

**BVS/BRETHREN SERVICE
PROJECT FORM**

Name of project/organization: Youth Initiatives

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BVSer's job title: Youth Initiatives Gap Year Volunteer

BVSer's immediate supervisor(s): Downpatrick Area Worker

Description of project/organization:

Young people are Northern Ireland's greatest resource. Yet it is a resource too often trapped in social and economic deprivation, sectarian division, and the notion that success can only come in far off lands. Young people need a positive vision for life; a vision that points a way through hopelessness and an environment that often undermines aspirations for positive change. Rooted in the Christian faith, Youth Initiatives seeks to address young people's needs at the source and builds its programmes as a response.

Mission Statement

Youth Initiatives is a cross community youth work that aims to awaken hope, inspire initiative, mobilise youth to make a vital contribution to their community and reconciliation in Northern Ireland through the discovery and renewal of Christian faith in daily life.

Aims and Purposes

To empower young people to realise their contribution to society

Youth Initiative's programmes recognise young people's value, creativity, and desire to make a contribution. As young people are involved in productive experiences, they see their way beyond apathy and hopelessness. Youth Initiatives projects involve young people in their own community. The projects are designed for growth in character through the challenge of responsibility and teamwork.

To encourage cross-community co-operation, and understanding

Youth Initiatives brings young people from both the Catholic and Protestant communities together. We aim to provide environments where co-operation and understanding are encouraged and suspicion, mistrust and fear are broken down. Our programmes work with young people in their local community and from that base joins them with others on cross-community projects. We emphasise on-going cross-community contact and provide an international dimension.

To equip youth leaders for effective youth work

Youth Initiatives is a response to the needs of young people. Our programmes seek to be a catalyst in youth work to address contemporary needs. We train young people in responsibility and provide opportunities for them to develop their leadership skills. Youth Initiatives seeks to work in co-operation with other organisations with similar or complementary aims. Our staff is widely involved in consultancy, and we value networking with others.

To be an instrument for spiritual renewal among young people

Youth Initiatives aims to present the Christian message of hope, faith and love through ways that are relevant and accessible to young people. We seek to help young people find expression of their faith in daily life. Youth Initiatives works in co-operation with local clergy and churches. We support and encourage a full expression of church commitment.

Purpose Statement

Youth Initiatives exists to reach out to young people and connect them to a positive relational environment where they can grow in faith a life skills serve others and honour God with their lives.

Youth Initiatives began in February 1991, when a group of young Northern Ireland Protestants and Catholics came together to reach out to young people in West Belfast areas of social need. YI currently provides 10 youth work projects for 11-25 year olds across four locations in West Belfast, East Belfast, Banbridge and Downpatrick working with up to 300 young people in personal development programmes on a weekly basis. YI also engages over 75 young people as volunteers to help run each project. These projects use a variety of youth work tools and youth workers with local knowledge and a history of involvement in the area to help young people through the issues they face growing up in an area of social disadvantage.

1) Crosslinks: is a long-term partnership community relations project that started with Oasis Caring in Action / CFC Merge in East Belfast in 1998, more recently joined by East Belfast Mission. In 2006, the Chinese Welfare Association was added with future partnership plans connecting the Belfast Polish Association. This arts-based project centres on: community relations workshops, creative arts training and a large yearly music and drama performance as well as residential weekend workshops. It involves over 70 young people who have creative talents, abilities or interest.

2) NUTS runs 3 YI Programmes for 11-14's in West Belfast. Each week the project engages with over 100 young people from the Colin area in 4 programmes. Chill and Space are the names of the single gender afterschool programmes, which are based in Twinbrook, and are aimed at providing young people with a safe and relaxed drop in environment. Express, a performing arts based programme run in Poleglass, brings together young people from the whole Colin area. The fourth programme is called Grow and is a personal development programme that challenges young people to actively engage in social issues in their community and gain life skills.

3) Lifeline West (15-18) Over 80 Colin Area young people attend attractive outreach programme nights with modular training including: employability skills training, drama & presentations skills and personal & social development. Participants also attend large weekly youth events, 2 Residential Training Weekends a year, and many attend Summer Scheme Leadership Training providing peer leadership for local 11-14s over 3 weeks).

4) Lifeline East (13-18) Has connected with around 30 young people through activity nights, seminars and structured educational programmes. Lifeline allows young people to meet, form relationships and discuss issues affecting young people and their communities in East Belfast. They also attend residential weekends alongside the Downpatrick and West Belfast young people.

5) Downpatrick (11-18) involves a number of different programmes run by our Downpatrick project leader and girl's worker and is a base for detached work in local housing estates. 11-14s and 15-18 years olds engage in different age and gender specific and also mixed activities. Small groups, involving youth volunteers, leads to interest led programmes.

6) Banbridge Project started in July 2009, and uses skilled detached workers to create a team of local young people concerned with improving youth provision in the area.

7) Young Men's Target Project (14-18) is based in West Belfast. The Target Project Co-ordinator partners with a team of young male leaders to plan events for 14-18 year old males according to their interests and needs. It is designed to address low self-esteem and poor educational attainment amongst this age group as well as a high local incidence of suicide and the associated factors of drug and alcohol abuse.

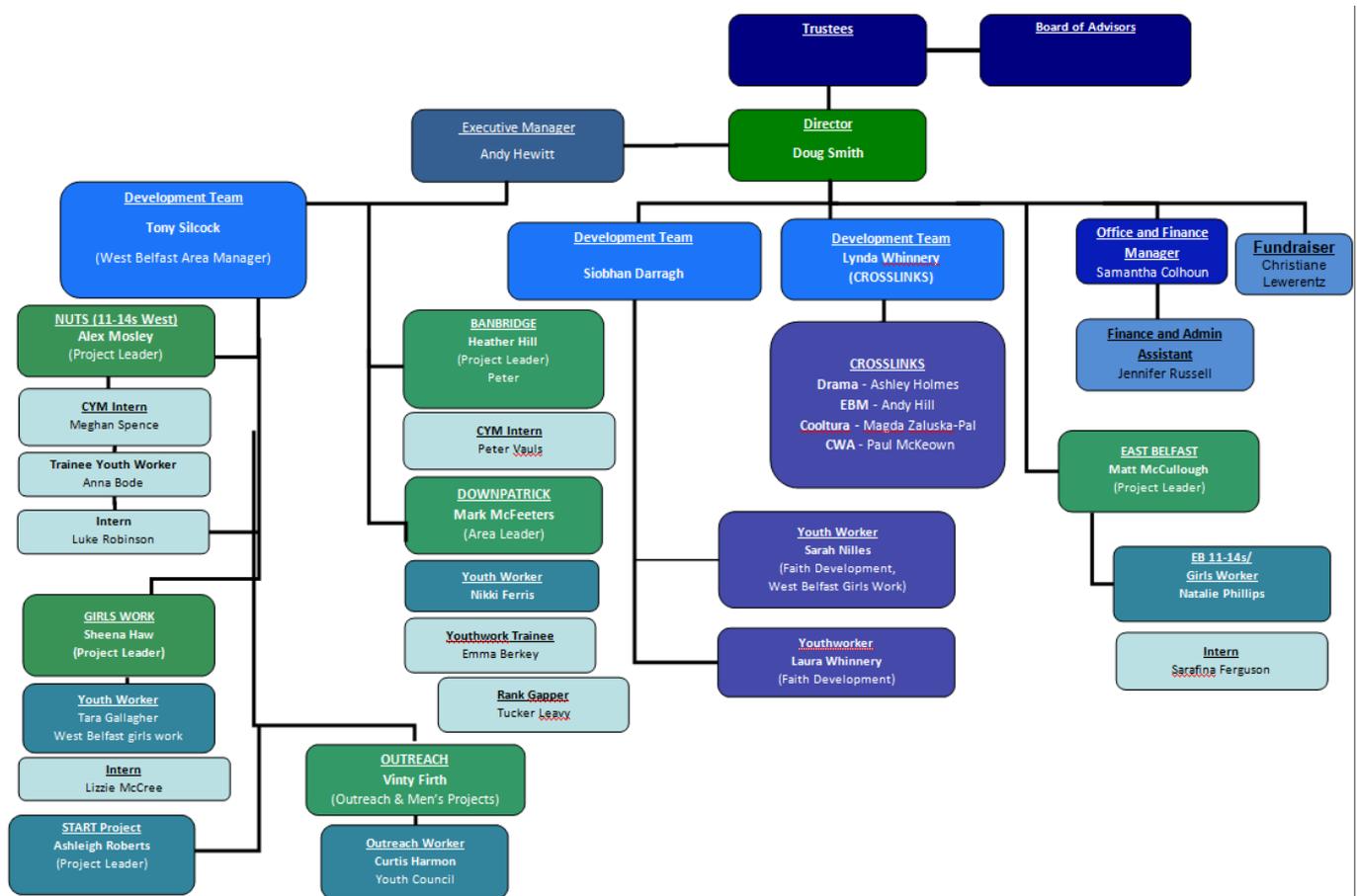
8) The Girls Project (14-18) is based out of West Belfast and targets addresses inadequate provision for young women in this age bracket in the local area. The Girls Project offers a safe relational environment and addresses issues such as teen pregnancy, underage drinking, drug use as well as planning events and providing educational courses.

9) The YI Faith Development Project -Utilises 4 of our youth volunteers who work with our faith development officer in schools to provide religious education, day retreats and pastoral care in partnership with the 3 local parishes and St. Colm's High School working with up to 400 young people per year.

10) The YI Volunteering Programme encompasses 80+ volunteers aged 16-25 working across all of our programmes in a three level volunteer achievement awards programme. Most have first been participants at Youth Initiatives programmes. YI programmes are designed and run by volunteers in conjunction with project leaders, engaging in youth work and other volunteering projects.

In addition, we have a packed school holidays and summer programme, which includes summer, schemes run over 4 locations, large volunteering events, day trips, overseas service trips and a summer camp.

Staffing and Structure of Organisation



Brief Description of Location

Downpatrick is a medium-sized town about 33 km (21 mi) south of Belfast in County Down, Northern Ireland and is one of Ireland's most ancient and historic towns. It is the county town of Down with a rich history and strong connection to Saint Patrick. It had a population of 10,316 at the 2001 Census. Downpatrick is a commercial, recreational and administrative centre for the locality and serves as a hub for the nearby towns and villages and within an hour drive of Belfast. Downpatrick is characterised by the rolling drumlins that are a feature of the Lecale area and also has the distinction of being the lowest place on the island of Ireland. Ballymote and Cathedral are in the top 5 most deprived wards in the Down area. The Model Farm Estate, situated on the outskirts of the town, was built in the 1970s mainly to re-house Catholics displaced as a result of the violence in Belfast. The estate is characteristic of a community trying to find its feet after years of conflict. These estates are some of the areas where the young people we work with in Downpatrick live.

Job description:

The YI Gap programme involves an intensive induction programme including a weekend residential, weekly face-to-face youth work sessions in one or more of YI's youth work projects, on-going training, supervision and support.

YI's methodology of informal education includes one to one and small group work, weekly programmes, centre based activities, trips and residential weekends. We aim to create a positive relational environment and Gappers play a key role in establishing and nurturing this atmosphere.

Key Tasks:

1. Assist Downpatrick Project Leader in the planning and delivery of the Downpatrick programme(s).
2. Attend staff meetings and staff and Gapper training as required.
3. Serve as part of the Downpatrick team(s), attend team meetings and project events.
4. Face to face work with young people including project events and informal work.
5. Help to establish, along with the rest of the team, an alternative relational environment for youth activities that generates social and spiritual development and community (including cross-community) responsibility.
6. Informal education activities and conversations with young people that help them grow in faith and life skills
7. Record keeping and administrative tasks to aid the delivery of the project.
8. Other tasks and responsibilities as needed for the organization as a whole.

Work Pattern:

The Gapper will have a flexible work schedule (40 hours per week) based around a few set time blocks, which include project times, staff meetings, and Gapper training. It is expected that the Gapper will work at least 2 nights per week, but additional nights and weekend residentials will form part of the schedule from time to time. Most of the face-to-face youth work will be based in the Downpatrick Area.

Minimum requirements or prerequisites:**Experience****Essential**

- Experience of volunteer or paid youth work
- Experience in youth work in areas of socio-economic need.

Desirable

- Youth work qualification
- Experience of community relations work in the local community
- Experience of working in a holistic way with "at risk" young people

Skills**Essential**

- Relational youth work
- Working with volunteers
- Leading young people in peer group discussions
- Connecting with young people through detached or schools work
- One to One mentoring
- Monitoring and Record keeping
- Building positive alternative youth environments

Desirable

- Coaching sports (football, basketball, etc.)
- Outreach youth work
- Networking with community organisations

Attributes

Essential to possess a minimum level, desirable to possess a high level

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reliability • Initiative • Creativity • Good Judgment • Relational Skills • Patience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-discipline • Diligence • Team work skills • Courage • Perseverance • Dynamic
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Couples? Can you take married couples? **YES**

Disabilities? Can you take a volunteer with a physical disability? **YES**

(Please specify: both of these would be dependent on the housing that would be available)

Housing for volunteer:

In community

In independent apartment

On project site

With family

Other

Must the volunteer seek his/her own housing?

Description of housing, if already provided: Housing is not yet confirmed

YouTube Video about the project work available online? Please provide the link here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGXRIEbqDkQ>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PJZEZx4fE8c>

Other comments:

Gappers are entitled to 5 days off for every 3 months of service. This should be agreed in advance by the supervisor.

In addition, YI also recognises 9 statutory holidays in each calendar year: New Years Day, St Patricks Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, May Day, July 12th and 13th, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

The Gapper will be line managed by the Downpatrick Area Leader, which will include monthly supervision sessions as well as on-going support. Additional support can be arranged in consultation with the YI Management Team.