise power, which can affect the interviewer's confidence, style and overall research outcomes. Mercer (2007) considers power relations to be an issue only if the researcher is in a more senior position than the participant is.

In stage 1 of the research with young people, I may have been perceived as one of the 'bosses' which may have been an inhibitor for young people. As an experienced youth worker, I was able to utilise skills that enabled trust, approachability and an overall diffusion of authority. With one focus group in particular, I attended an overnight residential with them, which further lessened any perceived power imbalance. On the lead up to the planned focus group, I also engaged in a 'walk and talk' with the young people along the beach, before we collectively chose a space at the Macedon temple. This investment helped to build relationships and to support trust.

In stage 2 of the research with adults there were undeniable elements of power symmetry. For example, the dynamics involved junior and senior staff, placement students, academic lecturers, statutory-voluntary youth work sector and people less experienced in the youth work world, but more experienced in community relations and peace-building. Power and status between group members can be difficult to eliminate, but people being valued and feeling safe in the interview focus group process helps to alleviate, or lessen, this interplay of power relations. Mercer (2007) notes that,

undoubtedly, research participants respond to the interviewer, based on who they think you are (Drever, 1995).

My status as both a researcher and recognised youth worker may indeed have had an impact on the data collection process. However, my letter of intention in advance of the data collection, and the re-clarifying at the actual focus group workshops, should have helped to alleviate any status-based issues. I presented myself as being on a journey of discovery, rather than exuding a professional expertise on this subject matter. This again reflected the exploratory nature of my research.

Feedback from participants (through the use of evaluation sheets) indicates levels of trust and openness through the data collection process. For example:

“I liked this method as the discussion was more focussed and everyone got to participate without losing the train of thought.” (24th July 2013)

“What strikes me Martin is that you constructed today. This is an exhibition. As soon as you walk through the door there is a visual experience. We had to get up and look at it, touch it and be provoked to think about it...to open up these conversations.” (22nd July 2013)

Feedback and evaluation from the research participants provides a better insight into how the participants found the focus group interview process in terms of the content, pace and level of enquiry. They noted that:

“I found the questions and discussion very open and direct about critical issues unpicking peace-building in general and Northern Ireland in particular.” (24th July 2013)

“In a way it brought the whole work together nicely and in another way it opened it up again.” (22nd July 2013)

Such feedback helps to support the approach of my research in alleviating or minimising power dynamics and that research participants welcomed and valued the opportunity to review and discuss in a constructive way.

4.21.9 Data analysis (positionality)

Denscombe (2010) highlights how cultural values and beliefs may bias the researcher's ability to objectively shape the data codes, generate theoretical interpretations, and provide conclusive findings. Thus, during the data analysis stage a researcher is open to positionality and being value-led.

While this is arguably the case, the level of detachment on my part as a researcher was minimised by the cross tabulation/triangulation in terms of how the data was gathered. Herein an independent rapporteur, for example, provided an objective recording of the group discussion. The data interpretation was approached in a way that maintained a systematic coding of data into coding families, and then connecting the relevance of the coded groups to the research investigation. The research findings, subsequently, present a balanced perspective, rather than a self-positioning and subjective emphasis.

As my research positioning was inductive, in not setting out to prove that youth work is having an impact on addressing sectarianism and separation, I believe that my intention was to consider the array of perspectives in a fair and non-biased way.

The findings from both young people and practitioners are ultimately perspective-based insights. While these have been grouped into core themes, they reflect the shared realities as cited by both participant groups in the research process.

4.22 Conclusion

This chapter set out the interpretivist approach used within my research and how it was aligned to an evaluative framework. This approach provided perspectives from young people and practitioners, who provided the data from which to make an evaluative assessment of how youth work might be addressing sectarianism and separation. The methods of data collection centred on focus groups and focused workshop discussions that were ethically approached to support a credible research study. Likewise, the data analysis was diligently reviewed and presented into broad themes based on a thematic analysis approach. I have also explored my positionality as a researcher and practitioner, and from these reviewed potential issues which may have impacted the study. Chapter 7, section 7.2 provides further information on the methodology review and limitations, including recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5: Findings and discussion

5.1 Introduction

In considering sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland two research questions were placed at the core of the investigation:

RQ1: What are practitioner perspectives on how youth work addresses sectarianism and separation?

RQ2: How relevant do young people feel that sectarianism and separation is within their lives?

The youth work profession prides itself on being needs-led and informed, especially by the end-user themselves, young people. This, has to some extent, been challenged by many who believe that the sector has been policy-driven (Grattan, 2012; Becks and Purcel, 2011). My research study places both young people and the practitioner at the core of the needs-assessment.

Keeping in mind that my primary investigation was to elicit perspectives from practitioners to make an evaluative assessment of how youth work addresses sectarianism and separation (RQ1, stage 2), it was also important from a youth work perspective, and in line with my evaluative research, to gather views and perspectives directly from young people (RQ2, stage 1).

While research question 2 (RQ2) is secondary to the research study, it was instrumental as a stimulus for practitioners in stage 2 to consider in exploring how youth work addresses sectarianism and separation.

Therefore, RQ2 with young people took place first, and as such I have named this stage 1 of my research. Stage 2 of the research is thus with practitioners and fundamentally supports the analysis of findings for RQ1. Stage 1 findings with young people are presented first, followed by practitioners in stage 2.

Section A Stage 1 (The voice of young people)

This section focuses on the research question 2 pertaining to young people's perspectives. This is important to present first as it denotes the views and insights from young people

from which the stage 2 practitioner findings can be assessed and comments made on the 'fit' with what young people have said.

As noted in chapter 4, section 4.10 the findings from young people were initially incorporated to aid reflection and discussion among practitioners in the main fieldwork. However, this data was so rich in its depth that a decision was made to analyse and present the findings from young people as an independent and stand-alone data set.

Any effective youth work development takes into account the needs and perspectives of young people and their local communities or communities of interest as noted in Morrow's model (2013). However, many challenges surround the youth sector in retaining its principles and practices while new service level agreements emerge based on a statutory technocratic approach to needs-assessment. The centrality of peace-building and related issues as core needs may need to be reviewed as key priorities and themes become clearer within any new Education Authority funding distribution mechanism. My research exploration attempts to uncover such needs in relation to peace-building. Firstly, it was important to locate the needs and perspectives of young people. This in turn provided the foundation for stage 2 considerations with practitioners to explore and assess perspectives on how youth work practices address sectarianism and separation. My evaluative research study, therefore, focuses on these perspectives from practitioners in making an informed evaluative assessment and it is also supplemented by the findings with young people.

This stage 1 research focussed on the perspectives of young people aged 13-25yrs in which the data was gathered and presented based on shared insights by the young people involved. Through a coding process, the data was themed into core categories where the most emphasis lay. This data has been presented to form the backdrop for the evaluative study.

This stage 1 data collection involved both primary and secondary approaches (see chapter 4, section 4.9). The primary relates to the research methods that I facilitated to gather research data (focus group and focussed workshop discussions). The secondary relates to consultations and workshops with young people that members of my work team carried out within YouthAction Northern Ireland. Together this data was reviewed and analysed to provide an overview of the perspectives of young people. The data is described as follows:

| | Location and type of data-collection method | Numbers | Gender | Religion |
|----------------------------|---|--|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Stage 1 (primary) | Focus group Belfast, Derry and Enniskillen (workshops 1-3) | 3 workshops involving 35 young people (community leader apprentices) | 19 female 16 male | 20 Catholic 15 Protestant |
| Stage 1 (primary) | Focus group Newry and South Armagh – facilitated at Downhill Youth Hostel (workshop 4) | 4 young people (community leaders) | 2 female 2 male | 2 Catholic 2 Protestant |
| Stage 1 (secondary) | Dialogue events and Creative workshops carried out by YouthAction staff | 480+ young people | | |
| TOTAL | | 39 young people (primary) 480+ young people (secondary) | | |

Table 5.1: Data collection in stage 1 with young people

The voice of young people is presented into 2 key components based on common citations and inter-linking categories. Each of these core categories are substantiated by sub-elements or core themes that were identified based on frequent citations by young people.

THEME 1 Impact of the conflict (external impacts)

- Integration and sharing
- Safety
- Perceptions and possible truths
- Identity and belonging (us and them)

THEME 2 Agents of change (internal motivators)

- Appetite for understanding
- Making a difference
- Appetite for action
- Learning places and integration

5.2 THEME 1 Impact of the conflict

As discussed in chapter 1 there are often two principal schools of thought when considering the impact of the conflict in Northern Ireland. The first is that the majority of people living throughout the conflict felt that it did not have much impact on their lives, and that people coped well (often by denial of the existence of its impact). The other is that everyone has been touched in some way by the conflict (Radford and Templer, 2008).

The relevance and impact of the conflict on everyday life of young people can be hard to decipher. My findings, for example, show that in one instance young people comment that their family has been personally affected by the 'Troubles' or sectarianism, and yet on the other hand they comment that on the face of it they have been "unaffected." In the same dialogue young people have commented that, "It doesn't affect me" and "I am living in fear." Roche (2008) highlighted that many young people often cite being unaffected or untouched by the conflict. Morrow (2017) refers to this as 'the phantom of the conflict' in which young people find it difficult to see or touch an actual reality, as though it was in the distant past.

This dichotomy in perspective can be best understood by applying Gramsci's (1971) theory of hegemony and critical consciousness in civil and political life. Herein common sense realities and discourse can be suppressed or undervalued. Simultaneously contradictory consciousness also implies that people really are aware of the social and political environment but have succumbed to a sense of inevitability in maintaining the status quo. Contradictory consciousness demonstrates limited or no acknowledgement of the realities and thus a lack of appetite or active engagement in actions for decision-making and change – '*a condition of moral and political passivity*' (Ryle, 2008:6-8). Within Northern Ireland the politics of polite avoidance are very often favoured rather than self and reflexive analysis of the underpinning structural and historical complexities that affect the present day situation (Hargie et al, 2003). In the literature, Batsleer and Davies (2010) have affirmed that the lack of critical consciousness, namely 'dormant consciousness', can only result in inaction, and therefore limited or no change the status quo.

However, some young people have adopted a somewhat more critical stance. At a 2014 'Finishing the Job' conference (Community Relations Council and YouthAction Northern Ireland) over 80% of the young people involved agreed that it was important to deal with

issues around 'our past'. That said, 20% of the young people present did reflect less willingness to address issues relating to the conflict and the past,

"Young people don't care about dwelling on the past."

"We can't change the past, the future is more important."

Such sentiments in my research would reflect how many young people in communities feel, commenting, "Let's move on" and that "the conflict is in the past." Whether this 'dry your eyes and get on with it' attitude is a form of resilience, denial or apathy is unclear and probably multi-faceted. Mankletow (2007) referring to strategies for coping throughout the conflict identifies three core approaches: denial, distancing and habituation (Radford and Templer, 2008). The same approach may have transcended to the present.

The denial and distancing can be witnessed among many young people in my study who cited that peace was not particularly relevant and that they were not as preoccupied with it as adults: "We care about music, money and clothes." In a similar vein, some young people believed that society had moved on with religion and ethno-politics being less of a factor: "No one cares about religion anymore." Probably more enlightening was the view from some young people that "peace is shoved in your face." In this way, some young people believed that there was too much emphasis placed on community relations and peace-building. This would imply a distancing from the conflict,

"We're not really living in peace; we're still quite separate. But it's not really affecting us directly, so there's not much that we can do."

On the other hand, some young people believed that the conflict influenced them in so many ways throughout their lives. They were often frustrated at the lack of opportunities or discussion around peace. They had a real willingness and appetite to explore the realities of the past and to consider future opportunities.

One remarked, "I believe there is a lot of peace-building going on around Belfast, but a lot of work needs to be done", while another cited, "I feel frustrated in my own community – I just wanna shake it up."

The impact of the conflict has also infiltrated young people's views, attitudes and behaviours by their own communities. They have often been encouraged to play the role of community-defenders, protecting their 'identity' from threat from the 'attacker' or 'out-

group'. This is of course not exclusive to Northern Ireland, but the conflict and threat of ongoing attack has enhanced this feeling and action. Young people noted,

"The UDA/UVF preyed upon kids with no minds – they got sworn in at lunch time."

"The picture of the street was like going from handstands to hoods."

The power of paramilitaries within communities alongside limited exposure to those outside of their community has often consolidated negative attitudes among young people about 'the other'. As one young person commented, "we are encouraged to be sectarian through ignorance from our parents."

People in Northern Ireland do not remain immune from the impact of the conflict and the current situation may not be as turbulent or as harrowing as what has preceded but the legacy of the conflict remains. One young person noted the importance of a positive and committed approach for the future,

"I think it would be good for others to understand 'this is what happened'. We need to not let this happen again."

Many young people within my study recognise that they are not living without the influence of sectarianism and separation. When young people were asked about the impact of the conflict, they regularly remarked 'I haven't been affected by the conflict but...'

Figure 5.1 below provides an indication of responses. This diagram shows how young people can articulate both obvious and more subtle manifestations of the conflict on how they navigate their everyday lives. These reflections often emerged after further discussion and from building on narratives shared by other young people in the group.

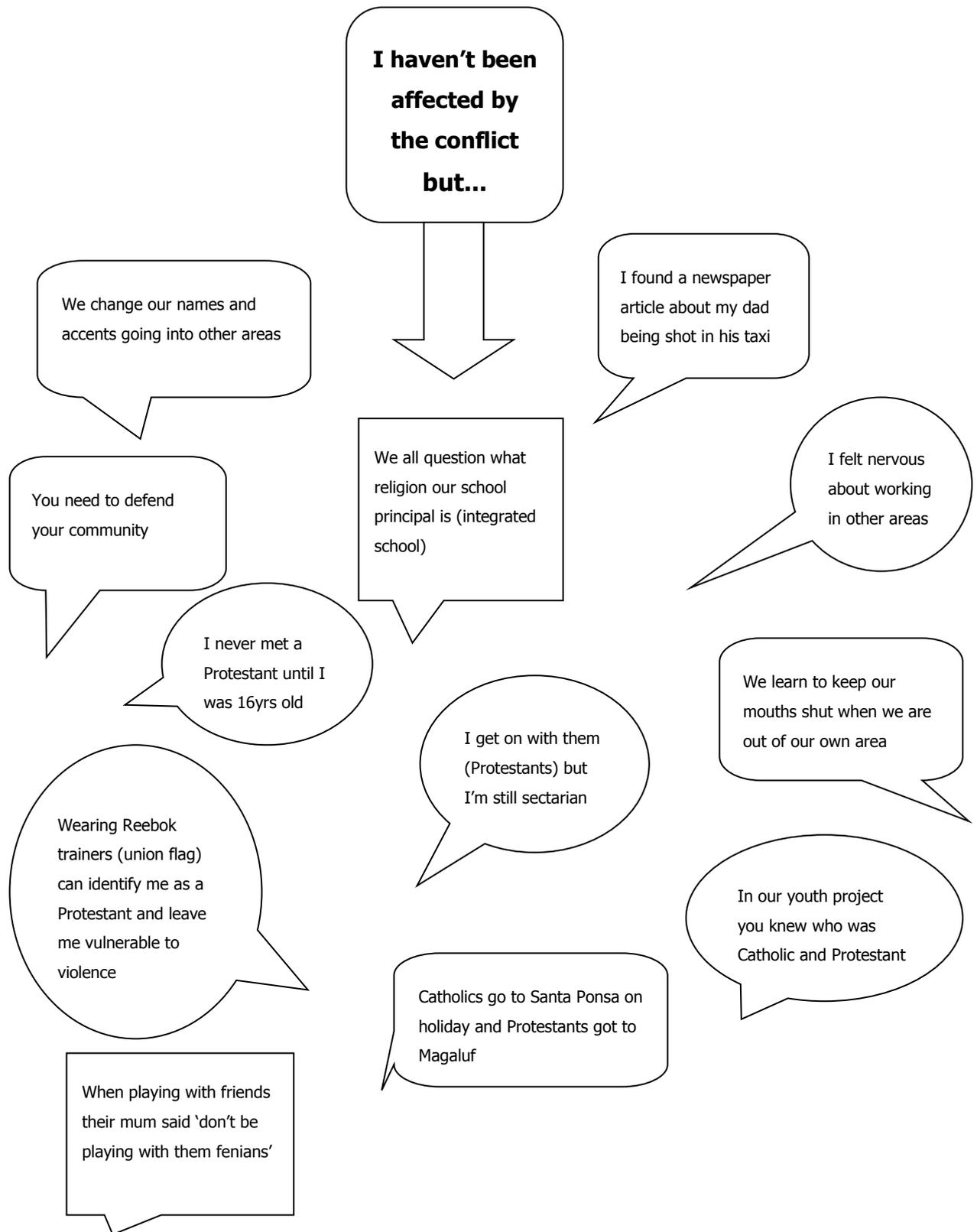


Figure 5.1: I haven't been affected by the conflict but... (Views from young people)

It would appear that young people at first rarely recognise the impact of the conflict but with some further probing and sharing this becomes more obvious. When the question or

statement is made more explicit about sectarianism and/or separation young people have been more easily able to name everyday issues that they have observed or experienced. After some deliberation and conscious reflection, they can begin to locate personal realities in which the conflict transcends. Quotes by young people in figure 5.1 indicate such views, for example, “We learn to keep our mouths shut when we are out of our own area” and “I never met a Protestant until I was 16 years old.”

Being able to identify need in relation to ongoing division and negative out-group attitudes is important for ‘buy-in’ from all local actors. As noted by Morrow’s model (2013) the need is articulated by young people and others, which is then followed with a commitment and ownership by all those involved. Too often youth work surveys appear to prioritise many other issues affecting young people. The challenge may be for youth workers that they need to consider more creative ways for young people to be able to name and locate their understandings of ‘need’ in relation to conflict and having convictions to commit to peace-building.

5.2.1 Integration and sharing

As a result of the conflict many young people grow up in Northern Ireland with a lived reality of segregation. This constant segregated society provides a lived environment where they do not have to integrate, and do not have to socialise with people who are different from themselves. On the other hand, young people can live in mixed neighbourhoods where the extent of separation is less pronounced. The realities of mixed housing is, however, less familiar to those from working class communities as noted in the literature review, but even within middle class mixed communities, while there is exposure to some form of sharing, mixing and contact, people can still be more likely to feel safety and security with those who share common bonds and similarities. As one young person commented, “We believe that sharing is good at times, but other times we want our own space.”

While the lexicon of ‘sharing’ echoes throughout government policy, most of the landscape in Northern Ireland remains separate. Spaces that are promoted as neutral or shared can be hijacked by one community to stamp their mark on the territory. For example, one young person commented,

“A boy was telling me that one day he was in Armagh and he noticed that there were Union Jacks right around the mall – it’s supposed to be a neutral area and

that could have created a negative atmosphere for maybe Catholics and Nationalists and like that's not right. Protestant areas really labelling that they are Protestant with the flags and that. It can start something and provoke hatred. I see hardly any Tricolours but I see a shitload of Union flags."

The findings from the young people indicate that their experience of engaging with people from different backgrounds was very mixed,

"Peace-building can be tokenistic; bringing groups together but not addressing the issues."

"I don't like to see the separation. We got separated from meeting people at school because of religion. If it wasn't for this group I wouldn't have met these 'uns."

"Having new friendships breaks the separation in some ways. They might not be discussing identity and division issues but it opens up a new world for you."

These sentiments reflect the 'peace-keeping' component of Smyth's model (2007), in which initial contact takes place but with little attention to addressing issues.

For some young people, they felt that their parents censored them from such mixing. One young person cited, "our family were not exposed to Catholics."

There were a number of participants whose first experiences of sharing and integration were not until after they were 16yrs old. Many young people talked about integrated schools as being the first point of inter-community engagement,

"Being in a mixed school has raised me to respect and accept everyone."

"Going to an integrated school has shown me that it is certainly possible."

What was clear was that the vast majority of those who had been given the opportunity to interact with communities of different backgrounds were positive of that experience, saw value in, and wanted to see more opportunities for such sharing and integration in the future. This reflects Batsleer and Davies' (2010) view where they cite the importance of 'border-crossing' or 'bridging and linking.'

One young person emphasised the importance of cross-community contact and learning, noting, "I love learning about both religion and history from both sides." Another suggested, "Try and speak to the others – give it a go." These views echo the model presented by Lederach (2005), in which self-exploration and understanding of one's own

attitudes and understandings are a central foundation to peace-building. Listening to and understanding the views of others through having a level of curiosity support a better appreciation of out-group experiences and perspectives.

A large number of young people, however, had no shared experiences within formal education, and many who did through the EMU (Educational Mutual Understanding) programmes were critical of the value of the work being completed. One young person went so far to state that the "EMU trips were a disaster. We did not get on with the other pupils, and teachers did not encourage us to mix."

While there can be universal support from young people for bringing young people from different communities together, there were also some concerns about mixing people too quickly, especially when heightened tensions and divisions are prominent. Strategic tactics such as having a deliberate avoidance of the 'other' were employed by young people for safety reasons (Mc Grellis, 2004). This strategic identification was often based on awareness of flags, for example, as symbols of one community's allegiance and kerb stones marking out territory where 'outsiders' were warned off. One young person spoke about this daily navigation,

"I take the long way home to avoid the others – you can feel a change in the atmosphere."

Young people, in particular, have to negotiate their way through divided and non-neutral spaces, utilising their cues and tactics to ensure personal safety. Some young people employ what could be called 'strategies,' enabling them to both manage and move beyond the circumstances they find themselves in' (Mc Grellis, 2004:12). The realities of sharing across all aspects of life, including education, require risk assessment and safety implications for all concerned. Such assessment does not mean that contact and integration should not happen or be avoided. One young person commented, however, that, "some young people may not want to go to a cross-community based thing because parents have drummed things into their head."

The sentiments of 'It's Always in the back of your mind' (Grattan et al, 2006), 'Always looking over your shoulder' (Mc Alister et al, 2009) and 'Just in case' (Morrow, 2007A) reflect the precautionary principle at work in Northern Ireland on a daily basis. The idea of 'if in doubt, take care' demonstrates great mistrust and suspicion, which can for some result in a passive "Learning to keep your mouth shut" or a more assertive carrying of firearms, knives and other 'protective' weapons. One young person noted this precaution,

“There are groups of people that you wouldn’t see yourself talking to.”

5.2.2 Safety

The level of anxiety and fear experienced by young people crossing community and territory can be immense as identified in the literature review. Numerous studies particularly indicate the impact of fear and safety considerations in relation to young people’s mobility. For example, 3 out of 4 young people expressed fears of travelling into areas inhabited by members of the opposite community (Roche, 2008). Likewise more than 1 in 2 young people do not feel safe when in areas that have a majority representation of the other community (Jarman, 2008). My research affirms that young people often adopt precautionary attitudes and behaviours. For example, one young person from the Catholic community noted, “I would go into a Protestant area, but I would still be careful about what I wear. You are just scared...”

Mc Grellis (2004) further notes the impact of fear among young people in being identified as the ‘other’, or as an ‘outsider’ in unfriendly spaces. Such fear overrides possibilities and thus limits young people’s movement and ultimately their opportunities and choices. The chances of meeting others and of building any type of cross-community friendship are almost doomed from the outset. Mc Grellis found that some young people were determined to overcome such limitations, and as such, they consciously and subconsciously employed various strategies or tactics to minimise their exposure to violence and their risk of sectarian assault. As one young woman commented, “I wouldn’t go into a Protestant community. Especially not in uniform, or anything else that would identify me as a Catholic.”

Mc Grellis (2004) affirms the levels of self-protection and negotiation that young people utilise for safety. They often adopt information and markers available to the trained and practised eye to recognise ‘the other’, read situations and people and to respond accordingly. They see themselves, and others, as ethnically identifiable and therefore potentially exposed and at risk in certain environments. Young people from both communities in Mc Grellis’ research talked about some identifying markers that include accent, mannerisms, dress codes, social style, hair colour, and ‘the look’. Such markers are often only recognisable to ‘insiders’ within Northern Ireland, learning the subtle cues throughout their development and everyday experiences.

Some young people in my study noted subtle realities whereby they changed their behaviours. For example, one young man said that he would not reveal the town where he lived in conversation with strangers for fear of abuse or violence. "I would say that I am from Newtown rather than Cullyhanna so that I would not be viewed as a Catholic necessarily."

One young woman talked about changing her shopping bag so that people did not think that she shopped at a Protestant shop. This was based on the perception from her mother that the particular shop "is full of Protestants."

Another young woman commented that "we learn to keep our mouth shut when we are out of own areas."

A young person also commented, "Shut up in case he's a Protestant." This illustrates the depth to which young people are either consciously or subconsciously aware of the background of others they may be engaging with. It may be that they are afraid of offending the other (a polite sectarianism) or that they have anxieties about their own safety. As noted in the literature review the concept of 'social grammar' often emerges where people in Northern Ireland tend to avoid talking about religion or politics in mixed religious settings, as this would be considered 'impolite' (Milliken, 2015).

One young woman recalled how her mother met her friend whom she did not know was Protestant: "Why did you not tell me she was a Protestant? I could have said something."

This very much reflects the adult model of polite avoidance. In a study of university students in Northern Ireland, Hargie, Dickson and Nelson (2003) found similar evidence as that of post primary integration where, inter-group friendships were made but again there was a significant 'consolidating patterns of in-group socialising' and polite avoidance of 'potentially divisive topics' (Mc Grellis, 2004:21).

Altogether, this shows the limited horizons for young people who are often restricted in terms of their sharing and integration. Roche (2008:27) labelled this '*cocooning*' or '*bounded contentment*'; Hargie et al (1998:7) labelled this '*bubble syndrome*' and Donnan (2006) labelled this '*fuzzy frontiers*.' The realities would appear to remain in that young people assess their safety based on where they are and who they are with. While contact theory (Allport, 1954) and the priority concepts figure 3.2 note the importance of contact in building relationships and creating conditions for border-crossing among young

people (Batsleer and Davies, 2010), the welfare and safety of young people should be prominent in any possible intervention.

5.2.3 Perceptions and possible truths

The legacy of the conflict has left an ongoing mistrust and varying interpretation of facts and realities. Throughout the history of Ireland, there have been continuous truths, myths, and mistruths perpetuated to support in-group victimhood or out-group antagonism. One such example, which has been cited in current day Northern Ireland, has been perceptions of who is benefiting most from the peace process.

One young leader commented that the peace agreements and the subsequent talks throughout the conflict have chipped away at the Protestant psyche of security. He believed that the community had now re-positioned itself as second-class citizens, in a peculiar role reversal from how the Catholic community experienced life in Northern Ireland from 1921,

“Protestants feel like the old Catholics.”

From previously having an uninterrupted hold of power, many now perceive a shift in the balance of power and question who ultimately benefits from the changes. Many Protestant communities now feel that they are not benefiting from the democratic peace process, and as one young man commented, “Protestant view Catholics as getting schooling and education and then jobs.”

Multiple suspicions abound where many Protestant communities feel they are losing out to the ‘opposing community’ or ‘competing identity’. A lack of ‘visible’ investment further creates frustration and a sense of isolation. One young person commented,

“Protestants see no evidence of investment other than new houses in Nationalists areas such as Old park and New Lodge. Protestants feel like second-class citizens. Housing and education are two major issues.”

One young leader from the Protestant community has cited the depth of anxiety and concerns that exist and are being manifested among the Protestant community. This has significantly been growing as the various agreements have played out in Northern Ireland politics,

“We are being forgotten about: betrayal and abandonment.”

"There is a feeling that politicians are trying to take away the Britishness."

Such perspectives are reflected in the literature review (chapter 2) where Nolan (2014) notes a continuous feeling of abandonment by the Protestant community as the peace process continues to develop. Mc Veigh and Rolston (2007) in their critique of the peace developments in Northern Ireland highlight the overall disengagement by the Protestant community and how for many the process is viewed as a 'surrender' and that the challenge remains 'selling the GFA to loyalists' (2007:18).

Ironically, young people from a local Nationalist/Republican community in Newry had similar suspicions and frustrations at how they were treated and how they perceived the Protestant community as gaining more. Young people commented:

"Protestants are never stopped by the PSNI."

"Why do they get away with this?"

"Who do they think they are?"

"We don't get on the way they do on St Patrick's Day or anything."

Views of the 'other' community are often based on learned attitudes and off-the-cuff remarks that have become part of the fabric of everyday speak and life and therefore become normalised and accepted. For example, one young person commented that "when you hear young people refer to the Loyalist community as 'they', and doing it with disdain and disgust it reinforces the community divide." Likewise, in Derry a young leader commented on their perceptions of the Protestant community that the "Fountain ones are caged in for a reason." The model presented by Geoghegan (2018) indicates how interventions need to, firstly address the level of 'ideas' where stereotyping and negative feelings and views about out-group members are both explored and challenged.

Limited horizons external to the community, and the threat of community exclusion, can often pressure young people to maintain community traditions and to maintain the 'other' as the enemy. Such community defence takes priority over individual progression and opportunity. This is primarily the case for communities where there is a political stronghold or community polarisation. Sennett (1974) frames this as a community of 'fraternity' that protects and retains local loyalties and identities while being suspicious of any outside contamination. Grattan (2007) further highlights the power and influence of the 'fratricidal' environment where alternative and out-reaching behaviours by those from within the community can also be viewed with suspicion. One young person remarked on

the influence of militant groups who exercise their power on what can or cannot happen, "Paramilitaries back making themselves known – doesn't help."

This has consequences for self-esteem, social interaction and patterns of movement of young people in meeting with others, or availing of opportunities for personal and social development. The quote below from one young person indicates how particular youth programmes have helped to support inter-community contact for young people,

"I do believe in equality and have never had a problem. However this programme has allowed me to meet people I wouldn't have known."

Numerous examples were cited in my study where learned perceptions and behaviours have developed. For example, young Catholics going to the cinema on a particular night of the week in a Protestant rural town (Ballymartin-Kilkeel); the spelling of names such as Connor with a double 'n' might indicate that the other person is more likely to be a Protestant; changing shopping bags so that people don't label you, and so on.

Alongside more subtle cues that perpetuate myths and perceptions, there are also the more obvious influences, such as community wall murals. In Northern Ireland, these have been used to display community oppression and suppression; to entice empathy and build support and alliance; to warn off any attack from an out-group; to enforce a militant defensive stance; to maintain in-group loyalties; and to present social concerns and a recognition of political challenges.

Since its inception in 1921, Northern Ireland has been a society based on suspicion, and closed and separatist communities further accentuate this. Each community's aspiration and competing national identities of Britishness and Irishness create continued division in a battle for supremacy. A perceived erosion of culture often restricts inter-cultural contact.

5.2.4 Identity and belonging (us and them)

Young people learn subtle and explicit messages, perceiving the out-group as the 'opposite religion', thus understanding the impact of the conflict in terms of religious difference and divide only. The notion of opposite can also be aligned with anything different and which is therefore a competitive threat to possible identity and national claims.

The power of in-group protection and out-group prejudice plays a significant role in shaping identities and a sense of belonging to a particular ethno-religious-political group

or community in Northern Ireland. The findings suggest that such is the swell of community identity and belonging, that young people are often prevented or even frightened of stepping outside of their normalised sectarian influences and/or identities. For example, many young people cited that they would be willing to go to community-based initiatives to meet with young people from different communities. However, young people talked regularly about the influence of their parents in restricting such opportunities,

“Young people are encouraged to be sectarian and there is a lot of ignorance from parents.”

While many children and young people often hear about conflict from within their own family, there are also clearly many instances where issues are not spoken about within families,

“The conflict happened but you don’t talk about it.”

This avoidance and lack of communication can, in fact, create and fuel further suspicions and misunderstandings, often reinforcing in-group identity and loyalty.

For many young people, the lack of exposure to the ‘other’ community was often directly related to the family influence. This reflected exclusive censorship where young people should not be thinking about ‘it’ never mind questioning ‘it’ (the conflict and the ‘other’ community).

Young people in discussing their ‘spheres of influence’ demonstrated how their perceptions of their communities often affected their lives. Concerns over safety from parents and relatives often prevented them leaving their communities and subsequently limiting their potential to build friendships, socialise or even work in areas deemed ‘unsafe’. It is very difficult to step above such influences even if the aspiration is there.

“Friends and their attitudes can hold you back; I would fear bullying and what they might think, say and do; and there are consequences if you do something different in your community.”

Many young people recognised the need to be able to speak out and act without fear. However they were aware that many influences within the community have a stronghold on what is possible,

“Young people have barriers to doing cross-community activities.”

The influence of either 'with us' or 'against us' resonates throughout many communities. Some young people in my study recognised the challenge for change within some communities questioning how they can gain power to make the necessary changes, especially with the influence of paramilitaries so prominent in many of their lives and their choices,

"Do we have choice or influence? Can you stand outside your culture and yet be accepted?"

Young people constantly referred to the re-educating of older community members as they felt that their attitudes often held them back. Young people felt that those most affected by the 'Troubles' are possibly more conservative in their overall attitudes. This reflected the idea that young people and others should learn together as a full and co-ordinated approach. In this way the 'us' and 'them' can lessen through meeting, learning and understanding. One young person commented,

"We are a different generation from the adults. Adults grew up in the 70's and the 80's and there was a lot of troubles. We are not living in that age. We are living where Catholics and Protestants can get on."

As young people frequently commented, they believe that parents and adults would benefit from community relations learning opportunities and indeed opportunities for meaningful encounters with others different from themselves. Young people cited that "to achieve peace there needs to be more community work," particularly highlighting that there may need to be re-education or training for older people who were most affected by the 'Troubles' and possibly more conservative in their overall attitudes. Young people noted,

"In the border community young people are curious about peace-building but there is very little being done to unite and bring young people together."

Such a reflection by young people reflects those views of Harland (2009), Bell et al (2010) and Milliken (2015).

Within many communities in Northern Ireland, there can often be an over-emphasis on in-group identification, where intra-perceptions and attitudes are nurtured at the expense of inter-group potential. Within such communities, there is often an over-emphasis on cultural behaviours, which demand unquestioning obedience as noted in the literature review. There is an expectation among young people, in particular, to be custodians of the community identity and culture. Barbalet (2002:33) has highlighted the emotional

bond and felt identities that are perpetuated by symbols, rituals, anthems etc. Young people in my research commented on the influences of cultural symbols and identification,

“It’s alright to celebrate your culture, but just don’t rub it in people’s faces and get their backs up.”

“Flags can represent you, your culture and your community. But they can also cause arguments and tension – they mark your territory in a negative way.”

At times of threat, or perceived threat, to local communities, what often occurs is a revival of local identities, played out in public symbolic ways, as a battle for supremacy transpires. One young person emphasised the depth of feelings and actions within communities that face most deprivation, “working class people were involved in the flags dispute – showing their discontent.”

Cultural celebrations can be interpreted, or misinterpreted, by outsiders and even those within the community. For example, one young person commented, “It seems to me that in Northern Ireland, the whole Protestant culture is to burn and degrade Catholic culture.”

In the model presented by Geoghegan (2008), he refers to a second level of collective action, which goes beyond the first of ideas (stereotyping), to translate into harassment and abuse. Such action can be difficult to challenge when much of this is often emotionally responsive than carefully planned.

The findings further show that it can be very difficult for young people to feel different, be different and step away from such a stronghold of religious-political-community influences. One young person talked about the parental restriction placed upon them when opportunities were available to meet with other young people from different communities. “Adults in communities are often blocking progress. My da said I couldn’t go.”

Another element noted by young people was the use and appropriateness of humour. One young woman from a Protestant background described her relationship with a Catholic. She talked of how his parents made many jokes about her religion. She commented that,

“While this is not malicious it is much healthier than not talking about it.”

Inoffensive humour can be difficult in many realms of life. In Northern Ireland, humour has been used as a form of resilience throughout the darkest days of the conflict. Humour continues to be an acceptable mechanism to reinforce stereotypes about the other

religion. While fun and laughter is core to the engagement of young people, the level of appropriate humour may be one area that requires careful monitoring,

“At (youth project) there was a bit of slagging – you knew who was Catholic and Protestant.”

It would appear that social and cultural values are perpetuated which reinforce traditional values and behaviours associated within a particular community and its identity, religion or ethno-political belief.

5.3 THEME 2 Agents of change

Young people have been cited as being apathetic and unconcerned about active citizenship, political life and participative democracy (Derry and Strabane EYC consultation, 2016). This is unsurprising when many adults too disconnect from wider civic and political life. For example, young people in one community were ‘told’ that they will never influence local councillors or politicians, while the group have clear plans to write to politicians using an interactive social medium. These young people while challenging the ‘c’est la vie’ notion further receive messages that nothing is going to change and “you just have to get on with it”. Young people, it would appear, have not had opportunities to question and interrogate rather than simply accepting a complacent ‘that’s’ just the way things are’ attitude. A compliant or defeatist attitude of others has the potential to be replaced with hope among young people. While hope can be aspired to, it is also important to assess the reality of attitudes,

“Whenever I think of politics, especially in Northern Ireland, it is politics and religion, so you are either voting for the Protestant parties or the Catholic parties, and the parties in between just don’t get votes or don’t get voted in. For my generation I don’t think it reflects it, because nowadays, I couldn’t care less.”

The Young Life and Times (YLT) Survey targeting 16 year olds (which has complemented the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey for those 18yrs and older) has monitored changing attitudes to community relations issues across Northern Ireland. Many young people have cited the lack of opportunity to mix and integrate, and blamed adults and the lack of political leadership for this (Schubotz and Robinson, 2006). One young person remarked, “Young people have barriers to doing cross-community activities.”

Many young people in my research showed aspiration for overall change through learning, mixing and integration, noting,

“We need constructive discussions, not just engagement.”

“We need to let Protestants and Catholics socialise together.”

“Taking a stand, and thinking what can I do about this? Taking a bit of responsibility – not going ‘this is everyone else’s problem’ – how can I help to move this forward?”

While such views by young people might indicate a progressive and hopeful outlook, Nolan (2014) notes a drop from 75% (Catholics) and 66% (Protestant) to 50% of young people in urban areas willing to live in mixed neighbourhoods. As with much life in Northern Ireland, attitudes and choices are often influenced by political setbacks and media sound bites.

In terms of being politically engaged and represented, many young people are frustrated with traditional rivalry politics. One young leader, in particular, from the Protestant community commented that the working class Protestant communities were being inadequately represented and as such, they have become more and more disengaged from political citizenship,

“We have a socialist ideology but there isn’t a Protestant socialist party affiliation.”

In the absence of affiliation to a democratic political party that represents a Protestant ideology, many people (especially young people) are utilising alternative leadership through more militant or former militant groups, such as paramilitaries. Some young people commented,

“Paramilitaries are stepping into fill the vacuum through informal policing.”

“Young people are starting to ask questions.”

These feelings and perceptions are real to those experiencing it, but often such emotions are built on messages contrived by others to create anxiety and panic.

Protestants have also been shown to be less satisfied than Catholics with the peace process in Northern Ireland. In the 2008 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey respondents were asked how they would vote in 2007 if a referendum on the St Andrew’s Agreement were held. The results showed that 54% of Catholics would vote ‘yes’ while only 39% of Protestants would vote ‘yes’. Among Protestants (adults and young people),

there is less optimism about the future of community relations than their Catholic counterparts (Schubotz, 2008:10).

Interestingly, while young people have shown some resistance to mixing and integration, they have also been less optimistic about effective community relations in five years' time. In fact, just over one third of all YLT respondents (37%) felt community relations would be better in five years' time compared to just under half (47%) of all NILT respondents. Protestant respondents were the most pessimistic, with 17% saying community relations would be worse. One young leader noted in my research,

“There was a Protestant dominancy and we were not prepared for the reality of the Good Friday Agreement. We were left in the dark by political representatives who be there when it suits them.”

This has often led many to argue that Protestant frustration has resulted in many leaving Northern Ireland to study and work in England, Scotland or Wales (and beyond). However, in the Young Life and Times survey of 16 year olds (Schubotz, 2008), the proportion of young people willing to leave Northern Ireland and not return was particularly high among those who identified as Northern Irish; who were neither Catholic nor Protestant; who had attended planned integrated schools; and who had been sexually attracted to a person of the same sex. This is significant and would warrant further investigation and analysis. In relation to my study, this clearly indicates a frustration for young people in Northern Ireland who do not conform to a prescribed cultural, sexual or political mono identity.

5.3.1 Appetite for understanding

Young people have mostly expressed an appetite for deeper understanding of the conflict and what respective 'causes' may have been from either side. Young people have recognised 'factoral' issues or causes such as land ownership, territory, equality, rights and having a vote but are uncertain of the detail. They develop a feeling and emotion which incites them to support or negate the perceived cause,

“Our parents were involved in the 'cause'. Is there more than one cause? Is this different on either side? What were and are the causes? Who and what are the sympathisers?”

Such inquisitiveness reflects the Lederach (2005) model where he discusses 'paradoxical curiosity' and the ability to scratch beneath the surface in terms of what is assumed or known. Many young people are uncertain of what 'causes' communities were actually aligning to during the conflict and unclear if 'cause' referencing and violence actually justifies the actions within a society at conflict. Interventions need to consider how young people can discuss the undiscussable and to have an awareness that better guides their future paths and that of others. Magill, Smith and Hamber (2008) support approaches in which young people can get answers to some critical questions including the roots of the conflict.

While some young people regularly cite the impact of the conflict as often not foremost in their minds, and that "the conflict is a thing of the past", they have also found that through intentional explorations, they have been more aware of the wider impact and how it affects their lived realities. One participant remarked,

"We don't know anything about the conflict, so how are we meant to make a difference?"

Harland (2011) talked about removing the 'fuzziness' of complex cyclical explanations which do nothing to explain or help young people to understand the past. Rather than complex histories and explanation, instead the youth worker can find relevance through current issues and news – finding the 'hot topics' and having dialogue during 'hot periods.' During such periods of tension, unsettlement and high agenda news reporting young people can be more animated about contentious issues and this provides a forum for dialogue to take place with young people,

"It's easier to discuss flag protests and Margaret Thatcher dying as its more noticeable."

However, it becomes very apparent that many of the views that young people hold are often retold narratives and perceptions of their parents, peers or community. Often these perspectives are grounded in fear, anxiety and an alliance to the status quo. For example, one young person commenting on the Scottish Independence Referendum,

"If Scotland breaks away, I think it might mean people starting to make more of an effort here, but it could start up loads of trouble again."

When the flags dispute of 2013 broke out at Belfast City Hall, the ripple effect throughout society was quite profound in that it reignited dormant loyalties and affiliations to competing national identities. Young people felt strongly about this commenting that,

“Working class people were involved in the flags dispute...showing their discontent.”

“Everyone should be allowed to do things or nobody should – it should be equal. It would just be easier if nobody flew flags or marched.”

Young people are moved by such symbolism, which really gets at the heart of their underpinning views, perspectives and affiliations. Young people who may not have been so aware of their cultural loyalties suddenly become aware of their views and allegiances.

5.3.2 Making a difference

One of the biggest issues for young people within my research was whether to challenge or ignore sectarian comments, attitudes and behaviours among their peers, families and communities. In some instances young people felt that they needed to stand up and challenge others, “the biggest thing we need to change is the hate.” Again, this reflects the model presented by Geoghegan (2008) where he highlights the need to address the problem at both the ‘ideas’ and ‘action’ levels.

In other situations, young people were often frightened to challenge for the fear of repercussion. As cited previously “you learn to keep your mouth shut.”

Most young people in the study also thought that living in tolerance or parallel living did not represent peace, but the general consensus was that there is nothing they can do about it, or that it is not having a big direct impact on their lives, so why should they do anything?

“Most of us don’t care.”

For many young people there was an attitude and feeling that they are unable to make a difference, also citing this as someone else’s responsibility? Some commented that,

“It’s the job of them bigwigs in Stormont and all – it’s nothing to do with us.”

“It’s not up to us to do anything.”

“We don’t care at all – it’s not our job to make decisions or explore these issues.”

It would also seem that young people are often made to feel the burden of responsibility for moving on from the conflict, with numerous citations of young people being ‘the future.’

“Some just don’t want anything to do with it (the peace process). They just want to leave it up to the politicians.”

There were also numerous examples whereby young people were indeed leading change and championing change in their communities,

“Since January we as a group have worked really hard. We’ve done a lot more than other people (including politicians).”

“I care but I haven’t really done that much about it. If it wasn’t for this group, I don’t think I’d be doing much about it. I don’t think there is much I could do. You can’t do much. I might try and invite some young lads to play on a football team.”

In making a difference, many young people cited their interest and care in building peace and that maybe it “needed to be shouted louder.” As presented by Morrow (2013) the appetite among young people as leaders and change-makers needs to be nurtured through a collaboration between young people, those working with them and wider strategic organisations and community leaders. Likewise, Lederach (2005) in his model discusses the importance of social capital investment where full community approaches and policy-relations are intertwined. In this way, youth work operates in a landscape that should involve multiple stakeholders to maximise impact and effect.

While some young people have been actively engaged in peace-building, others, however, remarked on the appearance and stigma associated with being involved in peace-building, noting, “peace isn’t cool.” Reychler (2006) in the literature discussed how peace-building still contends with an image problem which many people are not enticed by. This would appear to need attention in the interface between peace-building and youth work.

In one sense, there can be a misplaced apathy and pessimism among young people. The endless cyclical debates and non-movement on issues among politicians provides a chamber of ‘turn-off’ for young people. They often disengage from initiatives where lack of progress is visible and where the process of change is not clear,

“We’ve come a long way, though. Things are a lot better than they used to be – so maybe there is no next step – maybe we just stay here.”

Young people in fact often present more optimism and hope for life in Northern Ireland per se. Young people noted that while frustrations and apathy can happen they were also able to note that if even one person is actively making a difference this could in turn have a ripple effect on others.

5.3.3 Appetite for action

Throughout the research some young people expressed passivity and disinterest in dealing with contentious issues. Comments included, "It's not up to us to do anything", "How are we meant to make a difference? Most of us don't care" and "We don't know anything about the conflict – what does nationalism even mean?" Such sentiments paint a landscape in which young people interact with or disconnect with their local, regional or national communities. This is an important assessment for the survival and longevity of the peace process, as young people's active engagement is needed to sustain and progress the opportunity for peace. Young people's disengagement to political processes in Northern Ireland is often cited, while many others are concerned about unnecessary responsibilities for the transition from conflict to peace being placed upon young people.

The research has shown that many young people feel little connection to and understanding of 'the past'. In fact, some young people have little desire to gain any understanding but yet, they remain affected by the legacy of the conflict, whether they consciously know this or not. Young people in 'The Meadows-Newry' (Hughes, 2013) cited that, "it's not our fight". This demonstrates the feeling and lack of knowledge of many young people who continue to see it as "something in the past."

However, in a 2017 survey about young people's attitudes to community relations, Schubotz found that half of 16year olds agreed or strongly agreed that they are already making a positive contribution to bringing the two communities together whilst 84% felt they potentially can make a contribution. This democracy and citizenship approach reflects the 'peace-building' element presented in Smyth's model (2007). Youth work may not have considered and presented such democracy and citizenship-based work as peace-building and this could be a lacuna that can be built upon for future practices.

In terms of young people and the perception of politics and political engagement, the Institute for Conflict Research (2006) concluded that many young people are not interested in politics and indeed find the subject area boring. While many had a 'lukewarm' interest in politics, some however, felt passionate about social issues that affected their lives. It was the labelling of political engagement and being political that would appear to be off-putting for young people as they believed traditional politics failed to make a difference.

My research confirmed an aspiration for change among many young people, who expressed a desire to make a difference,

“There’s a lot more we can do. You just don’t wanna stop. I think we should keep going until we get sick of trying.”

It has further been shown that many young people are not necessarily apathetic to politics, as has often been cited. It is more important to explore what politics means for young people rather than who votes for which political party. Having a detailed understanding of political processes, party histories and policies provides information but what can be more important to know is what incites young people. One young person specifically remarked, “make politics more understandable for young people.” By understanding a range of political avenues and mechanisms young people can be better nurtured to make a difference.

Research findings released to mark the launch of the Hansard Society’s Y Vote mock elections 2005, claim that young people are not politically apathetic, and in fact, their interest in political issues is growing. In a survey of 1,000 young people, over 80% said that they felt strongly about political issues such as crime and education. To address political issues 80% said they would sign a petition; 52% would contact a politician; 48% would participate in a rally/demonstration; 42% said they would get involved in a boycott; 39% would campaign for a political party; and 35% would join a political party. This positive interest among young people can be important for political representatives to build on their communications with young people and represent youth issues within their political manifestos (Institute for Conflict Research, 2006:8).

While many young people are cynical about politicians and politics they have actively expressed a desire for reforming traditional political structures or seeking alternative political actions that are more accessible to young people. This indicates a clear appetite for action. Young people commented,

“Politicians do not canvas young people or use their position to inform young people of their policies.”

“They need to have manifestos that are relevant to young people.”

“Politicians should be organizing youth group discussions but won’t because they are too motivated by money.”

Many young women within the research also believed that politics was a male-dominated world and it was felt that this was off-putting and intimidating to women. It was felt that even if women became involved and broke through into the public domain, they would still come up against prejudice and opinions that may lead to them not being taken seriously in that position. Young people particularly noted,

“We have been surrounded by male politicians for so long that it has become acceptable...when will this start to be challenged?”

“Men dominate politics so there are barriers to women.”

This specific gendered lens highlights an area for further investigation within youth work, peace-building and political engagement.

5.3.4 Learning places and integration

One core component of interest in my research is the approach and methods used to ‘hook’ young people in and to match programmes to their needs in a relative and interesting way. For some young people the process of learning can seem off-putting, especially when they may have had negative formal education experiences.

One young man reflected on how young men, in particular, have had to readjust from work and apprenticeship opportunities to a changing world where education and qualifications is celebrated and prized. Historically, for example, young people in working class Protestant communities of Belfast embarked into traditional trades and apprenticeships, where wage earning was the priority for pride and credibility. Young people now have to learn the value of education as the key vehicle for both employment and political engagement. As one young man noted,

“Young Protestant males focus on trades, not school: to make money not education. Anyway there is no oomph in Protestant education.”

Through the research, young people also reflected on and advised on ways of best learning about ‘the past’. Young people noted that they did not want to learn by just being told or through explanation. They believe the most effective way is preparation followed by meaningful encounters with any groups or individuals different from themselves. Young people noted that youth workers and others should create experiences

where young people can experience others and have opportunities to learn about difference. "It would be better than a youth worker just telling you about differences." This complements the literature on 'contact theory' as noted in chapter 3.

Young people also noted various places where they felt they learned best, "residential are a good way to learn because you go away; you make new friends and you learn about them in that way." Young people, generally, believed that youth organisations addressed community relations and diversity in a fun and creative way. In the model presented by Lederach (2005) he emphasises the importance of providing spaces for creative acts to take place.

Bell et al (2010:100) further note the importance of location or best possible space for young people to explore the 'Troubles' and to develop in areas of mutual understanding and citizenship. Their research suggests that,

"It is perhaps best to do so in a multitude of locations, in school through History, Politics, English Literature and Drama, plus also through cross-community and youth projects."

The findings here suggest that young people for the most part have an appetite for learning about community relations and playing an active role in creating a safer and more peaceful society where diversity is celebrated and normalised. They have indicated alternative road maps which influence change as opposed to the traditional political systems that, for many, provides a 'switch-off.' This, firstly, builds a question for the youth work profession to consider how topics surrounding community relations and the conflict can be relevant, meaningful and interesting for young people. Secondly, it poses the question as to how youth work can provide a political 'switch-on' for young people whereby they feel and believe that civil and political engagement can actually be more engaging, representative and open to change. This is all set within a backdrop of a complex landscape where political governance continues to fail and where community identities and loyalties still provide a stronghold on what may be possible.

Section B Stage 2 (Practitioner's perspective)

Two core research questions were used to inform the perspective evaluative assessment of how youth work is addressing sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland. The primary exploration of practitioner perspectives on how youth work addresses sectarianism and separation is supplemented by perspectives by young people on how

they feel the conflict has impacted upon their lives. This section details the primary foci of the findings from that of the practitioner’s perspective.

The findings in stage 1 from young people provided a basis for the youth sector and sector-connected participants to consider its practices and priorities in this area. The stage 1 findings with young people were thus used to stimulate reflection and discussion about the context and placing of youth work in addressing sectarianism and separation.

Table 5.2 below shows the profiles of research participants in the main fieldwork data collection (stage 2)

| | | Number of people | Sex | | Professional status | Perceived religion | | Country of origin |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|------------------|--------|------|---|--------------------|------------|---|
| | | | Female | Male | | Catholic | Protestant | |
| Preliminary | 1 interview South Tyrone | 1 | 1 | | Youth worker | 1 | | 1 N.Ireland |
| Preliminary | Focus group YANI peace sub team | 8 | 4 | 4 | 4 youth work practitioners 1 apprentice 3 students | 5 | 3 | 5 N.Ireland 1 South Africa 1 USA 1 Ireland |
| Main stage 2 | Focus group 1 Belfast | 12 | 6 | 6 | 4 academic 1 pastor 1 policy (civil servant) 6 youth work/ community | 7 | 5 | 1 Germany/Ni 1 USA/Balkans 1 USA/Ni 9 N.Ireland |
| Main stage 2 | Focus group 2 Belfast | 14 | 6 | 8 | 2 academic 2 student (research) 1 pastor 9 youth work /community | 9 | 5 | 1 Germany/Ni 1 USA/Balkans 1 Portugal 11 N.Ireland |
| Main stage 2 | Focus group 3 Belfast | 20 | 10 | 10 | 2 academic | 11 | 9 | 1 USA/Balkans 1 Portugal |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|---------------------|--|----|----|---|----|----|---------------------------|
| | | | | | 2 funding 1 policy (civil servant) 1 student (research) 14 youth work/ community | | | 18 N.Ireland |
| Main stage 2 | Focus group 4 Newry | 14 | 11 | 3 | 1 funding 2 students 11 youth work/ community | 12 | 2 | 12 N.Ireland 2 Ireland |
| Main stage 2 | Focus group 5 Derry | 27 | 14 | 13 | 1 MP 3 funding 23 youth work / community | 17 | 10 | 25 N.Ireland 2 Ireland |
| | TOTAL | 96 people (15 of whom attended more than 1 event) | 52 | 44 | | 62 | 34 | |

Table 5.2: Breakdown profile of research participants (stage 2)

The research participants were a range of professionals (policy makers, academics and youth work practitioners) who were encouraged to deliberate on key issues and needs noted by young people in stage 1 and to further review and assess youth work practices and priorities in relation to such needs. The research methodology chapter explores the components of this approach in more detail.

A process of detailed coding led to a defining of the most significant categories that were regularly cited (see chapter 4, section 4.18). The most heavily populated and substantiated categories led to the identification of themes where most emphasis lay:

- Need identification
- Finding relevance
- Recognition of complexities

- An appetite to address the issues

These four areas reflect the evaluative research approach, which explores the assessment of effort, the assessment of effect, and the assessment of processes as noted within the methodology chapter. The research participants reflect on their experiences and interpretations in the area of peace-building, while also identifying challenges and recommendations.

FINDINGS

5.4 THEME 1 Need Identification

As noted by Morrow (Lurgan Town Project, 2013) 'need' is foremost in any community-based or youth work intervention.

5.4.1 Hearing need

In assessing need the findings indicate that many youth workers often do not wholly 'hear a need' to address community relations, sectarianism and separation. In my research both young people and practitioners cited wider generic youth issues such as relationships, mental health and well-being, sex and sexuality, and supporting youth employability as their priority and core needs. Practitioners noted,

"It's not political issues but personal issues. The things that hold young people back are jobs, boyfriends, girlfriends, simple things."

"The needs of young people are much bigger than just peace and conflict."

"What are the priorities for young people? Is peace-building a priority in their minds?"

Some participants cited that sectarianism and peace-building is not the primary focus for young people's lives, citing the basic and more imposing needs of young people, such as jobs, life opportunities, mentoring and so on. Comments included,

"A culture of here and now - instant gratification – it affects young people's resilience and apathy. Hopelessness sets in: not having a job, or dealing with issues becomes the 'weight' to carry and not community relations."

"Within the care background, religious separation and identity are not a problem."

"A lot of the weighting is on young people who are NEET."

Some participants further highlighted the everyday challenges that young people experience, including having the resilience to deal with negativity and prejudice. For example, some commented that young people experience bullying based on sexual identity with constant name-calling such as 'faggot' and 'poof'. The impact of this outweighs any sectarian or religious divide in the immediacy of the young person's life.

This reflection on needs would suggest that it could sometimes appear like a competing hierarchy of issues across youth work. When discussing or highlighting sectarianism as an issue, people often refer to other priorities in youth work. This also happens in gender-based work, for example, when discussing working with young women, people often remark 'what about young men'? Each issue can often be viewed in isolation rather than being inter-connected.

While all these cited issues are important, valid and integral to young people's development my research focus remains aligned to the realities that, firstly, Northern Ireland had a sustained conflict; secondly, this has left a legacy of division and separation; and thirdly, sectarianism (blatant and subtle) remains part of everyday life. All these elements further play their part in other issues such as mental health and well-being and employability. For example, the Education Authority Regional Assessment of Need (2017:11) notes that 'sectarianism and paramilitary influence' in general were issues of least concern for young people aged 9-13yrs and again quite low with 14-25yr olds. They did however note that 'young people in Belfast were more likely to place emphasis on community relations work' (2017:20). Having a carefully considered approach to needs-assessment would appear important, while also having a critical consciousness on needs and what wider social and political contexts have affected such these (Beck and Purcell, 2011; Batsleer and Davies, 2010).

While young people and indeed workers often prioritise other issues and needs, issues pertinent to the conflict can be side-tracked as an issue and argued as more relevant to other communities and areas. For example, a research participant commenting on a young person noted, "...they say that it's nothing to do with them, that it doesn't matter here and that the trouble is in Belfast but not here." Others citing the perspective of workers commented that "some workers say 'it's nothing to do with us – don't make it our problem.'" This again reflects the concept of distancing as noted by Radford and Templer (2008).

However, the findings also indicate that many working with young people can read beyond the young people's initial disinterest or disconnection to the conflict. This also includes being able to assess group behaviours and dynamics. One participant commented, "subtle sectarian bullying can still be going on and often workers aren't aware of it."

Youth workers in this instance have attentive skills and a critical lens in which they can recognise inter-connected and complex issues. "Dialogue sessions that have taken place indicate that young people don't necessarily see the impact of this on their everyday lives."

Beck and Purcel (2011) note that youth workers need to better read the political landscape and subsequently develop appropriate interventions with young people. It would therefore seem that more proactive needs identification and multi-layered analysis is required by the youth worker. One participant emphasised,

"It's easy to say that peace should be a focus of all our work and it should be but if you don't focus on it then it can be diluted and you can focus on other issues. If young people aren't saying sectarianism everyday it's easy for it to take a back seat."

Findings suggest that making the conflict relevant to the lives of young people can be difficult, particularly at periods of apparent contentment. Finding relevance matched to need provides the first challenge while maintaining relevance and interest provides another.

5.4.2 The obvious and more subtle

Many respondents discussed how the legacy of the conflict was more obvious and apparent during 'hot periods' and thus easier for young people to remark on. For example,

"A few recent conversations on the lead up to the 11th bonfires, about the status of some adults in the local, smaller communities. The talk from some young people – about what they could and couldn't do, where they were safe to go and where they weren't safe to go. And the movement of particular families from one small town into another...."

"It's been easier to discuss peace-building this year than the past because of the flag protests and Margaret Thatcher dying, and the 12th July being more noticeable this year. It's a more hot topic this year – they have a lot more opinions about it, but because something is changing and that it's more noticeable for them."

However, it is often the more subtle everyday nuances that young people tend not to recognise at first. Periods of contentment can provide a challenge for the worker to create relevance for young people, in which they can recognise the significance of both structural and everyday separatist life. Young people often believe that they have been unaffected by the conflict as it is more subtle and nuanced but with reflection and further consideration they can fully appreciate the depth of division and sectarianism (figure 5.1 illustrates what some young people said about being affected by the conflict). One participant (practitioner) highlighted the context of naming the obvious which unravels some contextual insight and understanding.

"Thinking about what is right in front of you – the light bulb goes on."

Participants emphasised that it is at this point (light bulb moments) that young people (and indeed workers) actually start to recognise and articulate their feelings about suppressed or previously unknown impacts of the conflict on their everyday lives.

"If we manage to change one or two things in that cycle, such as breaking down barriers and increasing mobility, it can open up a lot of opportunity for integration."

As some participants indicated, young people have never really stopped to consider their identity to any great extent, other than being a Catholic or a Protestant,

“A year ago (they) would have said they weren’t affected by the conflict, it’s not our issue. Whenever you do unpack it over time they get it.”

While some issues are more subtle many research participants also expressed a concern about the often explicit everyday known reality of the stronghold that militant groups (paramilitaries) have over the lives of young people and the significant influence on their behaviours,

“The power that paramilitaries have in local communities: we have to be realistic that Loyalist paramilitaries have a particular stronghold over young people in their area where Republican paramilitaries, the vast majority have gone down the political route.”

“...the influence of paramilitary groups on young people within local communities. Very often they are the people with the power who are very able to bring people to the streets to riot or protest. For me it is about two things. Firstly the threat they hold over young people and secondly young people responding to the threat and being at the forefront of the violence.”

While these are often more obvious and more visible influences that are ‘known’ or symbolised within communities, it can be challenging to express needs and legacy issues in communities where paramilitary influence may be less obvious or real. To gain an understanding of need locally requires a full reconnaissance of what lies ‘beneath the surface.’ As one research participant remarked,

“Are young people citing sectarianism as the major factor within their lives when we do needs-assessment? They are most likely to cite relationships, employment but how do we help them understand the structural sectarianism and how this affects them.”

Another participant talked about more proactive approaches which actually acknowledge the reality of the division that continues in Northern Ireland. This approach requires a more deliberate effort in naming the historical and structural challenges to dismantling sectarianism and separation. It demands considered responses and individual and group action.

“Taking this work to individuals, groups and communities that don’t want to move forward and address the issues of the other - Acknowledgement that something actually happened here i.e. partition, civil rights etc.”

'Need and demand' as noted in Morrow's model (2013) are a core foundation to considering and implementing actions which set out to create change by involving a wide range of players and stakeholders. My research findings would appear to suggest that this need can often go un-noted or unrecognised as a contemporary issue, while other issues come to the fore. It would seem that youth work should be diligent in how it understands need and be critical of who identifies such need and how processes of need have been carried out.

5.5 THEME 2 Finding relevance

As noted previously, many youth workers have commented that they are dealing with multiple issues in relation to youth development, and that providing a focus on community relations and peace-building may be a side-track from other social and development issues within local communities. In this way, connecting young people to community relations programmes can be challenging, as it can often appear less relevant and 'not a current day problem'. One participant reflects this challenge,

"And then there were other young people who were just not interested. They were completely turned off. They had no issues with the other side of the community. They just didn't see it as anything worth discussing."

Yet, it is widely accepted that in Northern Ireland, sectarianism significantly affects the opportunities and wider life chances of young people. This provides a challenge for youth work to consider its role in awakening realities connected to sectarianism and separation, while also supporting more hope-filled opportunities among young people.

5.5.1 Expectations and pitch

Research participants acknowledged the crucial role that young people can play as change-makers to sustain a continued peace in Northern Ireland. However, some were cautious about placing such a heavy burden of responsibility on a generation that have been born and lived through relative 'peace times',

"A re-check on expectations for young people. I wouldn't like to be a young person today. This is my responsibility to solve all this."

Some commented on the unrealistic expectations for young people to demonstrate a leadership and commitment to peace-building, often believing this to be unfair. Such expectations were viewed as 'too big' for young people to carry,

"Why are we encouraging young people to take on these big hard conversations?"

"We expect a lot from the young people, such the peer researchers who have been working on peace, consulting with other young people, and they have completely exceeded our expectation."

However, views were expressed that the youth work sector should not be passive, and assume that time and young people (as a new generation), will bring about changes for society. "Avoiding risk and controversial issues can indirectly inspire passiveness." Many respondents discussed the challenges for education (formal and informal) to prepare young people for a changing society, and their role within it.

At a 2014 'Finishing the Job' conference (Community Relations Council and YouthAction Northern Ireland) over 80% of the young people involved agreed that it was important to deal with issues around 'our past'. This indicated that young people are eager to know more about the contextual cause of the conflict from multiple perspectives. Magill, Smith and Hamber (2008) affirm this view, reporting that young people want an answer to the critical questions, such as understanding the roots and rationale for the conflict and the attempts, or lack of attempts, to resolve the problems. The Report of the Consultative Group of the Past (CAIN, 2009) has highlighted the need for much more debate on dealing with the past in Northern Ireland, especially in preventing young people from repeating similar mistakes in the future.

This would suggest that practices should support young people to recognise their part and role within the peace-building processes. Young people should be able to discuss the undiscussable and to have an awareness that better informs and guides their abilities to create change. This brings to the fore the 'pitch' of the work in achieving 'buy-in' from both young people and the communities they inhabit. As participants have noted, it might appear at first glance that young people are neither interested, nor capable, of dialogue about contentious issues. Comments from participants included,

"It might put them off if you say peace-building at the beginning."

“If you have a banner with peace education you are not going to get the young people to engage in it.”

“The way we sell the programme is crucial. Offering a peace-building project is often not welcome or attractive.”

While recognising the ‘hook’ or pitch to engage young people in peace-building can be challenging, participants however recognised the need for creative methodologies that youth work can often offer. Through a variety of learning methods, young people can become more interested and keen to investigate social, political and current affairs further. One participant noted,

“At first they don’t see how sectarianism affects this but when you delve deeper it definitely does. For us it’s about opening that space for the very first time. Approaching a hard issue as softly as we can to make young people feel safe, and then as sessions go on drilling down a bit further.”

While youth work is founded on being needs-led and through youth participation in which young people create and shape programmes, it would further appear that at times the youth worker needs to be creative and confident in presenting peace-building as a need,

“On the whole young people want peace but only if we put it on the agenda.”

While most young people are likely to engage in a peace related initiative if this is pitched appropriately and with relevance, findings also suggest that some young people are less willing to engage. For example, 20% of the young people at the “Finishing the job” conference (Community Relations Council and YouthAction, 2014) reflected such a feeling: “Young people don’t care about dwelling on the past” and “We can’t change the past, the future is more important.”

The task of any youth work intervention would therefore appear to balance the level of reflective exploration about the past with more current realities and issues in which sectarianism and separation are manifested.

5.5.2 Approaches

Many participants discussed varying approaches to peace related youth work which ranges from story-telling and activity-based programmes to more politically-based youth

advocacy. Some believed that youth work could provide an important place and space for young people to recall their experiences of growing up in Northern Ireland,

“It is important that we are bringing young people together in safe spaces, building trust and exploring realities of peace in their everyday lives.”

“The setting is important. Tackling peace issues can be difficult in schools.”

Many believed that young people were often neglected in the story-gathering within Northern Ireland and that all stories, however insignificant they may appear, are all worthy and need to be heard. Comments included,

“Some stories are sexy...they are on topic. What this leaves is a lot of people feeling that their stories are not important enough or tragic enough – My story is really not worth the air time.”

“There is a section of society’s stories that are not being heard or acknowledged.”

As highlighted in stage 1 research findings, many young people, at first, do not recognise the significance of the conflict upon their lives.

It was suggested by most participants that workers should ‘dig deeper’ to get to young people and open up an awareness of the realities around them,

“Youth work isn’t necessarily tackling real issues.”

“Youth workers need to pursue the hard issues.”

Some, however, suggested having less of an intentional approach and not necessarily confronting issues too hastily, “there is value in initially approaching these issues safely.”

Many participants commented on the need for young people to break down old prejudices of difference in favour of similarities, which provide bonding rather than division. However, many participants also aired caution to an over emphasis on similarities and sameness. Comments included,

“Young people can understand the term ‘same’ and we can all get along but to get deeper, actually we are all different but we need to understand how we can live and work together, without being exactly the same.”

“When you go in and try to encourage diversity and understanding about other backgrounds the word same, we are all the same comes into play.”

The focus on sameness over difference and diversity is explored further in chapter 6 alongside chapter 2, section 2.14 of the literature review.

Some participants advocated for wider structural approaches, in which youth work intervenes with local politics for change. For example, one participant cited,

“...the needle is stuck – if we really wanted to do something about it there would be things happening at the structural, policy and local level. What are we doing and saying about separation?”

In summary, most research participants supported young people as active civil actors but with some airing caution about ‘heavy’ issues being over-emphasised.

5.5.3 Depth of exploration

Many participants challenged existing practices as having minimal impact and instead advocated for deeper dialogue which is relevant and understandable to young people,

“Is there a safe space for young people to tackle these issues in a positive and meaningful way?”

Some were insistent that youth work should provide more meaningful inter-community engagement and create more depth or exploration among young people through social spaces,

“Some of these interactions are superficial -they are just designed to get a football game ...but not really to engage in any conversation or dialogue. Appropriate first step but nothing continued. Young people want something deeper and more meaningful.”

“You have to want to be friends – the strength of the relationships will overcome the influence of the divide.”

One participant expressed concern about potential artificial or surface-level approaches, “we are not dealing with the past properly. If we are keeping the lid on the problem this creates constipation for delivery.” Another commented, “sectarianism can easily be

papered over.” Once again, the ‘peace-making’ element of Smyth’s model (2007) comes to bear in noting the importance of facilitated discussions on potentially difficult topics.

Most participants recognised the need to address some of the historical or contentious issues with young people, believing that much of this had been limited to date.

Some suggested confronting the issues directly. “We need to address what actually happened in history.” Others challenged the realisation of this across youth work practices,

“In terms of contentious issues, I don’t see conversations or actions around the decade of centenaries.”

“... addressing values and having deep and important conversations doesn’t happen.”

Many participants had differing expectations, however, on the best-fit approach to peace-building within youth work. While some believed that relationship-building through activities was core, others advocated a much higher-level participative democracy model. A ‘web of relationships’ was noted by Lederach (2005) while Smyth (2007) notes varying activities such as peace-keeping, peace-making and peace-building. One participant emphasised that,

“Young people need to be around other young people who are different from them.”

One participant commented, “Having new friendships breaks the separation in some ways...it opens up new worlds and new ideas and takes away fears” In this way, they felt that such impact was sufficient as an elementary stage and realistic of what could be achieved through youth work. Christ et al (2010), who suggest a wealth of evidence exists to demonstrate that intergroup contact reduces intergroup prejudice, support such a perspective.

Other participants felt that such approaches were replicable of what had gone before and perhaps, provided little challenge. New approaches were cited by many participants and approaches which are shared to better co-ordinate practices,

"We are all doing the same programmes ...no one really talks to each other...same programmes and training."

"I feel we need to be brave and try new ways."

The literature indicated that much peace-building work and indeed youth work has been unreflexive and subsequently underdeveloped. Critics such as Stanton and Kelly (2015:45) noted how 'practitioners have to step outside their day-to-day 'delivery' pressures...to discern, reflect and consolidate' to better improve practices and research.

In my study, some participants were less in favour of explicit peace-building programmes, preferring wider equality programmes where a multitude of issues can be addressed. Some also favoured opportunities that are more organic rather than structured purposeful programmes. However, others noted that, "what actually happens is not accidental but intentional."

One participant was particularly strong in resisting such a fore-fronted peace focus, commenting that,

"If the centre of youth work is about compassion, care and empathy, you can see how peace will come out of it. If we start putting peace in front of it, it would be dangerous. It would be a detriment to the profession. Peace should be in it. For me equality should be a lot more explicit in our work with young people."

Another participant reflected some of the tensions in how to best approach the work with young people, noting that,

"One of the challenges is the priority of the young people are with whom they are working, and whether or not peace-building is, or should be at the fore of the work that they are doing, whether it's in terms of the relationships, whether in terms of the values, or in terms of the intent of the programme or engagement, whether peace-building is at the core of it implicitly or explicitly....Should it be written large across the work?"

Some participants cited a much more purposeful head-on tackling of the issues as core to maximising impact,

"If we leave a process to be organic it might never happen. The worker needs to identify pressure points."

Others built on this to advocate for clarity of intention in approaching this work with young people,

“Everyone needs to know why they are coming together.”

“Clarity of purpose is so important. Make sure that what happens on your programmes isn’t incidental but intentional.”

Mc Devitt (2011) noted how sectarianism and mechanisms for addressing this need to remain at the ‘top of the agenda.’ Such referencing of agendas has helped to inform the defined model of peace-building that has emanated from my research.

“If we don’t challenge it, it’s going to continue generation after generation...it seems blatantly obvious, but I think we have skipped over it and are not tackling the issue head on.”

While purposeful targeting was cited by some, most agreed that more adhoc and improvisatory opportunities could not be underestimated, noting, “it can happen at the strangest times.” If left to be addressed in a serendipitous way this may become more problematic and actually do little to advance peace-building in the wider context in Northern Ireland.

Reflecting on figure 3.2 (page 94) ‘priority concepts’, the elements of contact (border-crossing), integration (being together) and reconciliation (exploration and attitude) collectively help to reduce separation and sectarianism. Youth work would appear to be operating at some levels in each of these areas but it may be more limited in embracing all three as a hybrid intentional approach.

5.6 THEME 3 Recognition of complexities

The youth work intervention does not take place in an exclusive bubble but rather in a society embedded in history, politics, geography and social customs and norms. Each situational youth work approach should thus take cognisance of the unique local context and the wider regional and national contexts.

5.6.1 Structural separation and division

Sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland requires a complex inter-sectoral approach which has government and policy support. In this way, youth work operates in a structurally separated society that at times can work against proactive approaches to inclusion and inter-community contact. Youth work can thus have unrealistic and demanding expectations placed upon it. "There's a lot of pressure on youth workers to sort out the problems created by our societal structure."

As well as expectations on the profession, there can also be immense expectations for young people to be the leaders and champions for a new era. As the previous section has noted some young people often disconnect with any peace-building measures and often are not conscious of the complex habitual sectarian way of life in Northern Ireland.

That said, young people can recognise visible separation, such as in schools and sports. Research participants (stage 2 practitioners) who referred to in-built behaviours among both young people and adults, which often go unnoticed or unquestioned, noted this separation. Comments included,

"You might be more inclined to travel a further distance. Not even be aware of it or conscious of it – passed on without realising. Why do I shop in Banbridge rather than Newry – why do I go the extra distance?"

"The thing they have always grown up with doesn't be recognised as an impact but it's always been a part of their lives."

These behaviours are so normalised therefore there is often no need to question them. For many people, separation and 'avoidance of the other' are so historically rooted that it is a challenge to reverse habitual patterns,

"We go to great lengths to maintain separation."

"Young people develop skills in living and surviving separately."

This has led some research participants to question cultural traditions as perpetuating ongoing divisive attitudes,

"Do traditions serve a common purpose? If not, bin them."

"How do we help people out of patterns of behaviour? We need to build secure relationships to dissolve patterns and structures."

"We need to enable young people to be more critical."

Understanding, embracing sharing, and integration are very different matters in the reality of people's lives. Many parts of the region are almost exclusive, whereby sharing is often a logistical challenge and with many questioning the need and focus on this. The normality of silo living or operating patterns of avoidance can result in many distancing themselves from the undercurrent of sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland. Participants in the stage 2 research were unified in recognising how structural separation is maintained in everyday life in Northern Ireland,

"The young people have grown up in Northern Ireland and have known segregation, a constant segregated society...often live in an environment where they don't have to integrate and don't have to socialise with people who are different from themselves."

A few participants confidently cited how goods and services can be utilised in some instances, almost exclusively by one community or another. These services included 'shopping at a local butchers' or 'buying land' from only those with a shared religious belief/background. 'Sticking to your own' area and employing polite avoidance challenges the rhetoric of sharing and integration, where it may not be socially valued. This reflects actions at an infrastructural or structural level (Geoghegan, 2008) where discrimination can be deeply embedded through routinised behaviours and actions.

Rather than solely accepting such in-built attitudes and behaviours, many respondents were acutely aware of the challenging realities in promoting sharing and integration, when the welfare and safety of the young people may be at risk,

"Safety and mobility of young people is important and is often an issue."

Another research participant emphasised such risk,

"...the idea that you are going to go against or step outside of your own community, not only does it have implications for you and your family...but paranoia can mean that the simplest thing sparks off and brings back a flood of paranoia."

Another referred to the wider influences at play,

“There comes a time when this is difficult to challenge because of the people and the influences going on around you.”

Such views can be understood by referring to Grattan’s (2007) description of the community as being both a ‘fraternity’ but also ‘fratricidal’ in which the members of that community are expected to conform to cultural ideologies and behaviours.

Many research participants recognised the voids within young people’s lives often being ‘filled’ by community gatekeepers such as preying paramilitary or militant groups who actively recruit young people, often those most vulnerable. Some talked about ‘alternative activism’ that young people can engage with, which sits at odds with a democratic and non-violent approach,

“I worry about young people involved in dissident politics.”

“We need to understand triggers to youth activism in democratic or alternative pathways.”

This ‘switch on’ or ‘trigger’ to democratic activism among young people might be one of the most valuable ‘nuggets’ for the youth worker toolkit. Knowing what incites young people and what issues inspire action will provide the youth worker with a better understanding of how to connect such actions among young people into a broader human rights and peace-building framework. Participants noted,

“It’s important to get young people to the stage where they can recognise that they have an important role.”

“It’s important for young people to recognise themselves as peace-builders.”

5.6.2 Educational challenges to separation

As noted in the literature review, separate education in Northern Ireland involves over 94% of the youth population, with only 6-7% of young people attending integrated education (Roche, 2008:21). With such separation being a lived reality for young people, some research participants commented on how youth work can have lower level impacts,

"I have a big thing about segregation in education – growing up separately. Sharing is all part of it. Schools and youth work programmes can infiltrate at some level but the impact is small."

Such separation maintenance was echoed on numerous occasions. The challenge for many in promoting sharing, integration and inter-community contact can be immense when separation abounds. Participants noted,

"Separation plays into a sense of paranoia in communities."

"How effective is integration, not just in schools but in youth work?"

Mc Grellis (2010) in 'Growing up in Northern Ireland' emphasises how people remain within their own communities, refraining from inter-community contact that raises anxieties and tensions. She notes that this is not solely a working class phenomenon and that in fact, many young people from middle class backgrounds preferred and desired to remain with the area they were brought up. Most research participants within my study noted this feeling of limited attitudinal change. One, for example, cited,

"Every single year we come back to the reminders from adults that we are not ready to move on and that it's actually quite dangerous to talk to people from the other community."

With such strongly embedded community attitudes, it can subsequently be difficult for youth work to infiltrate with much success. It would appear from the views of participants that youth work, at times, is often expected to perform 'miracles.' One participant, in particular, noted that,

"...sometimes there is an agenda to expect too much that youth work can solve what are very serious political and community issues. We shouldn't be unrealistic about that...there is a lot of dumping onto youth work."

Such expectations on youth work to affect significant change were regularly cited by research participants. For example, one commented,

"I think there is a heavy burden on young people and those that work with them, to create this bright new future where we all love each other, hold hands and dance off into the sunset. This is just not practical. Politicians and others have distanced themselves from their own responsibilities."

This led many research participants to question the confidence of the youth work sector in working to real needs, rather than those being defined through an administrative approach and by those with differing agendas and expectations. For example, one research participant referred to how a social order agenda infiltrates much funding for youth work,

“...perhaps there is an expectation on youth work, when issues flare up in the street that youth work can solve things and do diversionary things. We can do that.... we will round up the young people.”

Such a view was complemented by others who believed that youth work was undervalued as an educational intervention, and something employed when social order may be perceived to be at risk,

“(there is an) expectation that youth work is there to service or mop up, rather than address young people’s issues, needs and rights...a lot of other sectors have gone home. We can expect a lot from youth work.”

Another research participant commented on the challenge of competing agendas and the lack of clarity on such expectations,

“(we) all might be there, but with slightly different agendas. You are coming at it from different angles.”

The overarching challenge of a complex divided society has significant implications for the youth work intervention, operating at both a macro and micro level. The findings of research participants would indicate that youth work should be clearer on its intention, capabilities and projected impact assessment. As one respondent summarised,

“Youth work needs to articulate itself, presenting itself in terms of what it is and what it isn’t.”

5.6.3 Community engagement

Youth work mostly takes place in geographical community settings, alongside communities with shared experiences. As such, it is important for inter-connections between the youth work approaches and those of the wider community education and community development. This research study has highlighted the significance of youth workers, from either within the community, or an outsider, to be aware of the context of that community and to be aware of the key stakeholders who have influence. One participant noted, "(it is the) responsibility of workers to be informed on issues (and to) know who the local influencers are."

Most participants talked about youth work getting 'buy-in' from both young people and the wider community to maximise impact. One research participant expressed, "youth work is not in an island... it involves whole communities. They are part of a wider network." Such views are complemented by that of Morrow (2013) who emphasises locally owned need-identification and engagement between young people, community activists and other strategic organisations. The literature further identified how outside experts who often bring their 'monopoly of wisdom' (Mac Ginty, 2008:141) should not predetermine local and indigenous practices.

Many participants expressed the inherent challenge associated with such community interventions and noted the importance of "finding and understanding the pathway to the heart of the communities."

"Communities - that's their kingdom. Once they hand over the keys of their kingdom, they've lost everything. If they don't reach out they are blocking the potential of good work. We need to build the skills of the people."

The ability to gain entry from key gatekeepers cannot be underestimated in the context of Northern Ireland. Anxieties and suspicions are heightened more so than other places where conflict and inter-community tension has been less apparent. Participants' comments include,

"Especially in rural areas it is so insular, so separated and segregated, it's difficult to get in there in the first place. You need a gatekeeper and key person that you can go through."

"...you need the backing to overcome the gatekeepers who stop you and tell you what it is you can do. If they give you permission and something comes up in

conversations there can be a backlash, the danger that all the hard work is crushed.”

“Adults in communities are often blocking young people’s progress.”

“Other workers may not be seeing the value or being apprehensive about doing the work.”

Many research participants discussed the reality of ‘getting people’s backs up’, especially when the focus of a project has community relations, peace-building or inter-community contact attached to it. Others noted,

“When we raise peace-building and community tension and conflict within the community you can get people’s backs up. As a youth worker it’s down to us to find a way forward rather than bowing to people.”

“When you redress an historical inequality there is an inevitable backlash – that’s where we currently are.”

It would thus seem that one of the main challenges for youth work interventions is recognising potential conflict between community activists and leaders whose ideology does not complement that of the ‘guest’ facilitator within the community. The ‘guest’ or ‘outsider’ can often be viewed as contaminating the heart, mind and soul of the local community, when in fact it is about widening opportunities and the potential for all members of the local community. This ‘outsider’ phenomenon is less discussed in each of the four models at the heart of my study, although Morrow (2013) does refer to ‘buy-in’ from strategic leaders and organisations. It could be argued that inspiration to enact a programme or intervention could, in fact, be introduced to a community from an outside source, while working collaboratively alongside the community.

Some research participants cited frustration with negotiation and power afforded to particular community influencers, noting that young people are missing opportunities,

“The issue for youth workers working within some local communities is the idea of local volunteers/workers being gate-keepers and often blockers to youth work interventions. It is often only ‘on their terms’ and young people are often missing out on key opportunities.”

Many young people, thus, suffer from the lack of intervention and opportunities as many of the ‘insider gatekeepers’ retain power, control and self-interest at the disadvantage of others. One participant sums up the challenge,

“Don't touch our young people” limits the youth work intervention in much needed areas...Paramilitary activity and influence further complicates the picture. Our fundamental challenge is to how can youth work and local community groups/associations work together in the best interests of the young people and the local community?”

While some local community members may appear suspicious of the youth work intervention, particularly when it has a peace focus, it would seem that clarity of intention is important. As many research participants noted, this is often to protect the worker and ensure their safety,

“We are meant to work with those most on the margins and those not willing to engage in peace-building, but we need to consider the safety of the workers. The safety of the worker is important, especially when you are at risk and vulnerable in the community.”

“Some people are being made to take these risks. Without some sort of body or group to back this risky work, we are going to struggle with this. ... The back-up not being there stifles creativity. We don't have the backing of politicians, especially when people are working against us.”

The literature review highlighted how some youth workers faced verbal and physical intimidation, with a few losing their lives. My findings indicate how for one participant abuse and intimidation were commonplace,

“There was a conversation about a group of young people from Newry who went to America. We happened to say that it was an initiative with the police. That small 5-second conversation turned into us being PSNI police officers. This broke our group down and led us to 2 years later still being very tentative. We were told that we weren't welcome in that area any longer. This was from adults, the gatekeepers, not from young people.”

As well as the safety of the worker, many research participants were also fully aware of the possible implications for young people in engaging in a peace-building or inter-community initiative. The risk associated for the young person often has potential repercussions within the community and as one young participant commented, this makes it extremely difficult to extend to develop 'bridging' experiences between communities,

“There are consequences if you do something different in your community.”

“The implications of breaking the lines of separation is very high – implications for you and your family.”

This affirms the slow pace of peace development, and recognition of sensitivities that exist for communities. One participant summarised this,

“If it’s just done all at once chances are that it will not work. If it’s all too quickly it will just explode. It needs to be gradually laid out otherwise it’s probably going to fail.”

Another participant remarked on the progressive and often regressive steps that are required. Such small steps involved stopping and restarting as she noted,

“I am a member of a community association and we do try to force social change but it’s a slow process. We had 2 years of a group trying to work with the police to do a cross-community thing. One parent kicked up and we lost the whole group over this. It took a year and a half to build back up and get a parent back on board.”

This perspective also highlights the importance of building relationships through intra-community bonding,

“It’s key not only to integrate between the communities but integrating the communities within themselves.”

Many participants noted an emphasis on co-learning at an intergenerational level. This reflects the views of young people who commented on older community members being part of reconciliation processes. In this way, youth work embraces a full community approach rather than operating through a tunnelled lens,

“Youth workers tending to only work with young people...but using a full community approach - have buy-in from communities.”

This reflects the perspective of Lederach (2005) who identifies four levels at which peace-building work should work: individual, interpersonal, community and policy. In this way youth work is about the individual and interpersonal, but should also embrace a social capital investment in community,

“There is a need to educate adults in communities as well as young people.”

Both young people and youth work practitioners mentioned the need to work with adults, particularly parents, who may not have had such opportunities to engage in critical dialogue on the conflict and reconciliation processes. Participants commented that,

“Re-educating older members as their attitudes often hold them back.”

“Parents learning to talk to their children about sectarianism.”

“...providing support and understanding to parents who may have very little experience of cross-community or single identity work.”

“If parents don’t want their children to integrate, how can we begin to take down barriers?”

With some increasing opposition to the peace process it can be difficult, if not impossible, to get beyond community gatekeepers to reach young people most in need of youth work support or contact. A youth worker selling ‘peace education work’ can find their job more difficult than say a market salesperson trying to sell window blinds. The findings highlight the complex skills set of the youth worker in having to negotiate and attain approval for their youth work interventions. Barbalet (2002:46) emphasised how fragile group solidarity can result in a higher violence response. Youth workers need to be aware of the social capital or intra-community development that has taken place within a particular community. They further need to balance a focus of community efforts that embody intra-group emotional and cultural preservation over inter-community bridging.

5.7 THEME 4 An appetite to address the issues

The findings with young people in stage 1 have overwhelmingly provided a case and foundation for much more practice-based interventions to help them explore and understand the conflict and how this may impact on their everyday worlds.

For example, young people have specifically asked, *“to learn about our past and different cultures”* and *“we want to look at this again – we don’t want this to stop.”*

This section considers the appetite among youth work to create such opportunities.

5.7.1 Appetite among youth workers

Having discovered that most young people have expressed an appetite to address the conflict and to have a better understanding of the context of such differences, it was equally valid to assess this appetite among the youth work profession. In exploring if there was an appetite among the profession, one research participant noted, "We can't ignore it but we do. But who wants to talk about it really?" Another participant noted the work of peace-building was often more of a 'tick-box' exercise,

"Things placed on you that you have to have a 60-40% box ticking rather than really focusing on the needs of a group or community. What's in it for the community?"

This perception of peace as a 'tick-box' reflects the administrative, technocratic or bureaucratic liberal-based approaches to peace-building (Beck and Purcel, 2011; Batsleer and Davies, 2010; Mac Ginty, 2008). Herein, many practitioners experience a top-down approach to practice intervention rather than one that is bottom-up involving indigenous and/or traditional practices (Mac Ginty, 2008).

Many practitioners, however, note difficulties in working with young people around 'the conflict', 'the troubles' and 'sectarianism.' Their lack of appetite for doing the work can often be aligned with limited understanding about priority rationales for this work; where to begin; how to do it; and what outcomes are being identified and measured. As research participants remarked there can often be anxieties about doing such work and in recognising the skills-set of the worker,

"Other workers maybe do not see the value or might be apprehensive or have fear about doing the work."

"The worker is paramount: knowledge, skills, confidence and values (are essential) as the most resourced programme can fall flat on its face."

In their research, Harland, Morgan and Muldoon (2005) found that despite initiatives to attempt to address such issues, many youth workers rejected the idea that 'political work' is part of youth work. Some research participants within my study reflected similar views to Harland et al (2005) expressing a resistance to opening up dialogue with young people for fear of disrupting the status quo. Comments from participants included,

"Let's not rock the boat. We are not killing each other. We are okay."

“There can be a fear and avoidance of conflict – maintaining the status quo.”

Other participants have expressed concern as to how much peace should be fore-fronted and implicit within the youth work approach,

“I would feel deeply uncomfortable with youth workers saying we are peace-building workers alone. The needs that these young people have are more than violence, hatred and rioting, which are all terrible things. It’s so many other parts to what we do. ...Peace is just part of youth work in my experience.”

Such comments begin to unravel a difference in understanding and approaches to peace-building through the youth work profession. While not suggesting that there should be one united or common approach, this does, however, indicate a lack of clarity and lack of certainty about how to present and market such programmes.

While some participants expressed concern about the centrality of peace within the youth work approach, other research participants felt strongly that youth workers purposefully side-stepped this area of work for one reason or another,

“Youth workers copping out in aspects of their role: ‘I don’t do community relations work.’”

“Workers need to embrace and overcome their fear. They can play it safe with the group and not want to explore the issues, or not challenge as such.”

“I am concerned that it can become a cop out for workers to go ... this is my bit of the jigsaw and everybody ends up doing this bit of the jigsaw but not doing the purposeful or intentional part.”

With young people not explicitly citing their ‘need’ to address the conflict, it can often fall off the education or youth work radar. Smith and Magill (2009) do, however, note that young people believe that education has a positive role to play in helping them and others understand the recent history of violent conflict. It was noted that young people did not want the past to be ignored, nor did they want to dwell on negative aspects of the past. Instead, they want to understand what happened and why, and how to create a more positive future. The sensitivities and potential controversial nature of the work is ultimately welcomed by young people and the youth work sector may want to review how it best responds to this request.

Research participants within my study highlighted the need for leadership and inspirational role modelling,

“Young people aren’t seeing other people stick their heads above the parapets and have some honest kind of talking in ways that are constructive apart from chucking stones.”

“Youth workers need to be brave enough to tackle the issues – it’s too easy to avoid the hard issues.”

Such an investment in leadership is shown through the model presented by Morrow (2013) in which ‘vision and commitment’ are owned and directed by young people and which involves additional allies to support actions for this shared vision.

My study reiterated the need for clear messages by leaders (whether youth workers or young people) emphasising the need for an ongoing commitment to peace and democracy,

“Insisting it will never happen again.”

It would seem that the research participants all acknowledge the structural factors at play in Northern Ireland but have different perspectives on how youth work should play its part in addressing such deep-rooted structures and attitudes.

5.7.2 Support and training

For many research participants there was much emphasis placed on the need for support and training for youth workers to be knowledgeable and skilled to be able to undertake peace-building work. Some commented that there was very little focus on community relations, conflict and politics through youth work training at higher education,

“No one trains youth workers on contentious issues...and when you did this training it was short, not adequate...The training is Community Youth Work which should focus us broader. It is not just necessarily work with the young people all the time but building relationships with MLA’s, councillors and the media.”

Many felt that youth work training had been inadequate in supporting a confident workforce in the area of peace-building work. This in turn, they believed, had a negative impact on the ability of the youth worker to carry out this role in an effective way.

Participants commented that,

“We need training to enskill workers to be knowledgeable and confident.”

“The workers: having competent, skilled and knowledgeable workers, with a strong value base.”

Stanton and Kelly (2015:44) note how a senior staff member from a peace-building and community development organisation felt real concerns about how community development and community relations were being taught in universities and ‘how there is a massive lack of practical experience for those coming through the other end of that.’

One practice-based youth worker in my study reflected on the lack of training and subsequent ability to apply skills and knowledge to their practice. The worker commented on how they actually resisted any probing of potentially sensitive and contentious issues. They cited “I didn’t want to push it. The temptation was to provoke and add other questions.” In this instance, an opportunity was available to open up further reflection and dialogue with young people, but the worker did not necessarily feel it appropriate or feel equipped to delve further.

Research participants also emphasised that the youth workers need to have a better understanding of the Northern Ireland context, to have an appetite to embark on a learning journey and be open to new skills development. One participant commented that youth workers needed to be “confident, skilled and knowledgeable - not being afraid to take risks.” Lederach in his model (2005) emphasises the willingness to risk among all players and actors involved.

Many research participants commented on the youth worker having a contextual understanding of the conflict. However, many also resisted the need for youth workers to become history gurus or teachers but rather “community relations work (focussing) on sharing and emotions rather than understanding of background and history.” In fact, the model suggested by Morrow (2013) would infer that practitioners are on a combined learning journey of discovery with young people, where new insights and perspectives can be synthesised to improve understandings.

Harland (2009) has noted that youth workers are expected to have a skills-set, knowledge and self-awareness which help them to better engage and respond to the needs of young people around potentially contentious issues. The findings in my research study indicate that many practitioners need to be nurtured through ongoing training, sharing and learning. Research participants noted,

“Look outside and learn from others so that you can adapt learning to your own work.”

“Youth work is very strong in action but needs to build further time, resources, opportunities for critical pedagogy – starting with youth workers - space is needed to step back to reflect.”

“Youth workers don’t get enough training. What is their political viewpoint?”

Bell et al (2010:33) note that there have been a number of difficulties identified at times with some youth workers’ roles in educating children and young people. Referring to a survey on ‘Teenage Religion and Values’ they note that some youth workers ‘who were often volunteers with little formal training and support were at times ill-prepared to tackle issues relating to moral and spiritual controversies’.

It could be perceived therefore that educators (whether teachers, youth workers or other) need to have an awareness of equality issues and civil rights, but more importantly have an inherent openness to addressing inequalities, prejudices and discrimination – namely a passion and appetite for it. The educator may have a possible knowledge gap but the key is to embark on learning journey with the young people and the wider community. One participant noted that within such collaborations it was important to refrain from cyclical debates of complex historical facts and myths, but rather to ‘remove the fuzziness.’

5.7.3 A policy appetite

The development of an agreed policy on community relations and dealing with the past has continued to present a challenge to the Northern Ireland government. “A Shared Future: Policy and Strategic Framework for Good Relations in Northern Ireland” was the first document in 2005 which tried to address this but it failed to gain support across all political parties in the Northern Ireland Assembly. The subsequent 2010 draft policy ‘Cohesion, Sharing and Integration’ again failed to receive the necessary support. The ‘Together Building a United Community’ policy (2014) achieved this to some degree, with many accusations of a diluted version for real vision and progress.

While having the skills and techniques to embark on youth work and peace-building are important, some research participants also placed focus on having a clearer vision. Some

criticism from research participants was directed at the structural and policy level, naming it as insufficient in articulating and working towards a particular vision,

“Within the Priorities for Youth policy, which will define youth work for the next 10 years within government, there is no recognition (and equality based policy) or emphasis in how we are trying to contribute to a civic, stable, Northern Ireland. No recognition of the role of what we have tried to do in community relations or peace-building work. It’s very concerning for the conversations we are having to day.”

“Community relations isn’t a policy issue anymore in Priorities for Youth.”

Smith and Magill (2009) affirm the need for educational policy to provide more effective leadership and vision that inspires a range of community relations practices. Within my study some research participants commented on the lack of realistic expectations in doing this type of work,

“On one level expecting too little (e.g. insufficient education of young people at local level) and on another expecting too much (e.g. expecting it to effect serious structural change in the face of entrenched power structures). Youth workers need to play their part.”

“We have aspirations but we can’t be unrealistic with regards what our role is in solving political or social issues who else is taking responsibility?”

This led some participants to question the agenda and focus of the youth work intervention, challenging the context of multi-agendas,

“We don’t want youth work to be pacifying young people. It’s about politicising young people. It’s creating an appetite for working with others. Radicalising towards peace instead of towards riots.”

This would indicate that youth work should challenge short term funding mechanisms, where an administrative statistical needs analysis often utilising a deficit based problem-solving intervention.

Others discussed the lack of resources in being able to make a significant impact,

“What resources are available in youth work? And are these proportionate to the expectation?”

“Resources need to match expectations.”

For example, rises in interface community riots tend to result in short-term targeted practices. This could be viewed as a narrow intervention which is disjointed to wider community development processes.

Much concern was expressed by research participants about the lack of vision for both Northern Irish society and in how the youth work profession can aspire to promote change,

“At what point did we lose momentum and vision? I’ve heard a few times ‘maybe that’s it’? As youth workers we cannot accept this it.”

“Short-term funding shouldn’t let us off the hook, however, as it is about our organisations long term visions and plans regardless of funding. The funding should reflect and aid our vision and plan.”

“Where is the new vision for society beyond where we have to be together? I don’t think there is anything at the minute in youth work?”

“Does the sector have a long term vision or do we focus too much on short-term outcomes and outputs in order to secure funding?”

Some research participants went so far as to reiterate the ‘challenge function’ of youth work as opposed to being a passive and compliant profession. In this way they were suggesting that youth work was about a strong value base in which young people are supported to have critical minds,

“(The) challenge function is very important - exposing young people to different approaches and thought processes.”

In the literature review, Mac Ginty (2010) discussed how many organisations and groups experience compliance devolved from the international to the national level and then onwards to the local. Stanton and Kelly (2015:41) also comment on the overly bureaucratic funding demands in current practices that focus on ‘project’ delivery rather than needs-based practice. Byrne et al (2008) also noted that practitioners felt donors were ‘dictating the scripts’. This lack of ownership and possibility to design or co-design

can result in disenchantment and disengagement either practically and/or psychologically in having belief and motivation.

5.8 Concluding comments

My research set out to explore how youth work address sectarianism and separation through practitioner perspectives. The findings firstly recognise that there is a role for youth work in contributing to peace-building, but there were a range of opinions on how much emphasis should be placed upon this, and what methodologies and approaches best engage young people. Many recognised that young people have multiple needs and some noted the inter-connections of these needs in relation to the legacy of the conflict. The realities and expectations of youth work and within youth work to make a significant contribution were mostly welcomed, in terms of clarity of programme outcomes. However, there was a realistic hesitancy in what could actually be achieved in a continued divided society which is too often reflected through structural and infrastructural levels. Most of the responses would further indicate that there has been a reduction in practices and workers taking up the mantle to champion youth work and peace-building, reflective of policy and government.

Lederach (1995:11) highlights the challenge,

You know the trouble with the activists - they assume that having the vision and speaking out for non-violent social change is the same as having the technique and skills to' and 'On the other side of the coin, having the technique and skill does not necessarily provide the vision.

This indicates one key challenge for youth work at both organisational and sectoral levels. Technique and practical skills to develop and maintain peace, it would seem, need to be complemented with a visionary outlook, commitment and emphasis. Such a vision would seem, at times, to be imposed by bureaucratic and outside influences rather than having a more equal and equitable approach embodying local actors in needs-identification and co-design of solutions and approaches. While not necessarily resisting policy or external influences the youth work sector may need to consider its voice in shaping the direction of travel rather than being the passive recipient. Research has indicated that sharing and peace-building require 'institutional buy-in' from individuals, organisations and the wider community (Duffy and Gallagher, 2012).

Chapter 6: Discussion

Introduction

Most of the literature review provided a critical perspective on the limitations of youth work in dealing with contentious issues (Morrow (2004), Harland (2009), Mc Alister (2009), Grattan (2009), Youth Council 2010). This was further substantiated with claims of workers avoiding exploration of contentious issues among young people and in providing superficial levels of engagement between young people of difference.

My study set out to review the contribution of youth work in addressing sectarianism and separation based on a perspective-seeking evaluation methodology, hearing directly from those primarily within the profession. Through an exploratory approach, participants were supported to reflect on the level of effort and impact of current peace-building practices. The perspectives of the 96 participants in the stage 2 research are aligned to the findings from the stage 1 participants with 39 young people. The evaluative methodology provided a purposeful space to reflect and review the strengths and limitations of current day practices based on needs identification, policy priorities, staff motivation and organisational commitments.

Parlett and Dearden (1977) note that the illuminate evaluation (which I have adopted) is not about definitively being in favour or against. As noted in my introductory chapter the evaluative approach by its very nature suggests areas for improvement and progression. Suchman (1967) emphasises that this is not a deficit approach but one that can acknowledge strengths but also recognise and identify limitations. It is perspective-based rather than a micro search for hard evidence of effort and impact.

This discussion chapter attempts to summarise the core findings in line with the three core elements identified at the outset of my evaluative research investigation:

1. Perspectives on **effort** at policy, organisational and practice levels;
2. Perspectives on **effect** as perceived by practitioners;
3. Perspectives on **processes** which enhance or restrict such interventions with young people.

This discussion chapter considers the literature and primary data findings in terms of complementarity, or where, there may be avenues for new knowledge and theory. The

chapter further illuminates the model which I have developed for my overall analysis. This 'Developing an Agenda for Peace through youth work' model describes how it aligns with and builds upon the four models discussed in chapter 3 and how the primary data has informed this new model. The chapter concludes with consideration as to how the perspectives from young people and practitioners inform our understanding of the nature of anti-sectarian education in Northern Ireland and what the implications might be for youth work and youth work policy in a divided society.

Section A Core findings aligned to the evaluative framework

6.1 Assessment of effort

6.1.1 Need identification

The findings from young people indicate a lived reality in terms of conflict and safety management. While not always instantly fore-fronted, most young people recognised the subtle manifestations of the conflict on their lives (section 5.2). They were mostly able to recognise various sectarian influences that can affect their attitudes, choices and behaviours.

In terms of understanding, many young people further cited a need to learn more about the conflict, differences and cultures, and to meet with others from different communities. Likewise many participants in stage 2 recognised the everyday nuances that affect young people's choices, behaviours and opportunities (sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2). They cited the skill needed in reading beyond what may be an initial disinterest among young people (section 5.4.2) and developing approaches which are relevant and connect to young people's lived experiences, especially those who are marginalised and disconnected to peace developments (section 5.4.2). This may involve some reconnaissance approaches which reflect upon the local context and local influencers, altogether providing better insight and contextual understanding without being overly research intensive (section 5.6.3). Some participants further noted that 'needs' related to the 'legacy of the conflict' can often be side-tracked in favour of other priorities and 'needs' (both subconsciously and deliberately) (section 5.4.1).

The findings indicate that 'needs' are often pre-determined by others, and favour a short-term social order intervention, often reactionary to moral panics (section 5.4). This mostly tendered work tends to focus on individual service approaches. These are often not aligned to core youth work principles and practices (section 5.6.2). Beck and Purcel

(2011:279), warn about needs based on coercive participation, individualised case-management and formal approaches. They argue that if the focus of youth work is only on changes in individuals the impact is lost on areas of social, economic and political terms.

The findings would suggest that youth work should create the time and space to critically reflect on what needs are most important. In this way, inter-connected needs-identification between all stakeholders (young people, community, practitioner, policy maker etc.) should result in subsequent interconnected co-design and implementation of relevant initiatives to address such needs. Needs thus, need to be considered from the local context but also through a broader regional lens which supports British-Irish relations at the structural level. The specific role of youth work in helping young people and communities to assess and understand need in relation to the legacy of the conflict would seem to an important role.

With potential burnout in the field in relation to youth work, and peace-building it is important to assess why this might be the case and to consider approaches which ignite the passion of the practitioner to engage in the work. Reychler (2006:5) notes how those within peace-building research have 'become cynical with some being burned out and have stopped contributing to the field.' He emphasises the need for motivated people who can overcome cynicism and defeatism across the work.

6.1.2 Grassroots approaches

The findings suggest that youth work and community relations is often more inspiring, realistic and optimistic at grassroots levels and can be more responsive than waiting on policy direction (section 5.4.2). Participants however, also noted the blockages at grassroots level where community gatekeepers can enforce which prevent progression in peace-building (section 5.6). In this way, youth workers are required to pay attention to key community influencers and appropriately nurture their skills in negotiations to enact programmes with young people in the community. Many significant community players can view interventions as intrusive, unwelcome and potentially contaminative (section 5.6). Risk assessment and ensuring safety are paramount for both young person and worker alike, particularly at times of high tension when the local context can be especially volatile (section 5.6).

The findings would also suggest an investment in social capital where communities learn to work and function internally as well as bridging relationships and opportunities across communities. Concerns did arise around an over-emphasis on one over the other (section 5.6).

Some participants commented on how finite budgets within education and youth work should not limit or inhibit a unique opportunity to be visionary, with others feeling bewildered at the lack of vision and hope for youth work in inspiring change (section 5.7).

The findings indicate that policy and government have been lacking leadership in a vision and support for peace and reconciliation, particularly in advocating integrated approaches.

The pitch and hook of peace-building programmes appeared central throughout the findings especially in considering and ensuring relevance of the 'peace package' that is on offer (section 5.5.1). As discussed in the literature review, Reychler (2006:12) refers to the problematic branding and image of much peace research and practice noting that 'not all people are enticed by the idea of peace.' Therefore, this branding should be improved.

6.1.3 Too many agendas

The findings suggest that youth work may be being over-stretched beyond educational outcomes to meet the priorities of all government departments' priorities and agendas, such as employment, health and justice (section 5.7). In this way youth work can advocate responses to all needs and priorities at the risk of holding true to its principles and capabilities. This is not to say that youth work should not play a significant role in meeting such government priorities but that the profession retains its integrity and clarity of purpose (section 5.5). Some respondents questioned if other professions experience such a repositioning from their core values and ethos. This stretch can align with priority needs being based on an instant hierarchy rather than always recognising the inter-connected nature of many needs and the multiple needs of each young person or community (section 5.4).

The findings further suggest that while youth work is educational and can build on an individual's growth, learning and attainment, it can also contribute to building strong cohesive communities and creating positive social change in society (sections 5.5 and 5.6). In this way, specific outcomes for young people can be complemented with wider community and societal outcomes.

The findings indicated how anxiety and frustration often emerge when need and direction are misinformed and embrace a shallow short-term intervention. Herein the youth worker can question the quality and relevance of the intervention aligned to need (section 5.5). The research would also suggest that youth work should articulate its contribution to peace-building in a more overt way to avoid any contention or misunderstanding of expectation (section 5.5). This would help to name and locate the effort applied by youth work as a significant contributor to peace and reconciliation.

6.1.4 Watered down investment in peace-building

The findings demonstrate some concern that community relations work in its traditional essence is at risk of being sidetracked and possibly left up to chance for practitioners to address. Many participants noted the lack of peace interventions being fore-fronted in youth work (section 5.4.1). While community relations related policies come and go, practices with young people remain, but often in silo communities. A new era and enthusiasm about community relations and peace-building work appears somewhat non-existent. Many participants voiced their concerns at the insufficient vision and articulation of youth works role in this area (section 5.7.3). In policy terms community relations priorities are often side-by-side with other equality issues. Much of the literature and findings claim that an investment in community relations and peace-building work has in fact been watered down (section 5.7). The implications of low energies for the work, low appetites, merged policies and a lack of conviction to addressing the legacy of the conflict within the youth sector seem concerning (section 5.7.1). Smith and Magill (2009) noted in the literature review the need for further consultation with educators about their willingness to undertake the task. It would thus appear that community relations and peace-building should be re-centred with more investment required.

Stanton and Kelly (2015:145) encourage scrutiny when embarking on a funding relationship or outside investment as there is a danger that peace support interventions become non-reflexive and uniform (Darby, 2003). In this way, the youth work organisation and workforce should ensure that the ideology of the investment favours that of the organisations values or at least does not compromise them.

6.1.5 Skilled workers

In terms of an assessment of effort, it is clear from both the literature and the primary data that more attention needs to be invested towards skilled youth workers who have training and spaces for experiential learning, reflective practice and continuous development. Bell et al, (2010), cited in the literature, that youth workers were often 'not skilled to tackle issues.' Osborne (2009) further insisted that contentious issues were often avoided (section 2.38). This supports the view from Harland et al (2005) that youth workers need to accept the idea that political work is part of youth work, embracing a full participative democracy and citizenship approach (sections 2.36 and 5.7.1). Wilson (2016) reflects on how *"the thoughtful youth worker is interested in strengthening civil society and creating a less-fearful environment."* The research findings in stage 2 indicate the limited training and support for youth workers in being confident to deal with sensitive and possibly controversial issues (section 5.7.2). In this way, either many workers find themselves avoiding such issues or limiting the possibility of such issues emerging within their everyday youth work, whether it be via structured programmes and/or everyday conversations. This might suggest that workers develop a critical policy and political lens that helps them better connect with their youth work practices (section 5.7.2).

The literature review highlights the lack of expertise among youth workers in peace development practices (sections 2.37/2.38) further complemented by the research findings (section 5.7.2). As well as limited training and experience, the findings also indicate that an inherent appetite is also needed (section 5.7.1).

Rather than viewing youth workers as having a huge deficit in their skills repertoire the concluding point is that youth workers embark on a learning journey with young people, rather than always waiting 'to be trained'. Rather than factual detail and interpretation, the youth worker can co-investigate the past alongside young people in interactive, relevant and meaningful ways. This understanding of the past and indeed present should encourage a greater recognition of past complexities and how they have shaped current day politics and everyday life (section 5.6).

Batsleer and Davies (2010:43) summarise the impact of the process and methods by young people noting that, *'workers respected and treated them fairly but also asked thought-provoking questions, posed problems without giving answers and challenged them to think, to learn and grow in confidence, in areas beyond their existing boundaries.'*

The findings conclude that workers require techniques and approaches that achieve buy-in from communities and young people (section 5.5.1). This hook or pitch was a common thread throughout the research (section 5.5.1) and again recognises the complex skills set

which youth workers need to employ in understanding the local community context and in negotiating with key community influencers (section 5.5.2). This requires effort and attention by the sector and its inter-linking components and organisations, with a particular emphasis on youth work aligned to community-planning and development approaches.

Skilled workers with a desire to create and to sustain peace practices through youth work will be essential for nurturing and growing youth leadership. Reychler emphasises the importance of building a critical mass of peace-building leadership (2006:6).

6.1.6 Involving young people

Stage 1 findings with young people tended to indicate that most young people were keen to participate in civil and social actions but generally felt unclear or unaware of how they could make a difference (section 5.3.2).

Both stage 1 and stage 2 findings conclude that youth work needs to work not only with young people but also with local communities and service-providers to ensure that young people are fully involved in creating peace in Northern Ireland. That said the findings acknowledge that the pressure should not solely be on young people as 'future leaders.' The prospect of burdening young people with historical legacies was cautioned by many (section 5.5.1). Young people also remarked on the sometimes over-emphasis on peace-building where peace can actually be perceived as being constantly 'shoved in your face' (section 5.3.1). This was further coupled with the stigma often associated with peace as being 'uncool' (section 5.3.2). In this way, effort must be carefully balanced in a way where young people do not disengage nor wholly be consumed in the challenges that peace development demands.

Magill et al (2008) noted that 'young people want a voice in debates' and this was supported by both my stage 1 and stage 2 findings. Young people have often felt disconnected and unrepresented with the local political structures in Northern Ireland. While they have an appetite for change, they are also victims of the ongoing political setbacks that can at times quash hope and commitment (section 5.6).

6.1.7 Not leaving the past in the past

The literature noted how the volatile landscape in Northern Ireland often equates with volatile outlooks where old rivalries and prejudices re-emerge. The notion of hot topics and hot periods (section 5.3.1) ensure that the past is effectively ever-present.

While some participants espoused an approach to 'leave the past in the past', they also recognise that dormant attitudes and feelings can fester and emerge if left unaddressed (section 5.6). Some talked about perceived cultural erosion and prejudiced remarks and comments that emphasised how the past carried into the present. Some also believed that a blatant focus on the past only serves to reproduce feelings of hatred and blame which may provide the catalyst for continued sectarianism and separation. Findings from participants in stage 2 included 'ignoring it', viewing it as a 'tick-box exercise' and rejecting any work which may be seen as 'rocking the boat' (section 5.7.1). Lessons from other areas of conflict would indicate that a transparent commitment to non-violence and a future, which will insist that conflict is an act of the past, trumps any denial and naïve consciousness. In this way, most participants suggested that issues are actually confronted (section 5.5.3).

Some writers in the literature review supported a more explicit recognition of past injustices and atrocities where historical colonialism and state-harm are named, for example, as core to the foundation of the 'problem' (Dixon, 2008). Citing Cairns and Darby (1998), Muldoon (2004:454) argues that *'in order to create and maintain peaceful societies we need to understand the causes of conflict and prevent the 'recreation' of conflict.'* This would reflect the need identified by young people in having a better understanding of the multiple forces and causes that led to the conflict (section 5.3.1).

6.1.8 Challenge function of youth work

The literature suggested that youth work can provoke young people to question and reflect, ask the hard questions, promote inclusion and support integration and safe mobility (sections 2.36 and 2.38). Participants in stage 2 affirmed the value base of youth work as being nurturing of critical mind development among young people (section 5.7). This critical pedagogy within youth work would appear to be a catalyst for addressing controversial and contentious issues among young people.

Maddison (2011), in the literature review, challenges those that claim 'if it's not broke don't fix it' claiming that in fact 'it is broken.' She further cites the need for transparent connections to previous harms and injustices, while creating new realities where hope can

prevail. In this way, aspirational and motivational leadership among youth workers can inspire positive change (section 5.7).

It would thus seem that modern day youth work in Northern Ireland continues to grow its ability to support and challenge young people's perception and understanding while supporting young people as the new custodians of hope.

6.2 Assessment of effect

6.2.1 Us and them

One underpinning element within the exploration with young people was to understand whether the 'us and them' is still as significant for young people (sections 2.14 and 5.2.4). The findings show that young people continue to have a lack of exposure to the 'other' and are still heavily influenced by parents, communities, peers and the visible cultural and traditional commemorations and celebrations (section 5.2.3).

The findings conclude that young people's perspectives on the 'other' may not be as fore-fronted as previous generations but it would appear to be subconscious in terms of attitudes and behaviours (sections 5.2 and 5.4). 'Light-bulb moments' such as recognising the lack of integration, or having a view on cultural erosion provided young people with a realistic check on the continued effort required to impact on attitudinal and behavioural change (section 5.3).

In terms of the effect of interventions, it would seem that there are real barriers to learning and engaging with young people from the other community. While youth work interventions and other service providers might initiate some initial bridging steps, it would appear very difficult and risky for many young people (particularly in singular identity working class communities) to step above the community stronghold in integrating with young people from the 'opposite' community (section 5.2.2). Furthermore, many young people have few incentives or realities that require them to integrate, especially as many experience polarised worlds (section 5.2.1).

The stage 1 research findings have provided an indication of how many young people want to "shake their community up" (section 5.3.3). However, the challenge would be creating interventions that can manifest such an effect.

6.2.2 Inspiring and ambitious

While the stage 2 research findings show a continuum of perspectives on how youth work contributes to peace-building, many participants' exercised concerns about the lack of inspiration and ambition among the sector in recent times (section 5.7).

Most participants advocated that the youth sector has a unique opportunity and placing to nurture and support an inspiring profession with upbeat and challenging training, seminars, conferences and resources, resulting in an optimistic and inspired workforce (section 5.7). In this way, youth work can play a significant role in the complex peace development in Northern Ireland. The findings indicated caution to self-gratification on 'fluffy' cross-community work or artificial integration that lack substance and impact, but preferably citing the change outcomes of adopting such approaches. Thus, the approach and content should be seen as 'worth discussing' (section 5.5.1). The findings would suggest that outcomes of the work for the most part need to be more explicit. Some participants were, however, cautious of the stretch within youth work to consistently anticipate outcomes and indeed identify over ambitious ones (section 5.6). For many it appeared that youth work should be clear about its outcomes and expectations (section 5.5).

6.2.3 Youth work: a focus on sectarianism over separation

The findings indicate that youth work has supported young people, to some extent, to address contentious issues, through both planned and adhoc or organic interventions. The findings are less convincing about inter-community or integrated practices. The realities and complexities of ongoing inter-community tensions and anxieties may be one factor which prevents movement in this area (section 5.6.1).

While recognising the challenges that abound for integration, Allport (1954) in his 'contact hypothesis' (Hargie & Dickson 2003) explains how meaningful contact can help to reduce tensions and prejudices between groups experiencing conflict. Contact theory and hypothesis suggest integration as core to addressing separation and deep-rooted sectarianism (section 3.6). Such contact and integration where issues are confronted would appear to remain challenging within youth work. Indeed youth work historically has adopted a proactive approach to the conflict in Northern Ireland throughout the 1970s – 1990's. Much of the early work appeared to be the forerunner for formal education

interventions (sections 2.37 and 2.40) and many lessons can be learned from this previous work.

6.2.4 Skilled young people

It can be argued that youth work supports young people's worldview understandings alongside galvanising collective action for change individually and at wider societal level (section 2.36). New insights and understanding, reflecting on attitudes towards others, and building skills for life are cited as core principles within the youth work profession. However, stage 1 research findings appear to show that many young people have a limited understanding of the conflict in Northern Ireland, retain negative out-group attitudes and are generally ill equipped to manage contentious explorations (section 5.3).

Wilson (2015) emphasises the challenge and need for developing curiosity, promoting ease with difference and working actively to decrease levels of inequality (Graffikin and Morrissey, 2011). Community Relations Council (2010) in the literature review also note the need for an investment in conflict resolution and mediation rather than solving problems by conflict and violence. In this way youth work can support young people to develop skills in violence reduction and conflict mediation. Wilson (20105) notes how these core societal values are central to promoting sustainable, diverse and inclusive communities and economies.

6.2.5 Sameness

In a region that has been separated by division and conflict, differences have too often been pronounced in Northern Ireland. In this way, a focus on similarities can aid bonding over division (section 5.5.2). On the other hand, a potentially dangerous rhetoric of sameness counteracts values that promote diversity and difference. While a focus on sameness might appear positive, Paulo Coelho warns that, 'there is no beauty in sameness, only difference' (Langer, 2013). The emphasis on 'sameness' presents a view that rather than looking for cultural, religious and political differences among young people, the interventionist such as a youth worker should seek out commonalities and sameness. While young people who lack exposure to one another can bond through similarities, some would be concerned that a focus on sameness should not come at the cost of celebrating difference and diversity (section 5.5.2).

Salmond (Cohen 2012), in the literature stresses the concept of a 'joy of difference' and 'gift of the other'. This would suggest that youth work finds a balance in supporting in-group similarities and differences and between-group similarities and differences.

6.2.6 Approaches (methods of engagement)

Some literature and research findings indicate that youth work approaches have made an impact on community life in Northern Ireland (section 2.41). While much of the literature questions the impact of this in recent years, many research participants in stage 2 also cited a lack of new approaches alongside the lack of a coherent vision (section 5.7.3). The effect or impact of practices in recent years would be less apparent due to many workers avoiding this area of work and/or less investment in peace-building practices through youth work. Instances of peace-building work at single identity level were more regular than cross-community contact while some citizenship and politically based youth work appears to be on the increase.

Blends of approaches, which include both purposeful exploration and young people coming together through social interests, have been cited as valid and making a significant contribution. This reflects the 'contact' and 'integration' framework noted in the theoretical chapter (section 3.6). Some participants have voiced the need for more explicit peace-building programmes while others have this less obvious in their intervention, raising the question of varying approaches which can be intentional or incidental in nature (section 5.5.2).

While not advocating for a particular approach, it could be concluded that workers need to consider the interplay of the varying approaches (contact, dialogue) in the scheduling of their activities. The challenge would appear to be monitoring a balance of these approaches and not assuming that all approaches are being implemented.

Regardless of how it is approached Wilson (2015) asserts that there must be sustained meetings between different 'others' and the need for promoting inter-cultural understanding, as central within any youth work model. Awareness raising can indeed be a useful starting point in starting to make a difference (section 5.5.2). Youth work can build on this and play a pivotal role in creating spaces for mixing which are often absent in other areas such as schooling and leisure. Central to the approach is creating spaces where young people can learn without fear through a variety of mediums including story-telling, personal reflection, creative activity, role-play, music and art (Wilson, 2016:7)

6.2.7 Sharing and integration

The literature consistently notes the lack of shared spaces and non-contentious neutral areas that are available to young people (sections 2.9 and 3.5). This prompts service-providers to consider where and how can youth work support sharing. Youth workers recognise, for the most part, the complexities of tribal territories that young people inhabit and how they employ a range of safety strategies to negotiate such spaces (mind-maps, subtle cues and markers, section 5.6). Fear, safety and self-protection can thus take precedence over youth work establishing potential risky meetings with the 'other.' Because of such risk, much youth work has arguably developed single identity work and some first step interventions between young people from differing communities. It would appear that practices that focus on sustained in-depth cross-community engagement are less applied. Risk-assessment and safety priorities for both the young person and the worker remain at the fore (section 5.6) which can limit the development of such integration. My findings indicate some ongoing single identity work but also note a gap in the level of exploration, bridge building and mobility that takes place across the divide. The findings within stage 2 recognise some effect or impact through friendships being made by initial contact but also highlight the need for more meaningful inter-community engagement (section 5.5). Removing the fears that young people may have is not solely a role for youth work, as this requires a structural change in which trust and confidence are developed (section 5.6). In this way, reconciliation can begin.

6.3 Assessment of processes

6.3.1 Youth work operating in a volatile landscape

Realities remain in which the Northern Ireland context is at one moment 'peaceful and quiet' and in the next 'noisy and erupting in riot'. One event can escalate into street violence, intimidation and threats. Periods of political drift and leadership, coupled with an economic recession, also create a dangerous void where tensions and violence are likely to emerge (chapter 1 and chapter 2). This volatile nature of Northern Ireland makes the approach of community youth workers even more difficult, with an ongoing presence and active role of paramilitary groups (sections 5.5 and 5.6). My findings confirm the complexity that youth workers have to grapple with as a divided society exudes in everyday life. The findings conclude that youth workers have a complex role that requires

Careful assessment of the political landscape and community contexts and sensitivities (sections 5.5 and 5.6).

6.3.2 Wider investment

The findings primarily relate to peace-building while recognising an investment in other socio-economic issues (sections 5.4.1 and 5.5.3). It would appear that communities who have experienced extreme economic and social disadvantage require complementary investment, such as economic development and health-based support (section 2.10). The findings from literature in particular tend to highlight the need to confront issues among communities that experience the most hardship and poverty because of the conflict (section 2.10). This would warrant further investigation and research.

6.3.3 Realistic

Northern Ireland is structurally a separate society that makes approaches to integration and sharing difficult (sections 2.7 and 5.6.1). Doing nothing can be very easily adopted in place of a carefully considered risk and risk-mitigation. The findings indicate that organisations and workers have to be realistic in terms of what outcomes can be achieved through youth work alone (section 5.5.1).

The findings indicate that emotions triggered by the past need to be considered alongside everyday emotional hopes and aspirations. It would seem that such realism is required to connect any project relevance with young people (sections 5.3.1 and 5.5).

6.3.4 Myth busting

The findings have shown that the opposing identities/communities perceive loss and betrayal in various guises (section 5.2.3). While the Protestant/Unionist community have feelings of insecurity and losing out within the Peace Agreement, many Nationalist/Catholic communities share feelings of defeatism and compromise (sections 2.15 and 5.6.1). Youth work, in such instances, can alleviate myths or pre-conceptions about who is benefiting from a peace settlement and work with young people to gain a more realistic perspective and explore full benefits for all. It would seem that youth work

has had limited interventions to work at a full community level to help alleviate myth and suspicion and to broker relationships within and across communities.

6.3.5 Participative democracy

A common theme throughout the research was the structural barrier or democratic deficit of young people not engaged or disengaged from local community activism and more so in wider politics within Northern Ireland life. Young people and practitioners both recognised the need for renewed appetite in participative democracy and alternative ways of being political (section 5.3.3). Many youth workers affirmed the need for youth work to stimulate such active citizenship and to identify triggers that switch young people on to political activism (section 5.5.2). As noted by Wilson (2013:12), *"the primary of equal citizenship not identity has to be a goal if we are to be at ease with different others."*

6.4 Summary

The literature review and research findings conclude that while the conflict in Northern Ireland is mostly a historical phenomenon, it transcends its legacy in contemporary society, in a differing and equally challenging manner. For example, issues of poverty and poor health have an inter-dependence to areas, communities and people affected mostly by the conflict. Furthermore, the literature would suggest that the conflict exists in a different guise that may indeed be more subtle than its predecessor may. The findings emphasise the intensity and complexity of the road ahead, on Northern Ireland's tentative steps away from conflict and murder. The placing of youth work is recognised as an important cog in the peace-building wheel and has the potential to better inter-connect at community and policy level.

Education has a vital contribution to improving community relations but it alone cannot carry the burden of change. The change requires political leadership, inter-departmental commitments and collaboration, private sector investment, third sector aspiration and influence, alongside a nurtured civic responsibility. The peace process is exactly that, a process rather than an end journey in itself.

It would seem that the findings and overall conclusions require youth work to build on its historical practices while repositioning itself in terms of its vision, values and approaches to addressing sectarianism and separation.

Stanton and Kelly (2015:36) reflecting on the abundance of research on specific elements of peace-building practice in Northern Ireland, query the lack of sharing on what has been learned from experiences of peace-building practice 'that may contribute to the development of indigenous theory or theories of conflict transformation.'

Complementary to reflexive youth work programming is a confident profession in which trained and reflective staff can articulate the value of youth work. They can also identify and showcase the impact of youth work on young people and the wider community. Furthermore, such practices should be actively promoted especially those which prioritise contact, integration and reconciliation. Altogether youth work can be demonstrating leadership as a key change agent for peace. Wilson (2013:12) insists that the profession and wider society should not lose sight of the human suffering inflicted by the conflict and to 'be committed to ensuring that we never return there.'

In terms of effort:

- Many youth workers and organisations have experiences in applying effort to building peace.
- Many participants in stage 1 (young people) had experienced limited opportunities to address sectarianism or bridge separation, suggesting a lack of effort from some service-providers.
- Many participants in stage 2 (practitioners) currently feel a reduced level of effort in this area, and that 'initiatives' were often left to chance.
- Youth workers need to put 'peace' on the agenda and seek an engaging 'hook' for young people to be involved.
- Youth work can provide leadership in peace-building with youth workers presenting an appetite and commitment to improving relations and building a peaceful society.
- While initiatives have been developed with young people in local communities, the influence of paramilitary groups can often limit this effort.
- Policy has given minimal vision or clarity in this area, with components of peace often mixed up with other social justice and equality issues.

In terms of effect:

- Young people remain polarised and continue to cite a lack of exposure to the 'other' community.
- Youth work has played a role in supporting young people to embrace different outlooks.

- Youth work has contributed somewhat to reducing levels of sectarianism.
- Youth work has supported young people to meet from different communities through a range of initiatives including youth arts, sport and dialogue events.
- Youth work has less success and experience in supporting integrated practices to address separation and encourage safe mobility.
- Youth work can be limited in its effect or impact when parents and other community members restrict opportunities for young people.
- Youth work does not appear to have a clear model and outcomes framework aligned to peace-building.

In terms of processes:

- The realities of structural separation abound thus limiting much possibility through youth work.
- Sectarianism and separation (legacy of the conflict) are intertwined with wider socio-economic issues such as poverty and health that require a co-ordinated approach.
- Full community approaches are needed which support development and progression involving young people alongside other community representatives.
- Youth activism can be better nurtured to support young people's engagement in social, civil and political life.
- The impact and direction as determined by funders and policy makers could both enhance and/or prevent creative initiatives. Realistic expectations and a sense of ambition are required.

Section B Proposed model

6.5 Developing an AGENDA for peace through youth work

The literature review (chapter 2) and theoretical chapter (chapter 3) particularly highlight examples of models and approaches within peace-building. These are not exclusive to youth work but provide useful frameworks and approaches that can be incorporated alongside the youth work approach. In section 3.9 Batsleer and Davies (2010) note the importance of a global youth work model in which critical consciousness is emphasised over a dormant one and from this action can be subsequently desired and enacted. The proposed peace and youth work model which I have established 'Developing an AGENDA for peace through youth work,' recognises the need to be proactive and brings together the 4 key models presented in the theoretical analysis (chapter 3) and the research

findings of my study (chapter 5). Altogether, this builds a new model of peace-building for youth work, ultimately contributing to knowledge and providing a framework for application to practice. Further, the model aligns with the United Nations peace-making and peace-keeping report also known as 'An Agenda for Peace' (1992). My 'Developing an AGENDA for peace through youth work' is exactly that, located in the field of youth work but the outcomes of applying such a model can align with this UN macro world agenda for peace. It brings together the required vision and practical expertise as defined by Lederach (1995:11).

My proposed model corresponds directly with the findings from research participants, particularly emphasising the common citation by both young people and practitioners that peace was either never on the agenda, or indeed had 'fallen off' it. Mc Devitt (2011) also noted how sectarianism and mechanisms for addressing this need to remain at the 'top of the agenda.' A specific table of 'agenda' referencing by participants throughout has been attached in appendix 25 to locate how my model has been derivative from the primary data. This table directly names the places and contexts in which the word 'agenda' has been used. My proposed model maintains peace development as a priority within youth work and serves to provide young people with the knowledge, values and skills that they require for shaping a more peaceful, shared and diverse society in Northern Ireland.

The 'Developing an AGENDA for peace through youth work' model in the first instance encompasses three key components as identified by Smyth (2007). The three key layers of the approach recognise an investment in peace-keeping, peace-making and peace - building.

Smyth considers the peace-keeping stage to be particularly characterised by 'diversionary' youth work that he suggests has a tendency to lead to cross-community contact, exemplified by summer schemes, outings and sporting competitions with short-term contact between youth clubs. Peace-making youth work, it is suggested, requires a higher level of specific training for staff as it often features in depth, facilitated discussions of a difficult nature in programmes such as those with local history and cultural components to allow for a deeper understanding of diversity and sectarianism. In the third point of his typological triangle, Smyth points to peace-building that he defines as democracy-building youth work.

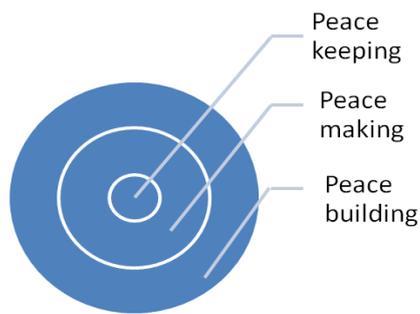


Figure 6.1: Smyth's peace model (2007)

Smyth's model is important for contextualising the approach and the level or depth of the intervention. Within my 'Developing an AGENDA for peace through youth work' model it is inherent throughout that the intervention needs to embody some initial contact (peace-keeping) but further needs to establish space for exploring difficult or contentious issues (peace-making) while encouraging young people to be champions or activists within the change process throughout all aspects of society (peace-building).

The 'Developing an AGENDA for peace' model is further supported by a set of underlying principles such as relationships, developing curiosity, providing the space for encounter and taking a risk (Lederach, 2005). Lederach (2005) also emphasised that peace-building work takes place not only at the individual level but also at interpersonal, community and structural levels. The model has again been supported with some key guidelines that recognise processes and outcomes at the varying levels. In this way youth work can better articulate its impact upon the young person but also make evidence based assessments on its wider contribution to community and at policy levels.



Figure 6.2: Lederach's impact level

Geoghegan (2008) further notes the impact in reducing sectarianism through ideas and values at the individual level; the impact on actions and changed behaviours; and finally addressing structural levels of separation and sectarian inherited ways of being.

My proposed model is primarily located within the field of youth work as this is where my study is concentrated. Writers such as Geoghegan and Lederach remind the youth work profession of its positionality within a larger structural framework. This can make impact and real change harder to achieve. That said such models and that of my 'Developing an Agenda for Peace through youth work' model provide a framework for continued effort in a belief that change is indeed possible.

The 'Developing an AGENDA for peace through youth work' model resembles that of Morrow (2013) which provides a linear journey from needs-assessment to building a ground swell of committed activists.

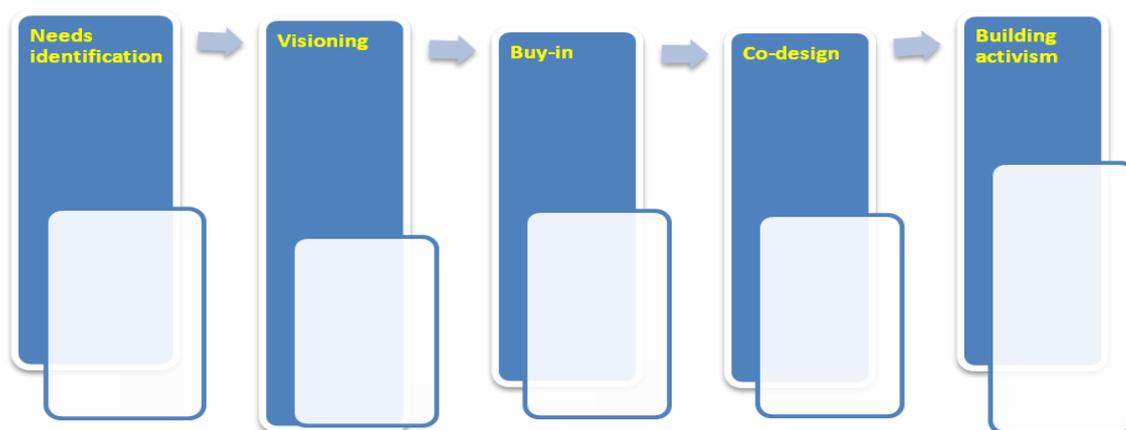


Figure 6.3: Morrow's stages of intervention (2013)

Morrow's stages of 'needs identification' and 'visioning' are incorporated within my section 'A' of my model – Assessment of need and acknowledgement to act. Such a process also reflects that of Beck and Purcell's core principles of community development (2011). The stages of 'buy-in' and 'co-design' suggested by Morrow (2013) are also reflected in my section 'G' of the model – Getting buy-in. The sections 'E' and 'N' within my model reflect more the processes suggested by Smyth (2007) in terms of contact between young people and the actual exploration of sensitive and contentious issues. 'D' Documenting the learning and impact has emerged from both the literature and primary data suggesting that youth work should be more explicit about its activities, and probably more so its impact. Morrow's model closes with 'building activism' which also reflects that of 'A'

(Allies for action) within my model which is very much about galvanising a committed movement of peace champions. Durkheim, in writing about social solidarity, refers to the term '*collective effervescence*' (YouthAction, 2011:5). Within youth work this can equate with supporting young people's collective conscience and action as a contagious behaviour which others find difficult to resist. By such collectivism, an energy emerges which can transcend conflict to stimulate social action and change. Youth work believes in the potential of young people in contributing to sustainable change. To complement direct work with young people, we need to '*support adults to learn to talk with young people about sectarianism and controversial issues.*' (YouthAction, 2011:3). This reflects a full approach of supporting individual or group knowledge, understanding and skills (human capital) and in supporting co-operation and social relations (social capital).

The 'Developing an AGENDA for peace through youth work' has been established using the 'AGENDA' acronym which follows a process for effective youth work interventions. The acronym and the components of the model are described below in table 6.1.

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| DATE: 17 TH March 2018 | | |
| DISCUSSION: | | |
| AGENDA | | |
| A | -Assessment of need & Acknowledgement to act | This involves having an appetite to investigate need and to enact process for change. This need is both local and regional. It involves reconnaissance and understanding each individual local context and knowing the local influencers. It also requires skills to read beyond potential disinterest from young people. In creating actions to address need attention must be given to safety of both young people and workers. <i>As one participant noted in the findings, "(it is the) responsibility of workers to be informed on issues (and to) know who the local influencers are."</i> |
| G | -Getting buy in (young people, communities, organisation) | This is about pitch and relevance that attracts initial community engagement and motivates young people to participate. The hook may require creative intervention and initial small steps. It should support ownership of young people in the co-design to maintain relevance and engagement. Buy-in further requires a full community commitment that can provide challenges in negotiating with community gatekeepers who might present resistance to such a peace-building agenda. Buy-in also requires understanding between funders |

| | | |
|----------|---|--|
| | | and the practice development in which youth work principles should be retained. |
| E | -Exploration of undiscussable or contentious issues (depth) | Youth workers provide leadership which in advocating change and in prioritising peace. Rather than confrontation approaches this is about consensus or a vibrant and healthy clash of differences. Herein the challenge function of the youth worker comes to the fore in challenging prejudices etc. Through dialogue or creative expression, young people will experience 'light-bulb' moments and awakenings in which they can identify personal actions for change. Where possible young people and adults in the community should have inter-generational sharing encounters. All of these learning experiences should take place without the fear of threat. |
| N | -New relationships and contacts across the divide | Contact and inter-community engagement are essential to fostering good relations and reducing prejudicial attitudes and behaviour. While commonalities can support initial relationship-building this should not over shadow difference which are needed for a more diverse and respectful society. Herein young people can meet together and build lasting relationships. |
| D | -Documenting the learning and impact within the local community and across the sector | Any intervention should note attitudinal or behavioural changes aligned to a more peaceful, diverse and stable society. Youth work should identify the impact at individual, community and wider society levels. |
| A | -Allies for further action | Citizenship and civil and social engagement are required to sustain momentum towards a more peaceful society. Young people should consider ways of connecting with others to further progress in this area. Youth work should recognise the triggers to youth activism and support a range of traditional and alternative mechanisms to affect change. Ultimately, this is about challenging separation and sectarianism. This component particularly recognises that many other young people remain disconnected to peace development and political engagement. |
| | ACTION PLAN for PEACE | |

Table 6.1: Developing an Agenda for peace through youth work model

Action plans for peace are a core element within the model as this clarifies the approach, the anticipated outcomes, the target group, the level of engagement and consideration to sustainability and a continued momentum towards peace. It specifically identifies individual and collective responsibilities and timeframes.

The 'Developing an AGENDA for peace through youth work' model is further set within a youth work approach where the unique nature of the profession builds on its signature strengths, such as association and voluntary relationships with young people (chapter 2, section 2.31). The youth worker is a role model to inspire peace and to challenge sectarianism and separation (chapter 2, sections 2.36 and 2.39). The youth worker should recognise their skills and undertake any necessary training and ongoing support through the process (chapter 2, section 2.39).

The proposed model provides a suggested framework to support the continuous improvement of youth work in the area of peace-building, building on previous models and my primary data findings.

Section C Practice and policy

6.6 Understanding and implications for practice and policy

This section brings together findings that can inform understandings for youth work. It also considers implications for practice and policy.

6.6.1 Needs-assessment

Understanding of what needs-assessment is, how this is carried out and by whom are central to establishing relevant peace related interventions through youth work. Many approaches to this have been light touch and based on quick-hit surveys covering a plethora of issues, which can often silo or sidetrack needs. It might be more useful to take cognisance of other established surveys or research carried out which documents needs in relation to current issues for young people. The needs-assessment driver should be critiqued, whether this be liberal peace approaches and/or other compliant policy driven pre-determined approaches. The youth worker at grassroots level needs to feel confident that the direction being given is matched to the realities of the communities

with whom they work, rather than feeling that they are passively or 'robotically' developing meaningless tick-box work. Preference would be to involving young people and local indigenous actors to enhance participation, empowerment and ownership. In this way, more realistic outcomes and approaches can be identified. Above all, the professional integrity of the youth work sector should be respected and acknowledged for having pioneering work in this area and in also having an evidence base of impact and success. The actual youth worker who has unique to access to young people's lived realities should be validated for their ability to name and document issues based on attentive reflective practices. The sector itself should confidently present evidence of needs based on a range of mechanisms that it uses to collate this, and to liaise and negotiate with funders and policy makers in compiling a fuller picture of need.

6.6.2 Multiple partner landscape

Whether the effort is about need, practice interventions or resource development youth work needs to review and assess its positioning as an important partner and ally to social change among other enterprises by other sectors (business, community, social). The repeated struggles and challenges of a non-functioning devolved government feed into ongoing insecurities, fears, anxieties and frustrations among the general population, and does little to reassure young people about a new era of politics. The role of civic society becomes all the more crucial at these times as it works to create and further establish frameworks and interventions which go some way to helping to improve society across Northern Ireland. The engagement with indigenous and traditional providers is fundamental to any policy or strategy with the voice and involvement of end-user themselves being central to shaping the bespoke intervention. While youth work appears to locate participation at its core there would appear to be much frustration with a new era of policy-informed participation. Furthermore, the levels at which youth work connects with a range of wider civil actors has been less known or documented. New insights in this area might display the inter-connectivity of sectors collaborating to address issues emanating from the legacy of the conflict and to create more opportunities, hope and optimism (such as early interventionist partnerships between schools and youth work). Rather than being insular to Northern Ireland policy jurisdiction youth work should also enhance cross border and Irish-British relationships to both maximise opportunities for young people and to promote youth work as a key conduit for promoting equality and inclusion across the isles.

6.6.3 The worker

Coalitions and strategic partnerships can be celebrated for their efforts, but they need to pay careful attention as to how they listen to and co-design alongside the workers within their respective organisations. Continued references to workers avoiding issues related to conflict and peace-building, or having a lack of appetite and passion for the work, or in fact, being burnt out compels much attention which has to-date been somewhat limited in research. The complex skills-set of workers to do this type of youth work has been known, but less attention has been paid to naming these specific skills and supporting workers to test these in supportive and reflective fora's. The identification of 'who' the worker is also warrants attention. In many cases the youth worker may be located within the community, or be belonging to that community or ethno-political identity. In other instances, the worker may be a support to developing practices alongside communities and youth work projects, but not necessarily be located within that community, or be from that particular ethno-political identity. All these multi-faceted roles and identities are worthy of attention in trying to decipher motivations and applications to practice. A visionary and inspirational youth work sector that contributes to peace-building requires a committed workforce who know what they are doing, how they are doing it and why they are doing it. Limited knowledge would appear to exist on such drivers and motivations in this area. Reychler (2006) emphasised the importance of such a critical mass in providing and building leadership for change.

6.6.4 Models of peace interventions within youth work

Stanton and Kelly (2015:34) have noted the lack of 'aggregated or consolidated empirical analysis of the peace-building activities occurring at the civil society level.' The youth work sector has played a significant role over many years in developing pioneering and innovative practices which support young people within a peace-building realm. A hybrid of approaches that embody the elements of contact, exploration of content and reconciliation appear to exist. However, there would appear to some stagnation in how this work is carried out and what lessons have been learned. Directions from local and regional policy alongside European and American investment can influence models of intervention but they should not be accepted as the only 'show in town.' Further, a contemporary emphasis on citizenship and social action among much youth work programming could be better recognised as a core part of peace-building alongside

participative democracy youth work programming and other political-based youth work. This could help to create a more current and attractive understanding and willingness to engage in peace efforts. Elements of inter-community contact still seem to be left to chance rather than a purposeful lens in this area. While some young people may be engaging in contact-based initiatives and others may be benefiting from extend-contact effects (Hewstone and Straube, 2001), it can be argued that communities with limited or no contact are actually having limited or no impact on attitudinal change.

6.6.5 Reflective practice

While there appears to have been a variety of interventions through youth work in contributing to peace-building, the current era of youth work has succumb in some ways to the bureaucratic and technocratic influences which favour short-term interventions. While more time is devoted to intervention, less time has been allocated for reflective and reflexive practice. This has implications for learning and growing. Stanton and Kelly (2015) indicate how practitioners in Northern Ireland often find it difficult to find time amidst the competing pressures of programmed delivery, tight resources, and funder reporting demands. The sector must retain its ability to reflect, review, analyse and challenge in order to improve as workers and in the application to practices.

My research study was approached amidst an infiltrating climate of output and outcome-driven targets, embodying hard-evidence demonstration and impact. I resisted such influences as a researcher as I strove to protect professional integrity and embrace a more professionally respectful approach in which practitioners were trusted for their insights and honest reviews. This challenges the tidal wave of bureaucratic and intrusive approaches (Mac Ginty, 2008; Reychler, 2006).

These discussion areas help to formulate some key recommendations which are outlined in the following chapter.

Chapter 7: Reflections and Recommendations

This chapter provides a summary of key recommendations aligned to the conclusions from the findings. It also provides a review and critique of the methodology and some recommendations for further research.

The research exploration focussed on 'Sectarianism and Separation in Northern Ireland- a perspective based evaluation on the contribution of youth work.' Two specific research questions were employed to help ascertain understanding in this area, namely how relevant young people felt that sectarianism and separation was within their lives and the perspectives of practitioners on how youth work addresses sectarianism and separation.

In summary, young people were able to articulate how they may not always consider the conflict as the foremost issue within their lives, but they were able to recognise factors closely aligned to the conflict that affected their choices, attitudes and behaviours. They particularly noted their lack of exploration to help their understandings of the conflict in Northern Ireland. Many of the young people also had limited opportunities to meet with young people from different communities but expressed a willingness to do so. Young people were active within their communities but rarely viewed this as being politically active or in necessarily contributing to peace-building. In this way, young people were able to understand the relevance of the conflict and its divisions, recognising the continued 'us' and 'them' but also expressing that they believed such emphasis of difference to be lessening.

In terms of how youth work addresses sectarianism and separation practitioners had mixed views on how this is prioritised as a need within youth work. Some practitioners were caution of too much emphasis in this area, while others advocated for a renewed effort in this area. Some were concerned about the lack of progression in youth work and peace-building in Northern Ireland and were eager to have more support and training to develop a workforce with a realistic skillset. Concerns were expressed about imposed outcomes and expectations and that perhaps this has affected the downward flow in motivations and appetite to develop work in this area.

7.1 Recommendations for the delivery of peace-building through youth work

The recommendations are founded upon the core findings and conclusions reached.

7.1.1 Defining youth work and peace-building

It has been noted that there is often a 'woolly' ambiguity across youth work in relation to peace-building. It is recommended that this be replaced with a visible vision and expectation. Herein youth work should be clear on its intent; clarify its purpose; define need; and present impact on its core principles and practices. Elements of citizenship, participative democracy and inclusion on a range of equality issues all frame components of a peace-building model. Youth work should define peace-building as such, so that practitioners can locate their work in the relevant area of peace-building. Above all, the definition and approach needs to be locally-informed and shaped (indigenous) alongside support from external organisations and groups.

7.1.2 Realism

Indicators of impact transcend the youth work landscape and are often imposed from top-down, and in many instances by ideological forces with approaches and methodologies which have been implemented in very different contexts. Local actors need to confidently negotiate with funders and policy-makers about realistic expectations and outcomes, and to assert well-evidenced and traditional (but progressive and developmental) models of practices. Outcomes from the work should embody the three elements defined in figure 3.2 priority concepts (page 94), contact, integration and reconciliation. Altogether this should involve purposeful exploration of contentious issues among young people as well as improved opportunities for integration and mobility of young people across community divides.

7.1.3 Revamp

The image of peace-building and how this is applied within youth work has consistently been referred to, especially as many practitioners commented on how to make such initiatives relevant and attractive to young people. A new 'hook' for peace-building

incorporating citizenship and political engagement may support more buy-in from young people and encourage more take-up from youth workers. A rebranded approach of youth work and peace-building should take cognisance of, and build upon, established practices to renew interest, motivation and confidence among the workforce. The 'Developing an AGENDA for Peace through youth work' model should support this revamp and provide a framework for practitioners to develop quality practices with documented impact and learning.

7.1.4 Sharing, training and support

The research has shown the need for sharing, training and support for workers in delivering youth work and peace-building. As per Smyth's model (2007), this might focus more on the peace-making and peace-building elements that prove to be more challenging. The redefining and rebranding of youth work and peace-building approaches should provide a platform for shared support and training. Such support and training might further develop inspirational leadership and role modelling. Reychler (2006:9) endorses the need for practice-theory reflexivity, and sharing, stating,

The learning of violence prevention and peace-building can be improved by...creating structures which support a better exchange of knowledge between the decision-makers, the practitioners in the field, and the research community.

7.1.5 Further research

This research has been limited in its exploration of the willingness among workers to both want to undertake peace-building youth work and secondly the barriers which may prevent such an appetite to engage. A focussed lens on research which explores why or how a programme is successful or experiencing challenges and what core elements of the programme look like might provide greater insight. Jeffs and Smith (2010) further note in the literature the need for impact and quality measurement across youth work. Research that respects the practitioner voice and that of the end-user (young people) should be considered in carrying out such analysis of impact.

7.2 Review: limitations and recommendations for further research

My study set out to review the perspectives of practitioners on the contribution of youth work in addressing sectarianism and separation. This perspective-based evaluative research study attempted to explore perspectives on the assessment of effort, the assessment of effect and the assessment of process. On reflection, the study has uncovered more about the effort and the effect (chapter 6). The effort element provides insight into the conviction of youth workers, managers, organisations and policy to developing youth work approaches that address sectarianism and separation. In terms of the assessment of effect, the data has provided some perspectives on the influence of programmes upon young people, including approaches, learning methods and developing new attitudes and skills.

My study engaged with young people in stage 1 to illuminate their needs in relation to their opinions, attitudes and experiences of living with separation and prejudice. While this did provide information for the stage 2 research process with practitioners, this was less focussed on the effect or impact of youth work programmes. Consequently, it would be advisable to take further stock of what young people have experienced through youth work programmes in addressing sectarianism and separation. Some of this evidence of youth work interventions has been noted in the literature, such as that by Mc Alister et al (2009). The assessment of process element does provide a better understanding of what has been working and how various models or levels of intervention have been succeeding or failing. This element has been more difficult within my study, as its primary concern is to understand why or how a programme is succeeding or failing (Suchman, 1967). Analysis of 'process' tends to look more in detail at the core attributes or elements of a programme alongside the context in which it was established and implemented. Such an approach was beyond the capacity of my research study. In this way, a further research investigation could expose tried and tested models and interrogate the process in more detail.

Another criticism may be directed at the approach of the evaluative study. Herein the study did not search out hard evidence but rather relied on truthful assessment and perspectives based on self-evaluation reflecting that of illuminative evaluation (Gray, 2009). This can be counteracted by advocating the value base of the youth work profession as being based on critical reflective practitioners who do so with sincerity, and a commitment to truth seeking. I believe that the illuminative evaluative approach employed best reflected the value base of the profession and which embeds a trusting discourse with participants.

Within this evaluative study, I self-identified as an 'Insider or Regular'. A researcher with a 'Stranger' stance may be better placed to assess the evidence without prejudice or potential bias. Schutz (1962) emphasises that the researcher needs to adopt the stance of the 'stranger' (Denscombe, 2010:99). *'A stranger is naïve about how things work.... By adopting the stance of the stranger, then, the researcher is best able to see things for what they are, uncluttered by assumptions that form part of everyday thinking about those things.'*

Beyond an evaluative research study approach, it may be beneficial to adopt an action research small-scale study to build on some of the recommendations in my research study and to possibly trial my proposed model. While my study adopted a broader holistic perspective an action research study which not only gains a better understanding of problems or issues but tests professional practices at a practical level. This forms a cyclical process in which practices are critically reflected upon for further research or inquiry with findings indicating an action plan for further action and implementation. In this way a researcher may investigate the impact and effect at an organisational level by focussing on *'aspects of their own practice as they engage in that practice'* (Gray, 2010:128).

My research study may be open to critique based on a sample bias, as the young people in stage 1 were connected to practices at YouthAction and the stage 2 practitioners were purposefully selected based on their experience and expertise in this area. In this way, the findings may be open to criticism as being unrepresentative. However, both approaches with young people and practitioners were based on a convenience and purposeful due to their participation and active involvement in this area of work. As an evaluative study it needed to hear the perspective of those who have been directly involved. Many of those invited for my research study had extensive practice and academic contributions for decades in this area of work. The sample was mostly 'hand-picked' for the research, based on their level of knowledge or experience. This is known as purposive or non-probability sampling, which in a sense, is selecting people because they are likely to produce the most valuable data. Denscombe (2010) emphasises that purposive sampling can help the researcher to identify the core people that are critical for the research.

The stage 1 data collection sample, for example, which involved 39 young people, was based on convenient accessibility through existing YouthAction practices, in which I had direct connection to. Gray (2009:180) referring to Miles and Huberman (1994), notes that

'the best strategy is to initially target those cases that are most likely to yield the richest data, leaving more peripheral cases until later.'

For three of my workshops with practitioners in stage 2 these were held at breakfast time (8am). It could be argued that this excluded some participants participating in the study or that the early morning starts was not the most effective time for 'brain-power'. I chose this approach for a variety of reasons: to allow participants to attend before their working day within their organisations started; effective feedback from a previous workshop within my practice in which participants endorsed this time as practical and effective; and to collectively 'wake up' together over breakfast in an inspiring way. The method of data gathering incorporated an interactive and conversational approach rather than that of a highly structured interview, which further reflected the relaxed atmosphere created by the breakfast workshops.

A purposeful data analysis process that I believe reflects the perspectives shared by the participants has determined the overall findings and conclusions. On reflection, I could have shared this analysis with a group of peers who had attended the focus group workshops which would either confirm or refute the overall findings and conclusions. As an ethical practitioner and researcher, I am committed to truth and honest reflections that I believe my research study provide.

7.3 Concluding comment

My research study has gone some way in providing a picture of the youth work landscape in terms of its contribution to peace-building in recent years. A rejuvenated youth work profession with a current investment of monies from the European Regional Development Fund may provide some opportunities for young people to participate in meaningful cross-community contact and to help reduce sectarianism. A unique window of opportunity exists to capitalise on this specific investment and to continue seeking such investment for practice, resource development, sectoral sharing, policy influence and overall nurturing young people's role as change makers within Northern Ireland. That said, creative and innovative practices in youth work and peace-building exist beyond the confines of such bureaucratically-informed programming which often pre-determine needs. All projects have value and significant outcomes regardless of the ideology and approach developed. Youth workers should, however, retain a macro perspective on the forces and spheres of influences which may enhance or restrict developments in this area.

My research findings will be used as a catalyst for ongoing dialogue within and across the youth sector. The 'Developing an AGENDA for Peace through youth work' model will be shared and disseminated at conferences, seminars and in the training of youth workers and volunteers. The anticipated outcome will be for a renewed interest in this area of work and supporting a workforce which is motivated, reflexive, critical and active in building allies for change.

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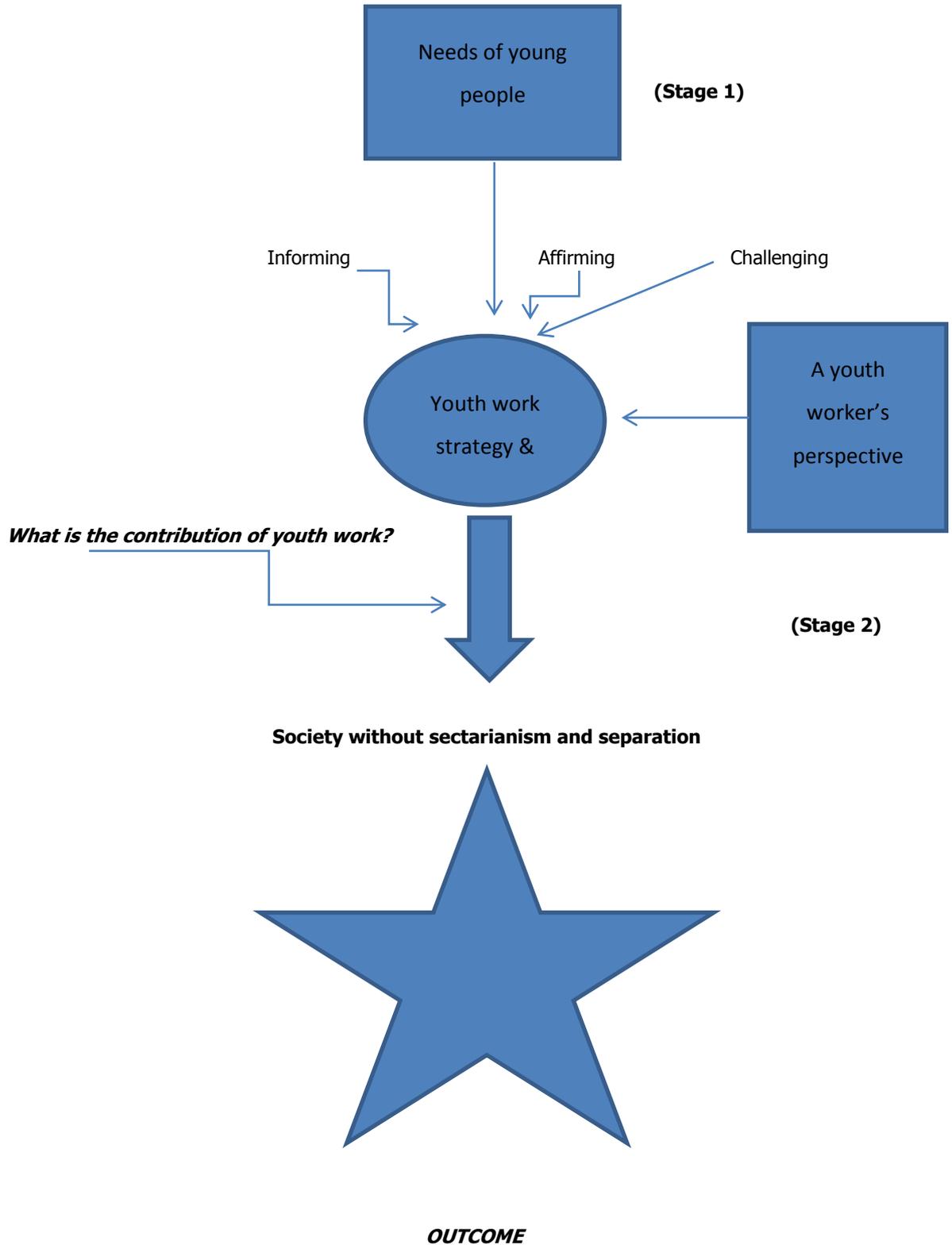
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Appendix 1

Research model to explain methodology

Sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland – a perspective based evaluation on the contribution of youth work.



Appendix 2

Overview of theoretical, methodological and data collection

| | Epistemology (philosophical) | Theoretical perspective | Research methodology | Data collection methods |
|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Stage 1 research (2009-2013) | Subjectivist | Intpretivism | Evaluative research with enquiry techniques | <p><u>PRIMARY DATA</u></p> <p>Focus group exploration with 35 young adults / apprentices (Derry, Belfast and Enniskillen)</p> <p>Focus group exploration with 4 young leaders (peer research group at Downhill residential)</p> <p><u>SECONDARY DATA</u></p> <p>Creative workshops with young people in Newry, Armagh and Mourne through the development of an interactive art exhibition (25 young people)</p> <p>Selection of stories and evaluations gathered by young people through YouthAction NI practices (over 400 young people)</p> <p>Let's Talk dialogue event on peace-building (55 young people)</p> |
| Stage 2 research (2012-2014) | Subjectivist | Intpretivism | Evaluative research with enquiry techniques | <p><u>PRELIMINARY</u></p> <p>Interview with peace team member at YouthAction (2011)</p> <p>Focus group with peace sub team at YouthAction (2011: 8 people)</p> <p><u>MAIN DATA COLLECTION</u></p> <p>3 phased focus group workshops in Belfast (2013: 46 people)</p> <p>1 focus group workshop in Newry (2013: 14 people)</p> <p>1 focus group workshop in Derry (2014: 27 people)</p> |

Appendix 3

Stage 1 Data collection with young people (sample)

| | | | Gender | Religion | |
|------------------------|--|--|--------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Stage 1 (primary) | Focus group Belfast, Derry and Enniskillen | 35 young people | 19 female 16 male | 20 Catholic 15 Protestant | |
| Stage 1 (primary) | Focus group Newry and South Armagh | 4 young people | 2 female 2 male | 2 Catholic 2 Protestant | |
| Stage 1 (secondary) | Dialogue events and creative workshops carried out by YouthAction staff | 480+ young people | | | |
| TOTAL | | 39 young people (primary) 480+ young people (secondary) | | | |

Appendix 4

Stage 2 data collection with practitioners (sample)

| | | Number of people | Sex | | Professional status | Perceived religion | | Country of origin |
|--------------|------------------------------------|------------------|--------|------|---|--------------------|------------|---|
| | | | Female | Male | | Catholic | Protestant | |
| Preliminary | 1 interview South Tyrone | 1 | 1 | | Youth worker | 1 | | 1 N.Ireland |
| Preliminary | Focus group YANI peace sub team | 8 | 4 | 4 | 4 youth work practitioners 1 apprentice 3 students | 5 | 3 | 5 N.Ireland 1 South Africa 1 USA 1 Ireland |
| Main stage 2 | Focus group 1 Belfast | 12 | 6 | 6 | 4 academic 1 pastor 1 policy (civil servant) 6 youth work/ community | 7 | 5 | 1 Germany/NI 1 USA/Balkans 1 USA/NI 9 N.Ireland |
| Main stage 2 | Focus group 2 Belfast | 14 | 6 | 8 | 2 academic 2 student (research) 1 pastor 9 youth work /community | 9 | 5 | 1 Germany/NI 1 USA/Balkans 1 Portugal 11 N.Ireland |
| Main stage 2 | Focus group 3 Belfast | 20 | 10 | 10 | 2 academic 2 funding 1 policy (civil servant) 1 student (research) 14 youth work/ community | 11 | 9 | 1 USA/Balkans 1 Portugal 18 N.Ireland |

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------|------------------------|---|----|----|--|----|----|-------------------------------|
| Main stage 2 | Focus group 4 Newry | 14 | 11 | 3 | 1 funding 2 students 11 youth work/ community | 12 | 2 | 12 N.Ireland 2 Ireland |
| Main stage 2 | Focus group 5 Derry | 27 | 14 | 13 | 1 MP 3 funding 23 youth work / community | 17 | 10 | 25 N.Ireland 2 Ireland |
| | TOTAL | 96 people (15 of which attended more than 1 event) | 52 | 44 | | 62 | 34 | |

Appendix 5 Letter of invite

Dear

Re: **Research Dialogue Focus Group**

I would like to invite you to attend a unique three-part breakfast focus group in which forms the backbone of my MPhil/PhD through the School of Education at the University of Southampton.

You are part of a selective sample, chosen because of your research, knowledge or writing, or you experience as a practitioner in the area under investigation.

This week of three brief workshops is broken down into three separate areas of exploration:

1. Monday 22nd July 2013: (8am -10am)

Issues facing young people

Method: INTERACTIVE PEACE ART EXHIBITION (& follow up discussion)

What are young people saying about conflict, violence, sectarianism and peace-building in Northern Ireland?

2. Wednesday 24th July 2013: (8am -10am)

Wider societal responses

Method: TABLE OF FREE VOICES (broad range of responses incl policy)

What needs to happen at the structural level to enhance peace-building in Northern Ireland?

3. Friday 26th July 2013: (8am -10am)

The specific response and contribution of youth work

Method: FOCUS GROUP WORKSHOP (youth work specific)

What contribution can youth work make to young people, communities and wider society in Northern Ireland?

All these workshops will be held at YouthAction Northern Ireland, 14 College Square North, Belfast, BT1 6AS. They will each involve a light healthy breakfast.

This three day sharing process will also involve a process for further primary data collection which will inform and shape the development of my Mphil/PhD study.

I would like to confirm that:

- You have the option to participate in all parts of the three day workshops or attend in part.
- The University of Southampton has given permission for this research to be carried out.
- With your permission the data will be recorded.
- Your anonymity will be maintained and no comments will be ascribed to you by name in any written document or verbal presentation. Nor will any data be used from the interview that might identify you to a third party.
- I will write to you on completion of the research and a copy of my final research report will be made available to you upon request.
- A broader framework on my research and areas of exploration has been indicated below.

Background:

The purpose of the investigation is to separate intentional and incidental peace-building interventions within youth work, pinpointing the actual contributions of youth work in asking the hard questions, in addressing diversity, in promoting inclusion, and in supporting integration and safe mobility.

It can be argued that many communities including those who work with young people try to avoid controversial issues. This sentiment has incited me to question if our interventions are actually 'missing the mark'?

The research specifically asks: How does youth work engage with controversial and contentious issues such as sectarianism and the legacy of the conflict in Northern Ireland? What critical pedagogy and action takes place within youth work to address sectarianism, create sharing and build integration? How does youth work connect with wider structural strategies to embed sustainable peace-building?

What exactly makes effective community relations (peace-building) youth work initiatives? What are the core elements and underpinning philosophies and practices? At what levels are youth work organisation's and groups operating at?

RSVP below:

| | | Please tick <input type="checkbox"/> those which you can attend |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Monday 22 nd July 2013: | Issues facing young people | |
| Wednesday 24 th July 2013: | Wider societal responses | |
| Friday 26 th July 2013: | The specific response and contribution of youth work | |

If you have any queries concerning the nature of the research or are unclear about my intention please contact me at YouthAction NI (02890240551) or martin@youthaction.org.

I would like to thank you for taking the time to help me with my research. It really is much appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Mc Mullan

Appendix 6 Locations and processes involved

The pilot research involved 9 participants through a focus group and a single one- to-one interview. In addition, the main data collection involved 87 participants through 5 focus group workshops.

The 5 focus group workshops are broken down as follows:

- 3 breakfast focus groups (Belfast) held on 22nd, 24th and 26th July 2013.
- A Newry focus group which was hosted in October 2013.
- A Derry focus group which was hosted in April 2014.

The first 3 phased breakfast workshops had differing themes as part of a progressive research approach as shown below. These workshops helped to frame a better contextual understanding in being able to answer the research question as to how youth work addresses sectarianism and separation. This reflects that of the 4 part community development model by Beck and Purcel. This was framed in such a way to keep individual and collective thought and synergy within the set time. The aim was to keep the flow of discussion fresh and in a way which avoided repeat conversations. They were progressive and deliberate in their design over the 3 days and utilised the creative art exhibition as a backdrop. The approach tried to utilise a funnelling of group exploration from a generic and loose discussion about the experiences and needs of young people (breakfast focus group 1) to a more structured and thematic exploration (breakfast focus group 2) and finally to a youth work specific exploration (breakfast focus group 3).



The themes for the first three progressive focus group workshops

The three Belfast focus group workshops took place in July 2013 as part of a suite of breakfast focus groups (8.00-10.00am / appendix 1 shows the full sample). All these workshops were held at YouthAction Northern Ireland, 14 College Square North, Belfast, and involved a light healthy breakfast (appendix 12). For each of these workshops the visual art exhibition was presented as an ongoing prompt and visual stimulus for research participants. The Dictaphone was placed centrally throughout all the focus group workshops to capture the dialogue.

- Workshop 1 on 22nd July 2013 involved 12 people (6 female, 6 male);
- Workshop 2 on 24th July 2013 involved 14 people (6 female, 8 male);
- Workshop 3 on 26th July 2013 involved 20 people (10 female, 10 male).

Workshops 1-3: BELFAST (July 2013, YouthAction N.I.)

The first breakfast workshop (22nd July 2013) focused on the theme of 'Issues and perspectives from young people' with the method being the interactive peace art exhibition and follow up discussion. The specific exploration was 'What are young people saying about conflict, violence, sectarianism and peace-building in Northern Ireland?' The backdrop of the creative interactive art exhibition was the key tool to elicit responses from the participants at this further workshop (appendix 14). The participants were invited to interact with the exhibit and to identify 3 core observations which they felt were significant from it. This then led to a facilitated and shared dialogue with key prompts such as: *What was most affirming? What was most shocking?* This focus group allowed for free dialogue with occasional prompts to ascertain the feelings of the research participants.

The second breakfast workshop (24th July 2013) focused on the theme of 'Issues facing young people' – informed by secondary data analysis. I believe this was a unique way of keeping secondary alive within an ongoing conversation rather than simply providing a literature analysis to my study. The specific exploration was 'What needs to happen at the structural level to address sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland?' I utilised the 'table of free voices' methodology based on a list of developed questions which participants selected to participate in based on their preference. The methodology involves all participants having a say through a timed focussed conversation (10 minutes) on one of ten themes (see table below). These themes were identified from the literature review which identified some core issues that were appropriate for further deliberation

and aligned to the overall research focus. Participants were asked to volunteer to be part of an inner circle discussion on the themes they felt most relevant to their knowledge and practice. The method involved these inner circle discussions where participants were active contributors to the dialogue. These contributors were observed by an outer circle of participants who listened to the core issues being debated and subsequently fed in their observations and insights following the core dialogue. The framework for the discussion draws upon the wider impact of the conflict on the lives of young people, such as housing, education, politics and community separation/influence. This workshop was envisaged as beneficial as it sets the perspectives from young people within a wider context of external impacting issues.

The result tends to be repository of thought, reflection and conscious insight. This approach reflects a micro focus group between 2-3 people while other participants observe and comment after the key discussion. This approach also helps to ensure that all participants have a say and encourages ownership among them.

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. SHARING | Is sharing desirable, real and in what areas of life? |
| 2. SEPARATION | What needs to be done to address separation? |
| 3. INTEGRATION | How effective is integration? |
| 4. LASTING FRIENDSHIPS | How can relationships better be sustained? |
| 5. COMMUNITY INFLUENCE | How should this be best addressed? |
| 6. SPOILERS/BLOCKERS: | How do we infiltrate local practices when 'blockers' often prevent the work? |
| 7. EDUCATION DEALING WITH THE ISSUES | How do teachers and youth workers engage with controversial issues such as the 'Troubles'? |
| 8. BUY IN TO PEACE & DEMOCRACY: | What are the implications of those who are most disconnected to the peace process and what action is needed? |
| 9. BARRIERS, WALLS & DIVIDES | What challenges and opportunities does this present? |
| 10. PREVENTION & INTERVENTION: | What does this look like in the Northern Ireland context? |

The themes given to participants at the second breakfast workshop

The third breakfast workshop (26th July 2013) While the first two workshops considered primary and secondary data of need in relation to the lived experience of young people third workshop focused on the theme of 'The contribution of youth work' which reflects the overarching research exploration. The specific exploration was 'What contribution can youth work make to young people, communities and wider society in Northern Ireland?' This third staged focus group centred the concentration to the role of youth work following a recap on key findings throughout the week. It allowed the participants to review and deliberate on the effectiveness of youth work practices addressing sectarianism and separation.

While there were 20 participants at this workshop the group were divided into 5 smaller groups to have a timed discussion on the contribution of youth work. Each group (un-facilitated) explored the 3 questions below and identified key priority points as agreed by their group onto flipchart paper. This was then fed back to one larger group in which others were able to elaborate and discuss further.

The key method adopted was that of a 'world café', a technique that I have used in my youth work practices for group based discussions. World Café is a technique for engaging people in conversations, often defined as more than technique but as a way of thinking and being together (<http://www.theworldcafe.com/about.html>). The world café method is widely known across the world and involves participants having a concentrated but timed exploration (6-8 minutes per topic) of various themes as they visit each themed table discussion. The questions for exploration were created as sub categories aligned to the central evaluative research exploration. The questions included:

- 1. How does youth work contribute to peace-building?*
- 2. What makes an effective community relations (peace-building) youth work initiative? What are the core elements and philosophies and practices?*
- 3. What pedagogy and action takes place within youth work to address sectarianism, create sharing and build integration?*

Workshop 4 - NEWRY (October 2013, Bagenal's castle)

The Newry focus group workshop, involving 14 people, took place from 10.00am -1.00pm on 4th October 2013 in the serene setting of Bagenal's castle. This focus group workshop was framed in a manner which kept the lens closer to the contribution of youth work in addressing sectarianism and separation in Northern Ireland. Based on analysis of the core concepts and coded categories from the Belfast focus group transcripts, selected areas

and themes were used for the Newry workshop. These themes were identified to maximise the amount of possible data collection in core areas related to the actual research exploration. The key exploration was to explore perspectives on how youth work contributes to peace-building. Once again the 'table of free voices' methodology was used to explore questions including:

- *How does youth work contribute to peace-building?*
- *What pedagogy and action takes place within youth work to address sectarianism, create sharing and build integration?*
- *What makes an effective community relations (peace-building) youth work initiative? What are the core elements and philosophies and practices?*
- *Is peace-building a priority within youth work?*

Workshop 5 - DERRY (March 2014, Guildhall)

The Derry focus group workshop was laid out with 4 large circular tables in which 27 participants engaged in dialogue over the 3 hour focus group workshop. The workshop intentionally embarked upon a professional review on the role and contribution of youth work. This event was hosted and sponsored by the Mayor of Derry City Council and supported by the Good Relations Department of the City Council, validating the significance of my study.

The initial part of the workshop comprised a presentation of some elementary and secondary data findings to which participants were provided with a recording sheet to make any key observations (appendix 11 shows the recording sheet). This sheet also included a few probing questions in which participants would make personal notes, deliberate in small groups, feedback in group based discussions and submit their notes for complementary evidence of findings. Such methods and techniques were used to maximise the perspective of each participant. For those who may be less vocal it provided an alternative or complementary vehicle by writing key notes on a recording sheet. These were collected after.

The key questions for exploration included:

- *Do young people see the relevance of the conflict and peace-building?*
- *Where are the windows in which people can question? (adults and young people)*
- *Are we opening up dialogue with young people? Are we dealing with contentious issues?*
- *Are youth workers confident, skilled and knowledgeable in peace education work?*

Appendices

This focus group workshop was entitled 'Peace-bridges – the contribution and challenges of youth work' and formed part of a suite of events showcasing YouthAction Northern Ireland's 70th year celebrations. This event was attended and endorsed by MP Mark Durkhan.



MP Mark Durkhan watches during the Guildhall presentation (2014)



Guildhall presentation Derry (2014)

Appendix 7

Example of summary points shared from focus group workshops

Some recollections: Our context

- The giant of sectarianism overshadows our day-to-day issues
- Visible separation: interfaces, annual reminders, flags & emblems
- Subtle divisions & prejudices: attitudes & behaviours
- Sectarian mind-maps
- Wider social justice & equality



Some recollections: Separation

- Separation plays into a sense of paranoia in communities
- The simplest things spark paranoia
- It's something that we have learned – learned sectarianism
- Separation has become ingrained in us and part of our psyches



Appendix 8

Pilot focus group

Tuesday 15th February 2011

2.30pm – 4.30pm

Venue: YouthAction N.I., Hampton suite

Present: 8 staff and volunteers

General reflection

- Reframe questions / re-order the questions
- Too many questions but I didn't stick to script – these were used as a guide
- Added extra questions as the discussion progressed
- Initially I was more leading the questioning but the conversation became more fluid and discussions bounced off one another with little facilitation
- Follow up the notion of researcher as researcher/youth worker (ability and skill in helping people relax etc)
- Follow up staff case studies (*what was their initial perception of their job? How do they view this now? Are they clear on principles and practices etc? Do staff around the issues and models? How do staff grow and learn in their area of work?*)
- Is it ethical to follow up interviewees to address some points raised and seek clarity? etc
- Having an agenda (purpose, timescale, questions and recording, fundamental question, background to the research question and how it emerged, confidentiality and use of pseudonyms etc)
- Agreeing boundaries and aiding people to feel comfortable
- Keeping the ultimate question displayed in the room / on power point etc
- Potential use of statistics and/or pictures to prompt discussions etc
- The venue worked well with no distractions (table between people and ample space)

Early questions to allow lead in such as: is it important to address community relations in youth work? However this has led me down a different road of exploration – this is the WHY rather than the WHAT – do I need to focus on what can be achieved and what does it look like?

THE FOCUS needs to be:

Does youth work address the legacy of the conflict? How does youth work address the legacy of the conflict

The interview

I began the process by clarifying the core research question and the underpinning value of the question

I explained the 8 overarching possible areas of exploration but reassured that all questions would not be explored – it was simply a guide

I started the questioning with “how does youth work contribute to peace-building?” (Note levels of staff and experience will vary in their responses (infrastructure, direct delivery etc)

P1: taking stock, reflecting, taking them beyond their bubble such as Eclipse youth arts, it goes beyond just sport and activities – it’s more issue based. Cross-community between schools is mostly about doing activities, that was my experience

P2: it’s about the here and now, not focussing on the history of the conflict. Some people are scared to address the issues. Unless you deal with issues you won’t move on

(Is this a contradiction?)

P3: it is difficult to understand the past and history. It’s open to interpretation. There is the potential for delving too deeply.

P1: you need to have a completely unbiased approach. It’s a very difficult topic.

P2: you do not have to be an expert

P1: the subject provokes issues in you

P3: the civil rights marches and potential escalation of violence. What would or would not have happened without those protests? There are so many different points of view.

Young people are living the experiences but not the events. Young people are not particularly interested in the past.

P4: The recent histories. You should only deal with it if it's an issue for the young people. Civil rights can be taken out of context. There can be so much misunderstanding. We should only explore with people who recognise it as an issue. Many young people don't know about it and have experienced the hurt. Not every programme has to address conflict.

Prompt – should there be a blatant exploration?

P4: The young people might know of the divide

Should we not allow the issue to be there?

P4: For young people the immediate reality is often drugs, alcohol etc.

P2: conflict impacts on every young person in Northern Ireland (we should not be ignoring the issues). Places like the Western Balkans are not taking about it. They are shutting the door on a powder keg

P3: people are ducking their heads. People are still using violence. It will never go away.

Q. How much time do we need to spend on this – how far back in time do we need to look?

P4: there is a need to address the issues but it is not immediate – the worker can make links to community relations throughout

P3: young people have open minds. Even with strong opinions they can consider angles. The bigger picture can re-influence though – impact on traditional stereotypes outside of the youth work project

P5: Keeping the bubble

P3: There is only so much you can achieve. Outside who is keeping the conflict going? Who has the power?

P6: Young men talk about their experiences whether it was recently, 1 year ago or 7 years ago. It depends on the young people and the communities. It's their terms of reference. There is no one way of doing this work. We are not history teachers. When we look at difference and stigma etc it is connected in many ways back to community issues and community based pressures.

Peace-building should be an element of all work

P2: Through projects like the Rainbow Factory there is bonding and relationships built between Protestant and Catholics. This is built through a creative environment where young people can do it for themselves.

Q. Is youth work intentional then or accidental in building/addressing community relations?

P2: all baselines of communities have shown that peace-building is an issue

Q. Do communities need to know that you are approaching equality and peace-building?

P2: through the drugs and alcohol DVD development young men were able to meet with other groups and learn about other issues. This is built into every programme.

P4: For me the issues should be kept separate

P2: young people should know there is a divide

P4: after working with a group of young people on drugs and alcohol issues they asked to then do a community relations programme?

P1: selling the programme on community relations and peace-building does not engage the young people. You have to almost sneak it in and incorporate elements such as prejudice

P3: I approach the young people by saying that I am here to hear about your experiences in this area and your hopes. This is not offering unrealities. At a certain stage you are not sure what comes next. Does it need to be more political?

P6: having a range of separate programmes becomes about programme consumption and delivery

P3: until society changes young people will need to be supported by youth work etc.

P4: if the group raise issues about 'the troubles' within a project I would tell them to catch a grip. We shouldn't be look out for issues that aren't there. We need to keep the issues separate. We need to focus on the relationship and the focus of the programme you are delivering. Young people do not just have 1 issue

Appendices

P6: that's why we need a holistic approach and a bit of flexibility. Is it a problem that you disrupt the focus for your programme by getting to the 'niitty gritty' which opens up other conversations?

P5: the youth worker, being young person led, allows fluid conversations and moving. I am not sure that there should be a multi-focus as this manipulates the agenda. You wait for the cues from the young people. The worker does not purposefully look out for the cue but is open

P1: often working to the young people's agenda but you are open to the project funding agenda too

P3: it's sometimes unrealistic when working in a community and you have only 8 weeks to address the issues

P5: it's the ideology versus the reality

P4: does your programme change direction? Young people are not always ready to do things. Young people need to be ready

P1: the worker instinctively knows how and when to address the issues

P6: is it about having an understanding of a broader equality framework or does peace-building have a different meaning?

P2: yes, sneaking sectarianism onto the agenda but a wider challenging of any bigotry or discrimination. Young people are aware of the programme and we have 1 session on sectarianism. If the conversations tend to focus on 1 issue such as homophobia, we would then develop a project around this issue. We should not be burying our heads in the sand

P4: it is about working on the young people's issues whether it be sectarianism or sexism. These are addressed as they come along. One project for me started off with nothing about religion but later when the group felt comfortable they began to discuss issues about the Queen etc

P1: I think we address a range of peace-building by discussing issues such as sexism and racism etc

Q. young people not ready...will they ever be ready?

P4: when young people from a school in Coleraine put another school pupil in a coma the issue was not wanted to be addressed within or by the school. It was only when a peace and reconciliation approach started within the school that this was dealt with this

(so what does this tell us?)

P5: we shouldn't be using us and them. Some people don't address the realities

P7: workers should make it known "we are here to do this..." allowing young people to understand and ask wider questions. As a youth worker you should follow the issue imminent to the young person, ensuring that you follow up with young people

Q. So should programmes be about new relationships and meaningful encounters?

P2: single identity work is not good enough. The issues need to be confronted such as the project in Glengormley. **Some days the young men are friends and some days they are enemies.** *(follow this up with Pete)*

For the young men in Glengormley there hasn't been a mechanism to explore issues and understand one another. They have been taken on activities such as canoeing and Indiana Land together but nobody has been asking the hard questions. Young people are being left behind in the peace process. Young people need to be encouraged to look at the bigger picture.

P7: in Durban music and sport are used as a common ground together. Once the people get there they look at the similarities and not the differences. It think separation leads to difficulties as the groups start asking what do we think of them, what do they think of us etc? In South Africa there are a lot of celebrations where different clans come dressed in their own traditional costumes etc

P1: having just the relationship is not good enough. You need to scratch beneath the surface. Tensions and tribal issues are prominent

P3: the context of the place or the environment you work in is significant – such as interface or separated /segregated area

(maybe I should focus my investigation in this area – differing contested spaces)

P1: knowledge and attitudes change – perceptions are moved – and there is a common ground

Q. How much of the work is separate and how much is integrated?

P4: Look at YANI models of separation through the GEU and Work With Young Men. Maybe we need to look at our own issues first and then look at the other?

P6: the majority of the work is about single identity work

(how does this fit with the integrated education debate? Do the ethics/principles of the community relations work conflict with the youth work practices?)

Some people have the view that this work is a civil rights or Nationalist agenda. There is suspicion and a fear of losing out. Should I be attempting to bridge this integration? There are weekends of missed opportunities for real integration. Young people act in certain ways when they are together and differently outside of this. Groups in Belfast can meet with groups from Cork (hundreds of miles apart) and the issues are so far removed. Are we taking a risk?

P7: if the issues are so sensitive is it too soon to start this work? How does it heal? What work is being done and how much impact does it have?

Q. Is it effective and does it work?

P6: ask young people about the impact? Get a 360 degree view by asking the community and workers etc look at the various elements of community and sustainability of peace. What is the model of measurement?

P1: there are multiple layers to the lives of young people. Within youth work we are only 1 voice and influence

(how much emphasis though can this one influence make?)

Q. What is the contribution of youth work to peace-building then?

P1: to reflect, to question, address the not 'taken for granted', taking a step back, challenging themselves and meeting others. In rural communities there are different issues and pockets of isolation

Q. What are the implications of youth work taking place in contested spaces?

Is there more need or differing approaches if these areas are interfaces, separated spaces etc? (thoroughfares, neighbouring estates, interfaces, divided villages, contested centres etc)

P1: its initially separation but working towards integration

P6: many young people from rural areas will go to Scotland to study or work rather than Belfast. In contested rural areas the division is not as obvious. The investment needs to be well resourced as areas are so isolated and there is nowhere for young people to meet... we need to work with those who believe that young people do not have issues relating to the legacy of the conflict.

Q. Is there an appetite for the work?

P8: it is not about working in neutral areas. Kids are hearing what their parents are saying. In California all identities come together to celebrate Martin Luther King day – you need to go out and break the barriers

P4: there are no interfaces in Coleraine as it is one majority community. The minority Catholics live in one small road/hill. People are being put out of their houses because they are different. Its not an us and them but an us, them and other.

P3: there is apathy as it is difficult to challenge the way society works. Is there a real impact? The pace of change is slow. How can we recognise that the conflict happened in the first place – how can we be open and accepting without revolt?

~ side discussion on civil rights/political struggle/gerrymandering/unequal distribution of wealth etc

Q. So what about the future?

P3: there is much more equality of opportunity in areas such as education, health, housing, justice etc. There is a danger in identifying the cause as it is far too contested. Issues of territory and land are so deep rooted but today it is more about communities than landlords and tenants. People have settled but yet others have been displaced. Where do they feel belonging and ownership?

P7: issues of land can be sensitive. In South Africa it was a law and cans of records. With the extreme movement of people the government has since asked for the land to be sold back. There are many transgenerational issues and at times disassociation with the land or heritage

P4: we won't move on. We need resources. I never came across a youth worker in Coleraine until I was 17years. Coleraine is allowed to be sectarian and there is nobody there to contest this.

Appendices

P4: the challenge is to work with parents and young people as parents are often the deciding factor for young people's engagement. You need to build trust, communication, have clarity. Do not lose sight of the wider community. Go out and meet the locals – immerse yourself in the community and link in with other organisations.

P6: Peace funding coming to an end will test the resolve North and South. How do communities sustain? Will the focus change? Will peace-building become a thing of the past?

P5: Youth workers own values and beliefs need to be explored and recognised. Recognise your own bias and not being extreme in this with young people. Be open to your mindset changing. Being careful of what you say

P4: Young people area a barrier themselves. Their commitments, their readiness to participate – they can be scared and apprehensive exposure can bring its risks (the fountain in Derry etc)

Reflections among the group about the process, content etc

The origins of the conflict – feelings of uncomfortability among ourselves

What makes it uncomfortable? – there is no meat on it

It has made me ask the question "what am I really doing? Am I getting to the crux or is it too wooly?"

We worry about others being offended

It's like walking on a mine field – it's so in bred

It's not so much about being uncomfortable but about the level of knowledge in the area

Everyone's truth is their own

You might feel like you have not been affected by the Troubles but when you look at the ripple effect we all have been (even differing currencies)

Q. How could it be made more comfortable?

The conversation was well managed and didn't follow script. The group felt that I assured them that we were making our way through the questions

Having the visual overarching question would have helped

The use of statistics may have guided the conversation in a different way – and maybe discouraged opinion

ACTION: Martin invited written feedback from the group on any points and also will suggest dates for one to one case studies

Email from participant 1 – 16th Feb 2011

Hi Martin,

Hope you are well. I just want to clarify something that I said at yesterday's focus group, I think it may have been misinterpreted, when I said that sometimes we don't directly say we are going to do peace-building work with young people, rather a needs based/community programme, then try to integrate peace-building, I think I used the term 'sneak it in' but I think it may have been misinterpreted that we are trying to trap young people in a sense, this is completely not what I meant, I meant that sometimes young people can be put off when they hear about peace-building but by covering the topics that we explore i.e. identity, culture, community, diversity, conflict etc. peace-building becomes a core part of the project, it fits into a process that the youth group undergo as part of the work. This can then be reflected upon with the young people, the young people can develop their own understanding of peace-building, what it means to them, without it becoming formal or too heavy. I was just thinking about it last night and I don't want you all thinking I'm trying to trap young people into doing peace-building work!

Hope this makes sense just wanted to clear that up.

Thanks!

SECOND part to email:

Ah I'm digging a bigger hole!!!!

I think some young people, especially those who have not been involved in youth provision before, can be a bit put off by the term 'peace-building' - the emphasis on creating a 'symbol of peace' whereby young people can explore the impact of peace on their lives and show how they can contribute to a peaceful society is apparent throughout. It's just using a different approach, that's what I use anyway but it definitely depends on the young people, the work we done in Fintona is totally different to the work we done in Galbally. I'll only do an interview if I can leave my shovel at home and a solicitor is present!!! lol

Appendix 9 Pilot research interview with Participant 1 of focus group

(Tues 15th March 2011)

FOCUS: How does youth work reinforce progress towards a peaceful and stable society & promote reconciliation?

KEY RECORD OF DISCUSSION

Part 1: Intro questions: (general questions outside of YANI)

Are you aware of youth work initiatives addressing peace-building?

What form do these take?

Reply:

-Counselling services

-Mostly community based services with some having a youth element such as Monaghan VEC

-POBAL funding having a new emphasis on young people

Part 2: Youth work and peace-building with young people

How does youth work intervene in the critical moments of a young person's development in relation to sectarianism and racism etc?

Reply:

-Particularly at the ages of 12/13yrs when becoming more independent

-Learning about attitudes

-Developing critical thinking

-Young people often not exploring sectarianism and racism

-Projects trying to get the EDI in there

How does youth work help young people to understand a changing society in Northern Ireland and their role within it?

Reply:

-New opportunities to help them explore their role

-Coming together

-In rural communities going beyond their own peers from church

-Thinking beyond 'what is right in front of you'

-Building up relationships to help change their attitudes: 'I won't go there...I wouldn't have anything to do with them...We wouldn't go there if there is Protestants'

-Trust leads to curiosity

How does youth work address the legacy of the conflict?

Reply:

-stigma attached to the conflict

-it happened but you don't talk about it

-'eclipse' drama opened up conversations

-fears based on a family member being shot

-don't think about impact until you explore

How much time do we spend with young people reflecting on the past? (the distant or more recent past?)

Reply:

-usually the more recent past

-knowledge of worker to go more in-depth

-by time relationships built – it takes time to get to exploration

How does youth work support young people as active peace-builders?

Reply:

-symbols of peace key

-opportunity to share learning and attitudes with the rest of the community-this has been key!

-the wee things that they learn and what they say to their families

-insights by an external tutor had such an impact within St Ciarans

-the lightbulb goes on: change in thought can impact upon others

Part 3: The role of education in peace-building?

What is the vital contribution of education to improving community relations?

Reply:

- education and schools focus more on citizenship*
- education is a necessity*
- different in schools because they have to be there rather than through choice*
- for me at school there was no real depth when schools met*

What is the role of non-formal education in reconciliation?

Reply:

- important because it's their choice*
- being more community based makes it more relevant*
- peace means different things to different areas*
- they see the benefits and get recognition*
- they get involved in fluid discussions*

What potential has youth work to be the vehicle/ catalyst in addressing diversity, promoting inclusion and encouraging safe mobility among young people?

Reply:

- trust being built up*
- opportunity to mix with other young people to take part in similar activities*
- everybody there for the same purpose*
- potential for more integration and learning about cultures*
- so much learning to take further*

What would be the impact if these programmes didn't take place?

Reply:

- do we continue living in a bubble?*

- no opportunities to mix with others*
- always attitude of ignorance of the other being carried on*
- needs to be an openness for sharing*
- NI social and economic development is based on peace*

Part 4: Measurement

What might youth work be aiming to achieve in its interventions – short term/long term etc? – for young people / for communities etc

Reply:

- young people have opportunity to voice opinions and to be active community members*
- communities to recognise the role of young people*
- long term: invest in leaders for tomorrow...this is what youth work is trying to achieve*

What frameworks are used for measuring outcomes, monitoring or evaluation within peace-building work with young people in non-formal settings?

Reply:

- baselining and descriptor scales but need more time to explore more*
- opportunity to do baselines with communities so that they can see benefit*
- look at other avenues*

Part 5: The wider community

How does youth work engage the wider community in peace-building and reconciliation work? How does it engage the wider community in public and symbolic gestures and meaningful peace-building work? How important is the PLACE in which the CR programmes take place (the community context)?

Reply:

- volunteers, community awareness and promotion*
- the need for community support to get the project off the ground*
- intergenerational for all community to see what young people are doing (symbols of peace)*

-example of Galbally developing a peace calendar – how they can share peace through calendar whether it be put on a fridge or walls of homes

How can community relations programmes with young people enhance community development, community dialogue, active citizenship and inter-community relations?

Reply:

-young people leading by example

-young people learning and wanting to beyond boundaries –being happy to integrate

-they are the community volunteers

Part 6: CR programmes – your experience

What does a community relations/ peace-building programme look like? What forms of community relations programmes do young people engage in?

Reply:

-needs-led is easiest way. Going in with a blank canvas

-all areas are different – different conflicts e.g. people staying to their own, living side by side, rise of minority groups in Aghnacloy

-take time to understand the community

-young people exploring their identity

-they often progress to looking at particular issues

-creating a symbol of peace is a good way to explore the issue (task, group, individual focus)

-what does peace look like?

What are the differences or similarities in other justice/equality based interventions? (such as gender, sexual identity. What are the starting principles? What elements of single identity and integration take place?)

Reply:

-begin by exploration. Begin by looking at identity. Single identity to prepare for discussions

-single identity crucial first for meaningful contact

What are the core elements and underpinning philosophies and practices?

Reply:

- needs-led*
- practical task*
- EDI a core element as part of personal and social development*
- testing values and beliefs – promoting acceptance and understanding*
- young people growing as adults*
- core curriculum*

What makes effective community relations (peace-building) youth work initiatives? What are the ingredients or key components that make this work?

Reply:

- needs-led*
- effective discussions*
- sharing learning*
- challenging*
- going beyond the norm and trying something different*

Part 7: Peace-building model

What model is your practice built upon? What significant terminologies do you utilise and work towards?

Reply:

- model for effective practice*
- YANI need to condense down a model: the core to what we are doing*
- integration and community development model*
- a youth work model*

How much is the model about building new relationships and how much is about the content and substance?

Appendices

Reply:

- a lot of it about building new relationships*
- if you are new to an area you spend time promoting the work and the agency*
- build relationships through taster workshop etc*
- the context is so important – gauge the minds of young people*
- follow on afterwards: sustainability*

Can peace-building work be about 'sneaking the issues in' or should it be more transparent and front loaded?

Reply:

- keeping peace-building clear and how it can be interpreted*
- Galbally example of how do you sell the programme – young people thinking 'is it heavy?' or holding hands sitting in a circle*
- it's a work in progress*
- how do you explain it's a journey when conversations get deeper?*
- it might put them off if you say at the beginning*
- it's being transparent and what peace means to them*
- opportunity to know yourself and explore identity etc*
- not initially saying but upfront about community exploration and symbol of peace*

Does there need to be purposeful and meaningful dialogue?

Reply:

- important but can happen at strangest times*
- it can creep in e.g. on buses*
- looking at relationship between young person and worker; the group discussions and the group dynamics*

Does cross-community contact equate with effective peace-building?

Reply:

- no, it needs to be deeper*

-it depends on the group

-young people on day's activity with others not necessarily building relationships: it can look good

-it can break down the stereotypes by just meeting...it only scratches the surface

Part 8: Workers and volunteers

Is there an appetite for peace-building work among youth workers/ youth organisations?

Reply:

-yes, but some organisations are not

-young people having opportunity to have different viewpoints, especially those born after the GFA – their attitudes being influenced by adults

-the symbols of peace work is 'airy fairy'

-is there value in single identity groups going further afield to meet with others not on their doorstep?

-other workers maybe not seeing value or might be apprehensive or have fear about doing the work

How are staff and volunteers growing in their knowledge, confidence and skills?

Reply:

-explore ourselves and our own attitudes

-I have learned a lot but room for more

Part 9: The future

What challenges lie ahead within peace-building work?

Reply:

-at the CRC conference it said there had to be not only norming but performing

-will the funding be there?

-trust needs to be further developed and worked on

-challenge attitudes – working in communities

-minority ethnic issues and growth in rural areas

-showing the benefits of the work

Feedback from participant:

- *It flowed*
- *There was nothing repetitive*
- *Some challenging questions*
- *It would be good for a focus group discussion*
- *Maybe get down some thoughts down in advance if have the questions*
- *Using the questions as a continuum for peoples thoughts*

Appendix 10

Evaluation sheet

Background:

The purpose of the investigation is to separate intentional and incidental peace-building interventions within youth work, pinpointing the actual contributions of youth work in asking the hard questions, in addressing diversity, in promoting inclusion, and in supporting integration and safe mobility.

It can be argued that many communities including those who work with young people try to avoid controversial issues. This sentiment has incited me to question if our interventions actually 'missing the mark'?

The Northern Ireland Commissioner for Children and Young People (NICCY) note that although some support has been provided through Community Relations Youth Support Schemes, the value and effects of such programmes were questioned on the basis that contact was not always meaningful or sustained. Such research should be heeded. (Facts, Fears & Feelings: Investigating Sectarianism & segregation post-conflict, Rosellen Roche, Queens University, The Challenges of Peace, CRC, 2006)

The research specifically asks: How does youth work engage with controversial and contentious issues such as sectarianism and the legacy of the conflict in Northern Ireland? What critical pedagogy and action takes place within youth work to address sectarianism, create sharing and build integration? How does youth work connect with wider structural strategies to embed sustainable peace-building?

What exactly makes effective community relations (peace-building) youth work initiatives? What are the core elements and underpinning philosophies and practices? At what levels are youth work organisation's and groups operating at? Are they working at the 'softer, but essential level of building relationships or are they working at the 'harder' levels of integration, sharing and co-operation? Are they strategically challenging the structural separation with young people alongside the fieldwork interventions?

The research further considers contemporary influences on youth work and how it is placed to operate as a medium for political engagement, political literacy and policy development.

Thank you for attending and contributing to this continued data collection process.....

Martin Mc Mullan

Evaluation:

How relevant and worthwhile did you find this workshop?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: _____

What key challenges remain in this area of work?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: _____

Would you like follow-up from today's event? Please comment here:

Name: _____

Organisation/Group: _____

Contact Information: _____

Appendix 11

Recording sheet for participants at Derry workshop

Peace-Bridges: what has this got to do with youth work?

Friday 4th April 2014 @ Guildhall, Derry (9am – Midday)



REFLECTION PAGE

| General relections | Reflections on core questions |
|--------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we support young people to see the relevance? • Where are the windows in which people can question? (adults & young people) • Are we opening up the real dialogue? Are we dealing with contentious issues? Is there an avoidance of the real issues? • Are youth workers confident, skilled & knowledgeable in peace education work? • How do we support young people with the skills for critical analysis & what are these skills? Does this attract resourcing? • Are our interventions 'missing the mark'? • What has youth work got to do with peace-bridges? |

Appendix 12

Focus group workshop -Healthy Breakfast

- Fruit: apples, grapes, raspberries, oranges and bananas
- Honey
- Fresh Yoghurt
- Innocent juices (orange and apple/raspberry)
- 3 litres milk
- Bran flakes cereal
- Bagels
- Jam
- Butter
- Eggs
- Ham
- Low fat cheese
- Plastic bowls and cutlery

Appendix 13

Research focus group -Music playlist

1. Brothers In Arms (Dire Straits)
2. Belfast Child (Simple Minds)
3. Zombie (The Cranberries)
4. Two Tribes (Frankie goes to Hollywood)
5. Imagine (John Lennon)
6. Peace Train (Cat Stevens)
7. Through The Barricades (Spandau Ballet)
8. Pipes of Peace (Paul Mc Cartney)
9. When The Children cry (White Lion)
10. No More Trouble ft Erykah Badu (Bob Marley)
11. War Party (Eddy Grant)
12. For America (Jackson Browne)
13. Land of Confusion (Genesis)
14. Only Teardrops (Emmelie de Forest)
15. A Little Peace (Nicole)
16. New Tomorrow (A friend in London)
17. Where is the love? (Black eyed peas)

Appendix 14 Interactive art exhibition

The interactive art exhibition was developed by a group of 25 young people who were engaged in a project which had deliberate attention to peace-building explorations. The young people worked along with a local artist to carry their insights and messages in a creative way. Rather than having a static and passive art piece the young people were keen that others could experience the exhibit through audio and visual stimulation and to be able to physically interact with it. The young people who created the interactive art exhibition were part of an existing youth employability and good relations initiative within YouthAction. They were participants within a naturally developing project where their issues were being presented without any researcher intervention. The development of the art piece provided an uninterrupted space for creative expression.

The interactive art exhibition was used for the first 3 focussed workshop discussions with practitioners in which they were invited to glean some insights and perspectives from young people. Participants were encouraged to discuss their feelings and observations following the interaction with the exhibit.



Sample of the interactive art exhibition

Transcription: Focus group 1 (22nd July 2013)

0-18mins

Following breakfast in the green room with anti-war/pro peace songs the group were invited to the workshops space upstairs

Martin introduced research purpose, background to and purpose of the 3 seminars and provided context of the interactive art exhibition. The group introduced themselves.

Martin invited participants to engage with the exhibition and take away 2 key things of observation

(music playing Bob Marley "No More trouble", Eddy Grant "War Party" and Jackson Brown 'For America')

19mins –

Martin asked for feedback: fantastic, interactive, not just dealing with the troubles but other aspects of life

A safe way to look at the controversy and conflict

Q. What are the observations about we hear from young people? What is affirming? What might be missing?

2 things – 2 parishes that I was in, based on comments... explained a friendship and relationship can be difficult to be maintained beyond a group – on a day to day basis...a comment about somebody's parents – introducing girls from a different religion (the impact of home life and what they actually learn at home). I wouldn't so much always hear it as, you would always know – yes, that's probably their parents talking – especially those among families where sectarian views at an early age...sectarianism is learned. Home is definitely one of the places where there is learned

Q. Community based projects and difficulties in sustaining?

CC groups meeting with others distant from where you lived. To stay in touch it wasn't particularly realistic. Work needs to be done on interfaces where people are living right next to them in close proximity – trying to improve lasting relationships. A less blurring of lines where communities can start to come together. At times of high tension it is very easy to revert back into old ways of thinking. It takes a long time to change an attitude – to change an upheld value no matter where that has come from.

It's not just about the young people themselves but about the adults that are working with them. We get a lot of cc groups coming to visit. There have been times where even staff and teachers are not actually integrating in the room. They are sitting at the opposite ends of the room. The example they are setting. You get the impression they are coming together because there is funding for a trip if

they join with another school. We haven't got the teachers buying in to it. We would maybe say (I WOULD MAYBE SAY) could you make sure you sit at a table with kids from another schools just to try. Not much attempt from most teachers to do this. There might not be any proper interaction on the trip at all, it might even be better separate buses or just sharing the costs of a bus

The question I would ask in that case applies also to parents – what support have teachers and what support do teachers get? Look at the extent of segregation in education. It can be quite difficult if you are working with young people where they go back into their home environments. How can you support parents to understand why their children are taking part? I think that's a key part in terms of ensuring participation, but also continuation and providing support and understanding to parents who may have very little experience of cc or single identity work

Some of these interactions are superficial, that they are just designed to get a football game though without any problem but not really to engage in any conversation or dialogue. Appropriate first step but nothing continued. Young people want something deeper and more meaningful

Q. Do young people want something more? Do they want to meet with other young people?

I get a feeling from the exhibition a sense of being anaesthetised, and we self-medicate in many ways and we block things out. I have met some of the young people on this project. I got that sense as well. Young people pick up that we are trying to pull the wool over their eyes in various ways. One of the comments on the TV we get that there is a recession going on, stop going on about it, let's get over it. Young people feel and they can see through adults and the way the world is saying 'this is so screwed up' and 'you aren't doing anything about it so I am going to opt out and drink myself into oblivion'. Because that's all adults are doing. Maybe that's harsh or a sweeping generalisation. Sense of well The adults aren't being honest about what's going on. So let's just forget it

Q. Honest about what things?

In this context honest about the fact that we haven't moved on. We still have an issue. Sectarianism is still a problem. We manage things in terms of peace walls. Its maintenance of things and structures like education. Those experiences of CC interactions that are superficial. If people aren't getting things out into the open and really sorting things out. Young people aren't seeing other people stick their heads above the parapets and have some honest kind of talking in ways that are constructive apart from chucking stones

I don't know if I missed it: Was there anything in the exhibition about political leadership or policing? I was really struck by this chair – the anger. I felt real sadness. How is this being addressed? What concerned me is where is that safe space to vent? Particularly if you are dealing with those issues at home with parents and habits that are passed on. And that in the backdrop of your home,

your stability and family and school and if things aren't going well. Or if you don't have friendships or relationships just what life might be like? These things are complex and very difficult.

30mins -

The thing for me that stood out: the giant of sectarianism and how it is so much in your face. It can overshadow the day to day issues that young people face in other parts of the world. I got a sense that young people want to change but maybe the issue is that they don't know how. The process to change isn't clear. Young people are left desperately trying to sort things out for themselves. This will set out a lot of challenges for Wednesday and Friday in terms of about what can we do. We have been talking about these issues for so long Martin. The processes through that are very vague. Also I thought the young people were clear about articulating the negative issues but in terms of the positives I didn't see the young people as aspirational or inspirational. It was more like to get a job, have friends, fall in love. You couldn't see vision for the future which is a bit sad. I do believe that young people do possess this. Again the process.... some of the things that schools and youth work don't facilitate that

Q. Do young people talk about these issues? Do they have the space?

I have worked in the Village area South Belfast 20 years ago where we did cross-community work. I can remember leaving the centre, 4 centres (2 Catholic and 2 Protestant) and getting tomatoes and all thrown at us. We were trying to develop safe places then. Some young people have had opportunities but the problem is that when you bring them back into the communities it all falls down as there is nothing sustainable. Maybe something wrong with the mechanism. I do think that young people do talk about it and have a lot to say about it. I think young people have a lot to say about it. It goes around in circles.

Q. Are they talking about it because we are asking them about it?

When I see the black and white chair I see other issues that are affecting them, more personal and that they worry about. Things that stop them from getting out of bed .We as the people decide see what needs to be done, and the issue of bringing communities together. For some young people it doesn't affect them either. It depends on where you live and if your family has been personally affected by the troubles or sectarianism. And we did a project a while back with young people. We got to know the young people over a year very well. There were a few people who were highly political in that group. There were sectarian issues. And then there were other young people who were just not interested. They were completely turned off. They had no issues with the other side of the community. They just didn't see it as anything **worth discussing**. They are all individuals and all different come from different communities. Their issues seem to be more personal - the ones that concern them. Are you saying that this could reflect the legacy of the troubles in terms of alcohol abuse and addiction to prescription drugs in NI?

Q. Are young people talking about it? Is it relevant?

There is nothing that would be so strong that could keep me in bed. A lot of young people would feel the same. When we talk about young people having

those issues we need to be careful. Not everybody has these issues – they are different. Some people have some these issues and other people have others. A lot of young people out there have none of these. By saying these are young people's issues we are not doing ourselves any favours as they are very particular young people. We need to unpick who these young people are in order to get to the roots of the problem

What came to my attention: The young people who are attracted to small rural town centres. Their experience of their leisure time in those small centres. A few recent conversations on the lead up to the 11th bonfires, about the status of some adults in the local smaller communities. The talk from some young people – about what they could and couldn't do, where they were safe to go and where they weren't safe to go. And the movement of particular families from one small town into another to dissipate some pressure at that time and moved onto another small town where they have some influence where they could come into a bigger town to call the shots about what was going to happen on the 11th July. The impact of this on young people who were around these town centres and the collusion that went on – comments that sprung up on the walls, paraphrasing be careful about the words you use and who you are with. Some comments about young Catholic people who were part of the social group: the reference to 'halfers' – mixed marriage halfers. The halfers will be okay on the night of the 11th in the small rural town. The punch that came through for me: if they went to our school they would have no chance....some of this about personal safety, their identity and the he insidious people with status – the power of some men and families - control about what young people could and could not do. Some little half comments – one and two liners. I didn't want to push it. The temptation was to provoke and add other questions

Q. What's changing for young people? Is there anything different? What is the context of their lives?

Young people changing their names and accent when they go into other towns. Not asking for direction as a Catholic in a Unionist community.

Why are we even talking about this with young people? Does the conflict really impact on their lives? Are they disinterested? Only with further levels of exploration.

Peer researchers a year ago would have said they weren't affected by the conflict, it's not our issue. Whenever you do unpack it over time they get it.

This exhibition is fantastic in its multi-dimensional aspects of young people's lives – not just being a peace wall which is dynamic in itself, it is talking about their dreams and aspirations a fabulous way to represents so many different aspects of young people's groups event though a limited group involved in this. Within that though which young people we are talking about I think it's really important to continue to focus on those who are most impacted and affected. We can't say that because some young people are moving on that we don't feel immediately connected to these kinds of issues, that to focus on this disproportionately

focuses on issues that remain a legacy of the conflict. It is quite related to where they live, class relationships, spatial relationships, those kinds of issues which are really important and that we don't forget those which contribute to what it is to live in a new Northern Ireland and why that's quite important

One thing that struck me about the television representation is that it would be interesting to talk with people who maybe don't interact with these issues all the times, but when comes to the Twelfth year on year NI is represented in a particular way, and so even if they don't feel these issues very specifically in their daily lives because they maybe live in a middle class community and not an interface, their particular community isn't represented on television, but NI is, and so it's no wonder that that will come up for them year on year. But it isn't something that will go away for any young person growing up. One other thing to talk about and what is represented through the windows – the element of spatiality and where you feel comfortable. My research is with young women and the use of outdoor spaces and the representation of their home life maybe. Once they leave the doors the additional elements are - Who are the community leaders and why is it important? One other thing – friendships and the normal parts of life that is young people's navigation and negotiation of these remaining challenges. Trying to make relationships, or find yourself involved in strong CC projects, sustaining those is something talked about but to have these annual reminders from the adults in your community that talking isn't worth it. Every single year we come back to the reminders from adults that we are not ready to move on and that it's actually quite dangerous to talk to people from the other community. Even if you had sustained a friendship over a number of months it wouldn't be safe during a lead up to the Twelfth

I'm thinking from the ceasefires, the drive towards peace which I don't think a lot of people actually formed peace-building processes. I think an opportunity for young people to talk about other issues. The other issues have been there but what you find in societies coming out of conflict that the more normal aspects of growing up and the normal forms of violence manifest themselves clearer. The issue still remains: We haven't moved fully into peace. The cloak of sectarianism covers everything no matter where you live or what you do. We are all affected by flag protest, by the 11th night, by the recent parade at the weekend. Young people are aware of this. Through social media even though you may not be involved.

My son and daughter in Spain have been able to tell me about the rioting on the Newtownards road for 4 nights in a row. They are aware of it. It's within the psyche. It's within the mind all the time. A lot of the issues which come out such as issues about depression, suicide, mental health and well-being, coming out stronger now cause we have a peace process. In the past sectarianism covered everything

Do we understand – are we listening to young people? There are a lot skilled people trying to do that but are young people the future? We just finished a study

of 400 young boys. Not one young man from a range of backgrounds involved in peace-building. It's not even taught in school. There is big challenges there.

If it wasn't for that project young people wanted to be involved in change but they didn't know how or what mechanism to do this. Young people not thinking that peace is cool. How do you make it cool to be involved?

Understanding the relevance of peace-building. Again we can't generalise. A question I ask myself: How relevant to young people is it in terms of jobs, feeling safe in your own community, knowing your neighbour, feeling that you can walk across the road, traveling across your county, which is still very much an issue as we saw over the weekend? Having a conversation around how you express your culture or identity whether it's your GAA top or the uniform that you parade in, very simple, but not very simple, what you wear is still very relevant. A concern I have as a mother and if young people are encouraged not to express themselves what is doing to their self-esteem and confidence? Maybe it's coming through in this exhibition. It does have implications for your confidence. To what extent do young people question that?

48 mins

Reebok – sussing out union flags on shoes – identifying religion. Young people tuned in. Young people don't care about the conflict but then these subtle cues which define their behaviours and attitudes

The young people have grown up in Northern Ireland and have known segregation, a constant segregated society. It's very different for people who live in different areas. My work with young women often live in an environment where they don't have to integrate and don't have to socialise with people who are different from themselves. They are concentrating on other transitions that teenagers go through such as changing schools, doing exams, worrying about their mental health, their sexuality, things which are taking up all of their time therefore The thing they have always grown up with doesn't be recognised as an impact but it's always been a part of their lives. An initial conversation with young women about that's just the way it is, it's kind of just there and it always will be. It takes a long time to have conversations about if you had the opportunity or you felt that you could change things what could you change? How could you change things and how do you find the power? Who has the power? Many young women feel powerless. Maybe young women haven't been asked the questions about peace-building in the first instance. For something that is so normal and so part of everyday life it has been quite difficult. It's been easier to discuss peace-building this year than the past because of the flag protests and Margaret Thatcher dying, and the 12th July being more noticeable this year. It's a more hot topic this year – they have a lot more opinions about it, but because something is changing and that it's more noticeable for them. When I look at exhibition you see a lot of apathy but when I work with young people I see nothing but optimism and hope – they want to get on with people – they want to have fun and they want to be enjoying themselves. But an Undercurrent of 'really – can we really do that? YLTS saying that young people are less optimistic than adults but can we say that its

adults having this impact on young people? Is there something bigger or bubbling in young people's psyche and that they can't impact so why bother trying. Changing the whole society that we are talking about – it's quite big

Conversation moving into a more political framework. A different framework now. How do we encourage young people to connect to influence, to challenge and change? Does the political structure and democracy impact? Is the context different?

53 mins

The use of social media now that didn't exist before. Young people having conversations and dialogue without actually being face to face with somebody. One young person that was involved in the exchange – having a conversation with the PSNI and complaining about harassment from police and lack of opportunities through Facebook channel – comments in which he gets a response. Something that didn't exist before. A different dialogue in which he was getting direct feedback from someone in PSNI agreeing to meet and exploring a lack of opportunities, looking at PSNI attitudes towards young people gathering in several locations that could possibly erupt into something.

Q. Notice of changes over the years or comparators with Balkans?

Similar challenges of CC work in sustaining work – not just a one off opportunity and that relationships falter and don't build upon something. Whereas we don't have interface areas we have more of a geographical challenge to bring people together particularly where there are tensions particularly in Kosovo with Serbian minority and Albanian communities. The impact of conflict on everyday youth issues a lit bit more magnified– hopelessness about the future. In our context a lot of young people leaving the region as they see hopelessness and not an economic opportunity and that's sometimes for them is a bigger priority than cross-community work or the conflict cause they see no opportunity in their communities in their town for sustaining any kind of life and that also brings some time more opportunities for conflict.

Q. YLT indicated those leaving the region in NI – mixed marriage and LGBT

One reason or another a passifying effect that reconciliation work has. Politically correct to get on with everybody and it's not a coincidence that Fermanagh was chosen for G8 summit cause there was no mission of any meaningful political protest. Our society: It's okay and nice to be getting on with everybody well and it actually takes away from political activity. Some of the people leaving NI are seeing the bigger picture. NI is often criticised for being parochial. It annoys me to some extent but there is an element of truth in that. Because we are so self-obsessed with ourselves we that we are not getting on we are losing the bigger picture. Bigger picture in exhibition are not just to do with NI but depression in other parts of the world as well. Who are the people that are really affected? A lack of aspiration and economic opportunities. In doing peace and reconciliation work we also need to do aspirational work and that's just as important

Is that about tolerance? Is that about passifying / encouraging a state of tolerance? What's encouraging young people to look inwards rather than think aspirationally? Changing mind-sets and how they understand and how we understand – appreciative enquiry – what are the needs?

I think the flag protests last year are a good example of this and how it was dealt with – the economic impact of that: Are we interfering with people not being able to get home? Are we interfering people who want to do their shopping. You can't have coffee in peace because of all the protesters. Running away from the real issues. It was highly inappropriate how it was dealt with. Rather than engaging with the protest and why the happened it was more about making sure that we are moving on in the peace process here.

It's often cosmetic in that sense

It's more economic than it is social

1 hour:

On the television it says one of the comments: self-image is not everything. That is about encouraging young people to look at the bigger picture. Images in NI which relate to self image. The role of the media in this as well. A lot of young people now – you don't study the conflict unless you choose GCSE history. Junior history up until 14 years, you look at 'What leads to partition?'– but only if you choose history will you go into it and you hopefully get a balanced view from text books with different sources, primary and everything else. How are young people getting their education about the troubles? Even as a parent I hear people saying my children wouldn't know the difference between Catholics and Protestants. We don't bother talking about that at all. As a parent I am explaining the Twelfth to an eleven year old and a nine year old who may not be too interested. Trying to educate them but then again...What message am I giving them? What message are other children getting? If it's from their parents, their peers the media. Can we rely on the media to give a balanced view or to address what it's all about, rather than politicians fighting and sound bites. Issues about how young people learn about the past.

Most young woman that I would have spoken to felt that parents weren't telling them the real story about things. They weren't being trusted with the history.

Appendix 16

Literature coding and analysis

| Coding primary data | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Code | Theme | Primary data | Additional primary |
| 1. | Learned sectarianism | ...families where sectarian views at an early age...sectarianism is learned. Home is definitely one of the places where there is learned | 4,8 |
| 2. | Realism of lasting relationships | To stay in touch it wasn't particularly realistic | 14,100,103 |
| 3. | Changing attitudes | It takes a long time to change an attitude – to change an upheld value no matter where that has come from | 22,40, 145, 148 |
| 4. | Adults as role models | It's not just about the young people themselves but about the adults that are working with them. We get a lot of cc groups coming to visit. There have been times where even staff and teachers are not actually integrating in the room. They are sitting at the opposite ends of the room. The example they are setting | 1, 8, 10, 137, 148 |
| 5. | Clarity of purpose | You get the impression they are coming together because there is funding for a trip if they join with another school. | 6,9, 94, 108, 123, 128 131, 132, |
| 6. | Proper interaction | There might not be any proper interaction on the trip at all | 9, 5, 94, 104, 159, 161 |
| 7. | Reality of segregation | Look at the extent of segregation in education. It can be quite difficult if you are working with young people where they go back into their home environments | 19, 21, 34, 37, 59, 85 |
| 8. | Parental role / support | How can you support parents to understand why their children are taking part? I think that's a key part in terms of ensuring participation, but also continuation and providing support and understanding to parents who may have | 1,4, 142 You need to condition them to act told and believe the stories from t |

Transcriptions: MPhil/PhD Sharing seminar 1 (22nd July 2013)

0-18mins

Following breakfast in the green room with anti-war/pro peace songs the group were invited to the workshops space upstairs

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Martin invited participants to engage with the exhibition and take away 2 key things of observation

(music playing Bob Marley "No More trouble", Eddy Grant "War Party" and Jackson Brown "Por America")

19mins -

- Martin asked for feedback: fantastic, interactive, not just dealing with the troubles but other aspects of life
- A safe way to look at the controversy and conflict

Q. What are the observations about we hear from young people? What is affirming? What might be missing?

2 things - 2 parishes that I was in, based on comments... explained a friendship and relationship can be difficult to be maintained beyond a group - on a day to day basis...a comment about somebody's parents - introducing girls from a different religion (the impact of home life and what they actually learn at home). I wouldn't so much always hear it as, you would always know - yes, that's probably their parents talking - especially those among families where sectarian views at an early age...sectarianism is learned. Home is definitely one of the places where there is learned

Q. Community based projects and difficulties in sustaining?

- CC groups meeting with others distant from where you lived. To stay in touch it wasn't particularly realistic. Work needs to be done on interfaces where people are living right next to them in close proximity - trying to improve lasting relationships. A less blurring of lines where communities can start to come together. At times of high tension it is very easy to revert back into old ways of thinking. It takes a long time to change an attitude - to change an upheld value no matter where that has come from.
- It's not just about the young people themselves but about the adults that are working with them. We get a lot of cc groups coming to visit. There have been times where even staff and teachers are not actually integrating in the room. They are sitting at the opposite ends of the room. The example they are setting. You get the impression they are coming together because there is funding for a trip if they join with another school. We haven't got the teachers buying in to it. We would maybe

MhM Page 1

Handwritten notes in red: "Learned Sectarianism", "Lasting", "Diff to Change", "Role Model", "Clarity of Purpose", "5."

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| | | very little experience of cc or single identity work | |
|--|--|--|--|

Coding primary data

All excludes Use for stage 2 finding

I need to mark this into headings such as young people, community, youth work, society etc:

| Code | Theme | Primary data | Additional primary | Literature reference |
|------|------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| 1. | Learned sectarianism ✓ | ...families where sectarian views at an early age... sectarianism is learned. Home is definitely one of the places where there is learned | 4, 8 ✓ | |
| 2. | Realism of lasting relationships ✓ | To stay in touch it wasn't particularly realistic | 14, 100, 103 ✓ | |
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| 6. | Proper interaction ✓ | There might not be any proper interaction on the trip at all | 9, 5, 94, 104, 159, 161 ✓ | Easy to Avoid |
| 7. | Reality of segregation ✓ | Look at the extent of segregation in education. It can be quite difficult if you are working with young people where they go back into their home environments | 19, 21, 34, 37, 59, 85 ✓ | Critical Thinking |
| 8. | Parental role / support ✓ | How can you support parents to understand why their children are taking part? I think that's a key part in terms of ensuring participation, but also continuation and providing support and understanding to parents who may have very little experience of cc or single identity work | 14, 142 ✓ | You need to condition them to accept other people and to not to buy into what they are told and believe the stories from their parents (p.5 seminar 2) |
| 9. | Superficial interaction ✓ | Some of these interactions are superficial, that they are just | 6, 5, 94, 129, 159, 161 ✓ | |

Appendix 17

Funnelling of key data (transcription coding samples)

that and so I wonder...we have aspirations for what youth work can do but politically sometimes there is an agenda to expect too much that youth work can solve what are very serious political and community issues. We shouldn't be unrealistic about that.

Q. Why do people come to us to deal with the issues?

- Mapping up things. Let's hand it over to the youth service coz the rest of us have dropped the ball. There is an outreach worker over there who might be able to do it. There is a lot of dumping onto youth work. At some level the youth service is able to deal with this. In my opinion it's an unfair expectation but that's not the best use of the youth service time

- There are youth workers out there in interface areas who have excellent relationships with young people and in their best intention they want to help those young people to avoid a situation, be out of a situation or to change their lives. So they do for the best intentions get sucked in. Its more from the top they don't expect the youth service to solve what are political and policing issues.

- It's not necessarily the youth work structure but more the expectation that local councils and police put onto the youth service - we need to be pushing that back a bit

- A lot of mopping up because a lot of other sectors have gone home. We can expect a lot of youth work as a methodology we know how powerful it can be and what it can achieve. When you don't resource it enough or back it enough you then expect too much of the profession. We all know that youth work is the poor cousin of formal education. Why invest 2% of overall education budget into youth services and then people expect to mop up? Too much is expected of the profession and the staff and what the methodology can achieve

- When there is anti-social behaviour, youth workers might be there, police might be there, community resident's representatives might be there, but with all slightly different agendas. It's quite a difficult scenario to be working together when you have different agendas. It's not impossible. There needs to be discussion with those varying agencies to get understanding about where people are coming from. You are coming at it from different angles.

Q. Youth work pacified young people?

2 streams of thought. One side saying that passive behaviour is learned in a conflictual society, you learn to be passive and to work around issues and to avoid. When you are in doing youth work you can be teaching passiveness in a way by avoiding risk and by avoiding controversial conversations. When you go in and try to encourage diversity and understanding about other backgrounds the word seems, we

124: MAPPING UP THINGS
125: MOPPING UP
126: UNFAIR EXPECTATION
127: DUMPING
128: COMMUNITY SUPPORT REMAINDERS FROM ADULTS
129: AVOIDANCE + PASSIVE
130: ALL IMPACTED
131: SUSTAINABLE
132: DIFFERENT AGENDAS
133: AVOIDANCE + PASSIVE
134: UNFAIR EXPECTATION

Page 2

16. THOSE MOST AFFECTED.....

Which young people we are talking about I think it's really important to continue to focus on those who are most impacted and affected. We can't say that because some young people are moving on that we don't feel immediately connected to these kinds of issues, that to focus on that disproportionately focuses on issues that remain a legacy of the conflict. It is quite related to where they live, class relationships, spatial relationships, those kinds of issues which are really important and that we don't forget those which contribute to what it is to live in a new Northern Ireland and why that's quite important

One thing that struck me about the television representation is that it would be interesting to talk with people who maybe don't interact with these issues all the time, but when comes to the Twelfth year on year NI is represented in a particular way, and so even if they don't feel these issues very specifically in their daily lives because they maybe live in a middle class community and not an interface, their particular community isn't represented on television, but NI is, and so it's no wonder that that will come up for them year on year. But it isn't something that will go away for any young person growing up. One other thing to talk about and what is represented through the windows - the context of spatiality and where you feel comfortable. My research is with young women and the use of outdoor spaces and the representation of their home life maybe. Once they leave the doors the additional elements are - Who are the community leaders and why is it important? One other thing - friendships and the normal parts of life that in young people's navigation and negotiation of these remaining challenges. Trying to make relationships, or find yourself involved in strong CC projects, sustaining those is something talked about but to have these annual reminders from the adults in your community that talking isn't worth it. Every single year we come back to the reminders from adults that we are not ready to move on and that it's actually quite dangerous to talk to people from the other community. Even if you had sustained a friendships over a number of months it wouldn't be safe during a lead up to the Twelfth

I'm thinking from the ceasefire, the drive towards peace which I don't think a lot of people actually formed peace building processes. I think an opportunity for young people to talk about other issues. The other issues have been there but what you find in societies coming out of conflict that the more normal aspects of growing up and the normal forms of violence manifest themselves clearer. The issue still remains: We haven't moved fully into peace. The cloak of sectarianism covers everything no matter where you live or what you do. We are all affected by flag protest, by the 11th night, by the recent parade at the weekend. Young people are aware of this. Through social media even though you may not be involved. My son and daughter in Spain have been able to tell me about the rising on the Newtownards road for 4 nights in a row. They are aware of it. It's within the psyche. It's within the mind all the time. A lot of the issues which come out such as issues about depression, suicide, mental health and well-being, coming out stronger now cause we have a peace process. In the past sectarianism covered everything

27: NAVIGATION + NEGOTIATION
28: COMMUNITY SUPPORT REMAINDERS FROM ADULTS
29: RISKY SAFETY
30: ALL IMPACTED
31: SUSTAINABLE

Page 5

and habits that are passed on. And that in the backdrop of your home, your stability and family and school and if things aren't going well. Or if you don't have friendships or relationships just what life might be like? These things are complex and very difficult.

30mins -

The thing for me that stood out: the giant of sectarianism and how it is so much in your face. It can overshadow the day to day issues that young people face in other parts of the world. I got a sense that young people want to change but maybe the issue is that they don't know how. The process to change isn't clear. Young people are left desperately trying to sort things out for themselves. This will set out a lot of challenges for Wednesday and Friday in terms of about what can we do. We have been talking about these issues for so long March. The processes through that are very vague. Also I thought the young people were clear about articulating the negative issues but in terms of the positives I didn't see the young people as aspirational or inspirational. It was more like to get a job, have friends, fall in love. You couldn't see vision for the future which is a bit sad. I do believe that young people do possess this. Again the process... some of the things that schools and youth work don't facilitate that

Q. Do young people talk about these issues? Do they have the space?

- I have worked in the Village area South Belfast 20 years ago where we did cross community work. I can remember leaving the centre, 4 centres (2 Catholic and 2 Protestant) and getting tomatoes and all thrown at us. We were trying to develop safe places then. Some young people have had opportunities but the problem is that when you bring them back into the communities it all falls down as there is nothing sustainable. Maybe something wrong with the mechanism. I do think that young people do talk about it and have a lot to say about it. I think young people have a lot to say about it. It goes around in circles.

Q. Are they talking about it coz we are asking them about it?

- When I see the black and white chair I see other issues that are affecting them, more personal and that they worry about. Things that stop them from getting out of bed. We as the people decide see what needs to be done, and the issue of bringing communities together. For some young people it doesn't affect them either. It depends on where you live and if your family has been personally affected by this troubles or sectarianism. And we did a project a while back with young people. We got to know the young people over a year very well. There were a few people who were highly political in that group. There were sectarian issues. And then there were other young people who were just not interested. They were completely turned off. They had no issues with the other side of the community. They just didn't see it as anything worth discussing. They are all individuals and all different come from different communities. Their issues seem to be more personal - the ones that concern them. Are you saying that this could reflect the legacy of the troubles in terms of alcohol abuse and addiction to prescription drugs in NI?

12: PROCESS TO CHANGE?
13: POSITIVE ASPIRATIONS?
14: SUSTAINABLE
15: DESIRE TO TALK ABOUT IT
16: NOT SO RELEVANT
17: WORTH DISCUSSING
18: LEGACY ISSUES

Page 3

Appendix 18 Transcript (sample) of young people's workshop

Peer Research Consultation Residential
19th July 2013 @ Downhill

METHOD: Peace Snakes and Ladders Game

QUOTE 1: It's not our job to make a difference – it's up to the politicians

- It can be our job
- Sometimes they can't come to agreements
- We can go out and try and make a difference in communities by bringing young people together
- Young people think that politicians will always agree on something but this is not necessarily the case
- They see politicians as having power

QUOTE 2: We are not really living in peace – we are living quite separate but it's not affecting us directly so there's not much we can do

- I live my life everyday as I am no problem – it doesn't really bother me
- There are groups of people that you wouldn't see yourself talk to
- It should be changed - Everybody should come together
- If you come into contact with them the problem would be addressed a lot more

QUOTE 3: We've come a long way though – things are a lot better – maybe we just stay here

- There's a lot more we can do. You just don't wanna stop. This is the best we can get. I think we should keep going until we get sick of trying. * *KEEP GOING*
- What we have achieved is amazing.
- Some just don't want anything to do with it (the peace process) They just want to leave it up to the politicians.
- Since January we as a group have worked really hard. We've done a lot more than other people (including politicians)

QUOTE 4: Flags can cause arguments and tensions. They mark your territory but in a negative way

- The other boy David was telling me that one day he was in Amagh and we noticed that there were Union Jacks right around the mall – its supposed to be a neutral area and that could have created a negative atmosphere for maybe Catholics and Nationalist and like that's not right. Protestant areas really labelling that they are Protestant with the flags and that. It can start something and provoke hatred
- My da wouldn't ask for directions (in a Unionist area) cause he has an awful strong Irish accent *DIRECTIONS*
- Even in the news there recently flags have caused a lot
- I remember I was in Liverpool going for an interview for university – it was in the square – with a load of flags – and about 300 people saying that Liverpool stands with Ulster – with all the Union Jacks and all
- Going into areas with the Irish tricolour is not so overwhelming – maybe it's just because I am Catholic – there would be one here and there – it's a lot less in your face
- I see hardly any Tricolours but I see a shitload of Union flags *BALANCE*

NEUTRAL AREAS

Martin and Tekkie July 2013 Page 1

Appendix 20

Reflexive notes

Reflections from 4th April 2014 at Guildhall

- Dialogue continues to refer to other life issues affecting young people such as jobs, relationships, homophobia etc. Some have cited that sectarianism and peace-building is not the primary focus for these young people's lives. Many cited the basic and more imposing needs of young people, such as jobs, opportunities, living support etc. others. While these are important issues my research acknowledges these but remains focussed on the fact that 1. We had a sustained conflict 2. This has left a legacy of division and separation and 3. Sectarianism (blatant and subtle) remains part of everyday life. With this in mind in what way does youth work address the sectarianism and separation? (an example was cited in which jobs are very important for young men but your perceived religion is a huge factor in choosing placements or jobs)
- Some people commented that young people experience bullying based on sexual identity – constant name calling such as 'faggot', 'poof' etc. The impact of this outweighs any sectarian or religious divide (a research project could explore how the gay community united/overcame religious divisions as part of a shared equality campaign). "We are making an issue out of the conflict. Forget about the past. Dissolve it."
- One young male volunteer commented that young people see the troubles and conflict as an older person's issue. It is not so relevant to the lives of young people. This prompted much reaction from others, including the fact that if young people do not see the relevance will the separation and sectarianism continue? One person commented, "Segregation won't change if we don't address it."
- It would seem at times there becomes a competing issues priority focus in youth work. When discussing sectarianism people refer to other priorities in youth work. This often happens in gender based work, when discussing working with young women, people go 'what about young men'?
- "We are not dealing with the past properly. If we are keeping the lid on the problem this creates constipation for delivery."
- Dealing with changing 'identification' as either Irish, British or Northern Irish. However this identification is often still associated with a religious labelling, such as a Northern Irish Catholic. Regardless of national identity the underbelly of religious perception fused with history and politics remain core
- Some commented that there was very little focus on community relations, conflict and politics through youth work during University training.
- We need shared spaces for political literacy. A global-local museum specifically for young people has been initiated in the North West.
- One commented that youth workers can have political and historical bias and present a one sided story.
- One commented that "if there is a mess in a child's bedroom, it's up to that child to sort their mess out." How does this apply to the 'mess' that Northern Ireland has found itself in?
- Fergal Barr presented on the Leadership Intercultural Dialogue Initiative: Inside Out Programme. Fergal noted how looking at international work can resolve local issues. Bringing people together can create a sea change. Such programmes

support young people to have an intense experience (often in less well developed regions), in which they have to share rooms and toilets etc They often return with an attitude of being more involved in their communities.

- Keeping my focus on the role of youth work in contributing to peace- building / dealing with contentious issues directly related to the conflict – Is my research question really the role of youth work in dealing with sectarianism and separation/ segregation as a result of the conflict?

Feedback from written notes on Reflection Pages:

- No agreed narrative (context).
- Contrast between those affected and those not affected.
- A 'demonization' of those who haven't yet opened up the dialogue?
- A culture of here and now / instant gratification – it affects young people's resilience and apathy. Hopelessness sets in: not having a job, or dealing with issues becomes the 'weight' to carry and not community relations.
- Peace is not just absence of conflict but peace with yourself.
- Being aware: critical awareness of those things around you.
- Within the care background, religious separation and identity are not a problem.
- Have young people who are hard to reach been engaged: such as NEET and Travellers?
- Youth workers don't get enough training. What is their political viewpoint?
- Whose agenda are we working from? Workers need to identify what young people need to overcome rather than their own perception?
- From experience we have little trust with adults.
- Worry of young people involved in dissident politics.
- Parents hold the key as they have a big influence.

Appendix 21 Evaluation of focus workshop 1 with practitioners

Evaluation:

How relevant and worthwhile did you find this seminar?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: *Fascinating exhibition, good way to engage with issues. It's about mental health and really like this. Very relevant!*

What key challenges remain in this area of work?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Comment: *How willingness to accept and ask uncomfortable questions. We are sometimes not actually prepared to accept what young people tell us. I know see the "young people" and are friendly with.*

Would you like follow-up from today's event? Please comment here:

Interested to see the real progress - both academic and practice.

Name: Tina

Organisation/Group: ABC

Contact information: alexandra@abc.ac.uk

MPhil/PhD Research focus group workshop 1: 22nd July 2013

Evaluation

In attendance:

How relevant and worthwhile did you find this?

- 9 out of 10 on average
- The exhibition was fascinating if a bit depressing. Love the different approach – the interactivity. I enjoyed the discussion – we all have a particular perspective/focus on such issues. Good to hear other views/experiences (I found it useful as a parent too)
- Method & Technique worked well – maybe seating far away from the exhibit
- It is very relevant to have the conversations as it gets you to reflect on your own life to practice with young people. At what level are you engaging young people in peace initiatives? I have a mixture of feelings to move forward. I am hopeful and excited as well as overwhelmed and powerless and I think this reflects a number of feelings in the exhibition. Do you ignore the negative feelings and power on or is it important to acknowledge why we feel like that
- Thought the introduction of the exhibit and young people's voices at the beginning was really useful to focus the discussion on these perspectives. It would have been great to hear more about the research, but it was useful to have Martin's comments and questions throughout
- Very relevant – both in terms of looking at underlying issues of sectarianism, how they directly and indirectly impact upon young people
- Good to have discussion about where we're really at and what's working or not. Gets beyond the usual youth work/CR conversations about our projects and how wonderful they are. It's an opportunity for critical reflection

- The seminar was relevant as a youth worker. It's important not only to reflect on current issues for young people, but also to address the underlying issue of addressing the legacy of the conflict as even though a lot of young people say it doesn't affect them – scratch the surface and it's there
- Fabulous exhibition! Great way to engage with issues. We could really learn from creativity like this. Very impressed!
- I found the discussion and topic really relevant to wider discussions in the Balkans. These issues and learning should be shared on a wide level
- Useful for identifying issues
- Really interesting to have a wide range of contributors in the room, leading to an organic, creative space to explore today's themes

What key challenges remain in this area of work?

- To allow young people to set the agenda
- Ongoing 'troubles' (12th July/flags)
- Lack of leadership of the whole – politicians play up to their constituencies
- Segregation
- Working with those who continue to say 'no' or identify themselves as 'dissident' and the young people who are attracted to this position
- The challenge function – what is this?
- The structure of society and long standing issues makes this so hard and complex to tackle. I think we need to re-motivate people. It's important to learn how to question and not just accept things as they are. Its hard but important to understand that you don't always have to agree with others but by disagreeing it does not mean that you can't associate with them
- The challenges for young people seem immense, whether this is negotiating inter and intra community violence in their areas, navigating safe space or managing the subtleties of how the legacy of conflict affects their experiences
- How to engage young people in peace-building without 'turning them off'
- Easy to identify sectarianism when it has a physical manifestation and harder when indirect and social
- Young people's lack of vision/aspiration
- Ensuring good practice around CR/peace-building e.g. to create meaningful and sustainable cross-community relationships
- Young people having opportunity to be active citizens
- Participative democracy and affect change – change the channel/the dialogue
- Asking difficult questions and creating the space where people feel they can answer them honestly and openly
- Also where is the evidence of projects that have worked?
- More willingness to unpick and ask uncomfortable questions
- We are sometimes not analytical enough to unpick what "young people" tell us. Who are the young people we are dealing with?
- I think making this work more participating for youth – that they feel ownership. Also to make it relevant to youth development and challenges facing young people.
- How peace-building moves forward and the role of all aspects of society – schools, practitioners, politicians, and the wider socio-economic context

- Structures within communities go against the positive work. This work takes time and needs to be tailored. Some people don't have the time: recession, lack of understanding about peace-building work and youth work
- I have 6 pages of key challenges to pass on. Most notably for me is young people being involved in every step, educating themselves and each others, and most importantly knowing why

Would you like follow-up today's event?

- Yes – can you bring exhibition to Parliament Buildings please?
- I would like to come to the other workshops this week
- Yes certainly. These discussions are so critical to the larger picture for NI moving on, and it is useful to have a range of voices involved
- Look forward to being there on Friday morning (sorry, can't do Wednesday). Keen to hear the results
- Yes, I would like to continue the conversations and maybe hear from people like Ken Harland what has worked in the past 20 years and what he thinks still needs to be done
- Interested to see the real products – both academic and practice!
- Please keep me involved
- I'm looking forward to the rest of the week and being involved in any feedback
- Yes, good to hear how your research develops and the conclusions you come to
- Q. When will you finish collecting data and write up?

Appendix 22 Example of rapporteur notes / researcher transcription

| <p style="text-align: center;">Rapporteur notes</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Transcription: MPhil/PhD Sharing seminar 1 (24th July 2013)</p> |
|---|---|
| <p><u>Gerard Hughes – 24/07/13</u></p> <p><u>Sharing – Inner circle</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initially, young people are saying that it needs to happen to help cross borders and boundaries, but squabbles and fights easily arise when sharing simple things (sweets, clothes etc) • Somebody else might ruin something if you share it with them – fear and lack of trust • There's a feelgood factor involved when you share – everyone gets something out of it • Such a complex issue – people's perceptions of other groups lead to fear and distrust • We have an idea of sharing in our parliament – but is it really sharing? • Division suits our politicians and our political systems • Sharing is a big part of integration/segregation – it can help young people find that they have a lot in common with other, 'different' young people • It's very difficult for young people to share in a meaningful way in the context of our society • There's a lot of pressure on youth workers to sort out the problems created by our societal structures • Politicians don't want sharing • There are good examples of shared spaces – The May/primary schools sharing campus • People need to not be afraid that they might lose something <p><u>Outer Circle</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political parties keeping separation means they keep power – another example of fear of losing something • Sharing is a taught skills – it's something that we teach children when they are young, but this isn't maintained in later life – it's not easy to do. <p><u>Action</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need to be more political – encourage people who don't vote to do so – inspire communities to become interested and engaged in politics • Work with groups who don't vote • Keep chipping away as youth workers, having real meaningful conversations <p><u>Separation – Inner Circle</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "So-called peace" | <p>Martin introduced seminar and context of the research – being objective, a focussed lens, informed by research and young people saying...</p> <p>Group introduction</p> <p>7 mins: Moving into the bigger picture and the structural framework and how these impact on young people: education, divided communities, housing, political structures</p> <p>Explained method of inner circle dialogue, outer circle observation, and identifying actions – focussed conversations</p> <p>THEME 1: Sharing is good at times theme</p> <p>-With young women. Initially they said you need to make friends and cross borders and boundaries. Stripping it back – sharing a back of sweets, sharing rooms, sharing clothes but how easy is it to do that? Squabbling and fighting. Trying to link to the difficulties in sharing in a broader sense in terms of sharing community and sharing culture. You get protective of what you have. You don't really want to share that. Someone else might ruin it if you share it. More positive things: if you share it's fairer and everybody gets something and you can get the feel good factor. You are rewarded and they are rewarded. Through this analogy it can transfer into the broader sense</p> <p>-Such a complex issue for people here– thinking about where people live and where they go to school – there are so many perceptions and ideas about other groups they have never met– and then being fearful of sharing. I think it's a no brainer. I think we have to share. Where we are at, at this time and place we have to share. We have an idea of sharing such as consociational assembly. Sometimes I wonder is it really sharing. You get this and we get this. It's played out on the</p> |

| | |
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| | <p>streets . I think division suits us – its suits our politicians. I have a big thing about segregation in education – growing up separately. Sharing is all part of it. Schools and youth work programmes can infiltrate at some level but the impact is small. We know that when you have conversations with young people and that when they meet with others they recognise it is good to share and its god to work together as they have so much in common. Young people realise it’s good to work together and to share. The structures of this society influence the perceptions, never get the opportunity to have the conversations. There is a lot of pressure on teachers and youth workers to try and sort out the mess created by the structure</p> <p>Q. What’s holding us back? Politicians. Division suits us. Two parties in the Assembly where division suits them. People vote for them. I don’t think they want sharing which makes it difficult for us. Sharing can be real. There are good examples of shared spaces such as the work in the Moy and primary schools sharing spaces. Working at a pace where people don’t feel frightened and not losing something – that’s okay. Shared space and shared subjects and curriculum is a positive thing.</p> <p>-Very realistic that political parties are very divided separate. Stalemate of peace idea – if you stay that side and we stay that side, then we are alright. Its going to keep carrying on the way its going unless we change it</p> |
|--|---|

Appendix 23 Academic rigour

The tests of validity, reliability, credibility and generalizability tend to favour those who employ positivist research approaches. Shenton (2004), comments that alternative terminologies have been adopted by some researchers to distance themselves from such a positivist paradigm. He specifically notes Guba (1989) who proposes four criteria that support a trustworthy study. These criteria are similar to those employed by the positivist investigator:

- a) credibility (in preference to internal validity);
- b) transferability (in preference to external validity/generalisability);
- c) dependability (in preference to reliability);
- d) confirmability (in preference to objectivity)

To enhance the **credibility** (legitimacy and truth) I can reasonably likely say that my approach was non-biased based on:

- A balanced relationship on site with research participants which did not undermine the authenticity and objectivity of the research being carried out.
- A research exploration in which I had no strong leanings and welcomed a journey of discovery.

To enhance the **dependability** (checking data for accuracy) I can reasonably likely say that the data is accurate and appropriate due to:

- Investigator triangulation (dictaphone, rapporteur, key notes, individual scribed notes/evaluations).
- Preparation (letter of clarity, brief power-point etc).
- Focus (keeping exploration tight to research question such as free voice method/data analysis also connected to research question).
- Building and bonding (trust and rapport between research participants and with myself though breakfast, music, visual exhibition etc.).
- Facilitation (use of prompts /provoking responses via quotes, bedroom visual / time bound discussions / all having a voice and not concentrated on loudest or timely speakers).
- Reducing interviewer bias/impact by paying attention to my tone, facilitation and overall research positioning.
- Noticing and managing power relations and performing roles between group members (especially using methods in which all participants have an equal say).

To enhance the **dependability** (dependability/replication with same consistent results) I can reasonably likely say that the research instrument was neutral and consistent due to:

- One core question and sub questions being used across the data collection sites.

- Investigator triangulation (cross referencing via dictaphone, rapporteur, evaluation etc.).
- Immediate reflection and write up following the data collection.
- Later review of the data.
- Data collected from different sites (Belfast, Derry, Newry).
- Data collected at different times of the year.
- Detailing the processes, implementation and reflections on the research study as a "prototype model" – emphasising methods and their effectiveness (Shenton, 2004:71).

Appendix 25

'AGENDA' Referencing throughout findings

| Area of thesis | Content | Key message |
|----------------|---|---|
| Abstract | This ' AGENDA for peace ' model highlights: A ssessment of need and acknowledgement to act; G etting buy-in; E xploration of contentious issues; N ew relationships and contacts; D ocumenting the learning and impact; and A llies for further action. | Naming it Acting on it Keeping it alive |
| Page 8 | This reflects a wider government agenda which seeks evidence on impact. The House of Commons Education Committee, for example, (2011:19) notes that, ' <i>despite the weight of individual testimonies, we experience great difficulty in finding objective evidence of the impact of services....</i> | Government agenda |
| Page 55 | <i>Thirty years ago Youth Work aspired to a special relationship with young people... It claimed to 'be on their side'. Three decades later Youth Work is close to abandoning this distinctive commitment. Today it accepts the State's terms. It sides with the State's agenda.</i> | State / Government agenda |
| Page 72 | in 1987 the publication of 'Policy for the Youth Service in Northern Ireland' placed community relations firmly on the youth work agenda | Youth Work agenda: Community Relations |
| Page 77 | Former member of the Legislative Assembly, Conall Mc Devitt (Social Democratic and Labour Party, 2011) commented, ' <i>do we have courage to put our division at the top of the agenda? We can't live in separation but equal</i> ' (UTV live, 27 th Jan 2011). | Conflict on the agenda |
| Page 79 | The case for a shared agenda throughout institutions and structures in society sounds plausible in its intention. | Shared society agenda |
| Page 180 | "On the whole young people want peace but only if we put it on the agenda. " NB I think this is key to my model... | Young people's agenda |
| Page 189 | "...sometimes there is an agenda to expect too much that youth work can solve what are very serious political and community issues. We shouldn't be unrealistic about that...there is a lot of dumping onto | Agenda forced upon youth work |

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|----------|--|----------------------------|
| | youth work.” | |
| Page 190 | For example, one research participant referred to how a social order agenda infiltrates much funding for youth work. | Social order agenda |
| Page 190 | “(we) all might be there, but with slightly different agendas . You are coming at it from different angles.” | Differing agendas |
| Page 201 | This led some participants to question the agenda and focus of the youth work intervention, challenging the context of multi-agendas . | Differing agendas |
| Page 208 | The findings suggest that youth work may be being over-stretched beyond educational outcomes to meet the priorities of all government departments’ priorities and agendas , such as employment, health and justice (section 5.7). | Too many agendas |
| Page 220 | Core to this is a confident profession in which trained and reflective staff can articulate the value of youth work; identify and showcase the impact of youth work on young people and the wider community; placing and maintaining peace-building as central to the youth work agenda; | Peace on youth work agenda |
| Page 221 | <p>The proposed peace and youth work model which I have established AGENDA for peace recognises the need to be proactive and brings together the 4 key models presented in the theoretical analysis (chapter 3) and the research findings of my study (chapter 5).</p> <p>The model corresponds directly with the findings, particularly emphasising the common citation by both young people and practitioners that peace was either never on the agenda or had fallen off the agenda.</p> <p>The Agenda for peace model in the first instance encompasses three key components as identified by Smyth (2013). The 3 key layers of the approach recognise an investment in peace-keeping, peace-making and peace-building.</p> | Peace on youth work agenda |
| Page 274 | <p>Pete: yes, sneaking sectarianism onto the agenda but a wider challenging of any bigotry or discrimination.</p> <p>Brenda: often working to the young people’s agenda but you are open to the project funding</p> | Overt agenda |

| | | |
|----------|--|-----------------------|
| | agenda too. | |
| Page 243 | Some people have the view that this work is a civil rights or nationalist agenda . There is suspicion and a fear of losing out. | Political agenda |
| Page 274 | Whose agenda are we working from? | Overt agenda |
| Page 277 | To allow young people to set the agenda . | Young people's agenda |

