



TIME FOR A NEW MODEL OF YOUTH WORK:

MORE THAN 70% OF YOUTH WORKERS WANT MORE FREEDOM TO DO MISSION

StreetSpace, in partnership with Frontier Youth Trust (FYT) and Church Urban Fund (CUF), has undertaken a small study into youth work and mission to find out to what extent Christian Youth Work reaches (and wants to reach) those young people hardest to reach - and what stops us doing more. Working with YOUTHWORK magazine, StreetSpace hosted a survey: *10 questions on church, mission and youth work*, and here are the results:

Of the all the responses, just under 70% came from church-based youth workers – and of those youth workers the majority work predominately with church-connected young people (67%), don't engage with the young people that are most marginalised, deprived and disadvantaged in their local area (67%), and aren't working in an area of significant deprivation (74%). But this is nothing new – we already knew that those young people hardest to reach are not engaging with traditional models of youth ministry.

What we did discover, however, is that of those church-based youth workers the vast majority are keen to work more in areas of poverty and deprivation (85%) and with those young people most marginalised from church and society (92%). And for that to happen, youth workers felt that they needed their churches to do more to encourage, resource and engage with work in marginalised or poor communities (74%) – with the majority of church-based youth workers (72%) expressing a desire for more freedom, time and support within their current role to invest in this type of missional youth work.

How have we found ourselves in a position where the majority of church-based youth workers are not engaging those young people hardest to risk – despite their intentions to do so. A recent study into the work of Pioneer Ministers in roles that were split between new and traditional forms of church found that their time, energy and resources were drawn into maintaining traditional forms of church to the detriment of the new. We asked if church-based youth workers felt similarly restricted or overburdened by maintaining existing congregations, working in church structures, and fulfilling traditional youth work responsibilities at the expense of investing in mission – and the result is yes they do (69%).

The barriers, participants suggested, to doing more work with marginalised young people varied from a '*lack of resources*' and '*not enough volunteers*' through to '*churches not understanding youth work*' and there being '*expectations to deliver the bible message in a traditional format*'.

Outreach to young people in poor areas may seem beyond the local church – but StreetSpace would like to offer an alternative.

StreetSpace offers an effective, low cost and innovative way to engage young people on the street with the Christian story. For £500 and two volunteers for two hours a week, StreetSpace can help get you growing church with young people on the margins of your community. Over the last two years StreetSpace have launched 36 projects, working with everyday volunteers growing church in some of the UK's toughest areas. StreetSpace provides the processes, training and resources to plan implement and evaluate work – with a dedicated development worker leading you through from cold-contact to church-on-the-edge!

For more details contact admin@streetspace.org.uk or visit the website www.streetspace.org.uk