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Faith-based Youth Work: Education, Engagement and Ethics.

Graham Bright, Naomi Thompson, Peter Hart and Bethany Hayden.

Introduction

Youth work represents 'a people-centred, commitment to diversity, anti-oppressive practice and the provision of relational spaces in which individuals and groups can think critically about their lives and worlds, in order that they might act to shape them differently' (Bright, 2015a:xvii). Grounded in critical pedagogical praxis (Freire, 1970), youth work continues to hold the ethea of equity and inclusivity paramount (Batsleer, 2008; Sapin, 2013). Despite these commitments however, there continues to be considerable debate regarding the nature of youth work and its relationship to the various faith-based practices in which much of its history is rooted. This comes at a time of on-going dialogue regarding the telos of the profession - a period characterized, in England[1] and other neo-liberal economies by continuous restructuring, cuts and uncertainty, to which the faith sector has remained broadly resilient. Interest in the nature of faith-based youth work and its relationship to wider forms of practice can be seen in the growing number of academic publications and conferences on the subject. Despite a narrative of growing secularization, faith praxis remains a significant, albeit contested contemporary driver. Building on the work of the authors (Bright and Bailey, 2015; Hart, 2016; Stanton,[2] 2012, 2013) this chapter draws on narrative case study interviews with youth workers operating in different faith settings, to explore how they conceptualise and experience some of the joys and challenges of inclusive praxis. It further considers ways in which faith-based youth work attempts to promote social, religious and institutional inclusivity, as well as examining practice motives, and potential conflicts in personal, professional and religious consciences.

The present policy environment in England and beyond has reduced much youth work practice to a 'rump' (Jeffs, 2015:75). The faith sector has taken its moral duty seriously by developing provision to mitigate recent fiscal effects, yet neo-liberal inducements have led to attempts by states to colonize, marketize and control religion in welfare production (Woodhead, 2012). Such processes are evident in youth work, where civically-minded people of faith, concerned with young people's wellbeing have engaged in continued voluntarism and localized processes of co-production. Pimlott (2015a, 2015b) in addressing those involved in Christian youth work, argues that people of faith should engage, but do so with active critical political insight, lest they risk accelerating the race to the bottom.

All youth work, like all education, is an act of faith (Jeffs, 2011); full, in equal measure of possibility, uncertainty, hope and adventure. Whether that faith is in something political, social, educational, philosophical, human or 'religious', youth work in its myriad forms, draws in diverse ways on these 'faiths'. Faith gives youth work its dynamism. Jolly (2015) suggests whether expressed or not, that there are inherent links between these 'faiths' and practitioners' motivations for practice. The motives for faith-based (religious) practice have often been viewed with an external glare of

[1]Cited to denote particular political and professional distinctions between England and other United Kingdom jurisdictions.

[2] Naomi Thompson, one of the chapter authors, was previously Naomi Stanton.

proselytizing suspicion. However, little 'secular' youth work expresses its intended purpose. State agendas are not benign, yet they remain surreptitiously unnamed. This flies in the face of ethical transparency (Sercombe, 2010), and undermines a key tenet of youth work practice: *informed* voluntary participation. In contrast, by virtue of the spaces and places in which it is undertaken, much faith-based practice is, on the surface at least, more teleologically accessible to young people. As an act of inclusive and encompassing faith, all youth work is premised upon, and concerned in the most ethical sense with, espoused processes of conversion – of empowering and enabling young people's potential transformation from one state of learning and being to another. Irrespective of sector, the telos driving these transformative, experiential 'border-crossings' (Coburn, 2010; Giroux, 2005) which open up processes of possibility require further interrogation. Drawing empirically on youth workers' practice narratives, the purpose of this chapter to explore these concerns in relation to faith-based provision.

The origins of faith-based youth work, and indeed youth work more generally, lie in the Sunday School movements of the UK and America and in Jewish youth work, which were developed as lay movements in response to social need (Jeffs and Spence, 2011; Lynn and Wright, 1971; Pimlott, 2015b; Stanton, 2011). The largest sector of the UK youth work field (Brierley, 2003; Green, 2006; Stanton, 2013), and a significant player in community-based provision in other contexts such as Australia and the USA, faith-based practice has had an influential role in youth work's history and development. There is not space in this chapter to explore the full history and internationality of faith-based youth work, however, it remains important to frame recognition of its significance across time and place, rather than as a 'poor relation' to the wider field.

The research informing this chapter focusses on inclusion in faith-based youth work settings. The practice explored is conducted by individuals and small faith organisations rather than large movements with faith-based origins. The present work explores practice in a range of faith traditions, and supports Stanton's (2013) previous findings that inclusive approaches are often more embedded in the youth work provision of religious organisations than in wider faith communities. Our research shows how faith-based youth work challenges and extends the inclusivity of wider institutions (e.g. mosques, Gurdwaras and churches). The role that faith-based youth work plays in extending inclusion is also supported by the wider literature. Singh (2011), for example, found that Sikh young leaders set up camps and societies for other Sikh young people to explore their faith in more accessible ways. Gould (2015), exploring the practice of the Glasgow Gurdwara, found that its volunteer youth worker had broken new ground in securing young people's representation on the Gurdwara's leadership committee. Ahmed (2015) outlines how the Muslim Youth Helpline was set up as an accessible and inclusive 'space' for Muslim young people to discuss and be offered support around issues that were difficult to discuss in other contexts. Our research found that faith-based youth workers facilitate different forms of inclusive practice - both for young people of particular faith traditions to enhance their sense of inclusion, and open access provision for young people more broadly.

We recognise challenges to inclusion in faith-based youth work, as in all youth work, which is never fully neutral or unaffected by the agendas of the state, religious body or other funders (Stanton, 2013). However, we resist taking a deficit approach to exploring faith-based youth work in this chapter and to framing it as a sceptical piece within a largely secular text. In doing so, we remain true to the experiences of our research participants, who, overall, frame their work positively.

Through their accounts, we recognise the role that faith-based youth work plays, how it deals with inclusive practice, some of the challenges it faces, and how it contributes to an inclusive range of provision within a context of wider funding cuts and reduced opportunities for open access provision. However, Clayton and Stanton (2008) and Hart (2016) recognise that there are different approaches and attitudes to professional ethics and boundaries within secular and faith-based provision, largely because of the community-based and vocational nature of the latter. Faith-based youth work has been subject to scrutiny, as all youth work should be, as to its role in cementing inequalities, particularly around gender and sexuality. Similarly, secular youth work has, at times, been found to work to an agenda of conformity rather than empowerment, with Coburn (2011) finding it can promote 'containment' rather than 'liberation', and Garasia et al (2016) arguing it can suppress rather than empower young people's voices in political processes. We do not therefore approach either faith-based, or secular youth work as being more superior, or problematic than the other – but recognise the complexities and paradoxes within each.

Overall, we argue that faith-based youth work subscribes to the principles of inclusivity, empowerment and participation, and that it challenges its wider religious institutions, despite some barriers, to become more accessible, inclusive, and accepting in empowering young people.

Methodology

The research underpinning this chapter engaged Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as its methodology (see Bright et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2009). Research informants volunteered to participate in the study as the result of calls made through various professional networks in the UK[3][4]. Interviews, which occurred either face to face or via Skype, were analysed by individual members of the research team using the frameworks outlined by Smith et al. (2009) and Bright, et al. (2013). Interview themes from each data item were distilled into three or four major motifs which summarized the essence of each participant's experience. Subsumption across the data set generated three superordinate themes: **Education, Engagement and Ethics** (see Figure X.1). Griffin and May (2012:453) suggest that 'the presentation of analysed [IPA] data should contain substantial verbatim quotations which illustrate the importance of the participant's voice.' The data and contextual commentary that follow attempt therefore to illuminate participants' experiences of contemporary faith-based practice, and provide a basis for the critical analysis with which the chapter concludes.

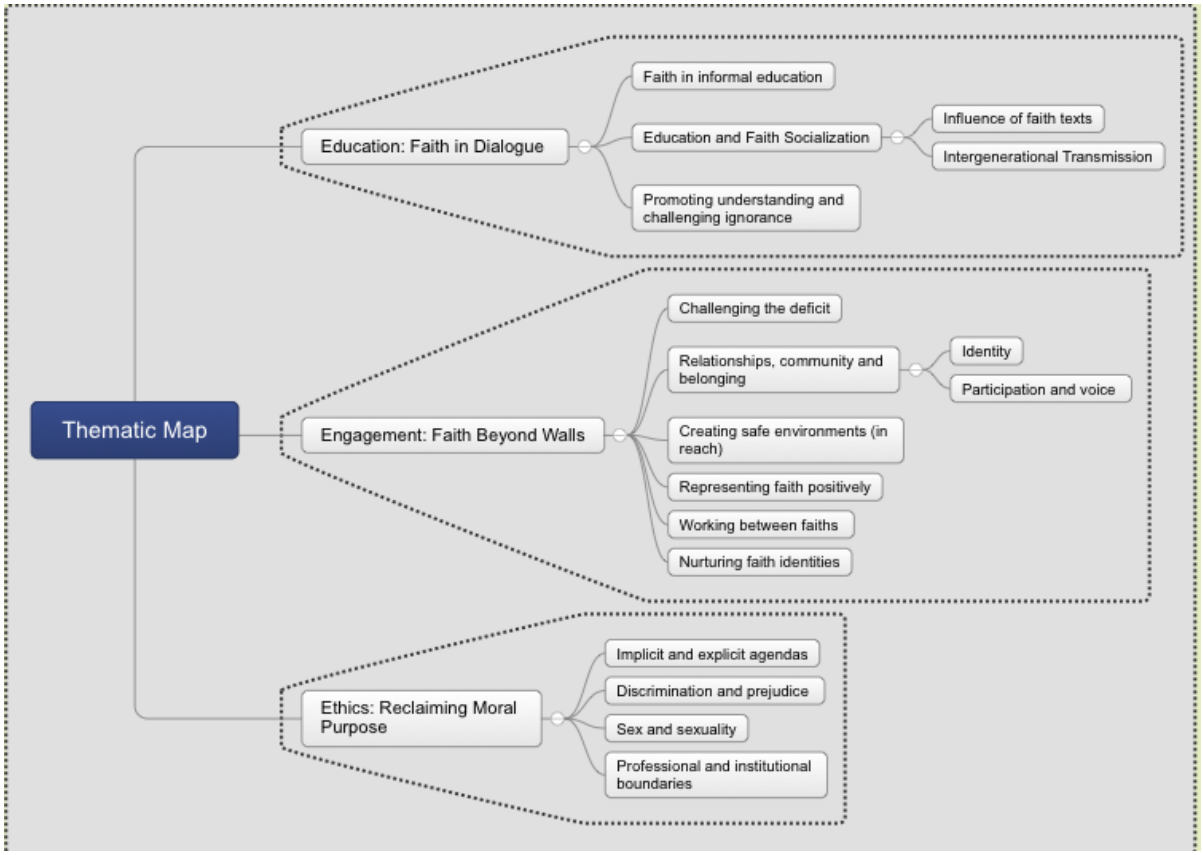
Name	Participant Information
Balraj	Sikh Volunteer Youth Worker
Beth	Christian, church-based Youth Worker

[3] We are particularly grateful to Shelley Marsh from Reshet, The Network for Jewish Youth Provision, for her support for this project.

[4] The authors had originally hoped for international contributions; however, despite sustained efforts, this did not materialize.

Daniel	Jewish Youth Worker
Jim	Christian, church-based Youth Worker
Kana	Buddhist Volunteer Youth Worker
Mark	Christian Youth Worker with The Feast - an inter-faith youth work organization
Saori	Buddhist Volunteer Youth Worker
Steven	A Revert Muslim Youth Worker with The Feast - an inter-faith youth work organization
Warsan	Muslim Volunteer Youth Worker who has initiated a Scouts group for Muslim young people

Table X.1 Participant Information[5]



[5] N.B. some names are elected pseudonyms. Other participants and organisations made explicit requests for real names and locations to be used. Ethical protocols, as consented by York St John University for this research, have been followed throughout.

Figure X.1 Thematic Map

Education: Faith in Dialogue

The sub-themes, like the superordinate themes generated in this research are intricately interconnected. The challenge has been to find appropriate threads with which to begin navigating a way through the data, and to select a cross-section of examples from the significant amount generated. Research always necessitates compromise. In this case, it has been to balance out the richness of the data produced through IPA with the space afforded by, and, focus of, the chapter. For this reason, particular subthemes will be explored in this work. Our hope is however that the data is presented in a way that resonates with the reader, and, which remains true to the contributors' experiences.[6]

Faith in Informal Education

It became encouragingly apparent in analysing the data that a deep commitment to relationally-grounded informal educational practice with young people lies, in various ways, at the centre of participants' practice. In many instances, this was framed by connecting young people's everyday experiences to issues of faith through dialogue, and, to exploring young people's perceptions and understanding of faith in a safe and respectful manner.

> *"…we had a boy who came the other day who has joined us and is part of our team now… but he'd suffered with bone cancer at 17, and we'd seen this stuff that Stephen Fry had presented online, and this whole discussion started, and as the boys filtered in and they joined in. And we talked about what we believe about creation, and 'Was there a God?' and 'Could there be a God? 'And if there was, did he create anything, or was that just luck, but he's still around?' So we really talked, and I would say the conversation was for about an hour and a half, which to get young people to sit down and talk for an hour and half, like, orchestrated, you just, you couldn't do that at all."* (Beth)

Other examples included Daniel having an open exchange of ideas around atheism and allowing everyone's opinion to be heard, and Saori who creates space for informal dialogue amidst opportunities for study and prayer. This dialogical commitment extends to ethical and moral issues, and often leads to action in the wider community, and, in some cases, to a committed engagement with global concerns. This, many of the participants highlighted as key to developing critical pedagogical practice, and, results in young people generating a greater sense of possibility, agency and critical civic responsibility.

> *"…one of the first things we did back in 2012 was a charity event, and we raised funds for a local children's hospital…So we did a fundraising event and we fundraised almost £8000 for that because we managed to get all of the community together. So that was a real kind of taste of, oh wow, we can actually make things happen."* (Balraj)

In a further example, Steven described how he engages young people from different faith backgrounds in critical discussion regarding human trafficking and fair trade. His focus is on developing a pedagogy that challenges young people to *"…look at things on a local, national and*

[6] Our participants provided us with a varied amount of rich data for which we are very grateful. We are aware of our struggle to do justice to this in the space afforded in this chapter. We are therefore considering ways in which we might re-visit this data in the hope of producing work which gives further voice to their experience and wisdom.

global scale…" The programme he currently runs encourages young people to consider ethical choices in terms of shopping. He suggests that irrespective of young people's particular faith traditions that:

> *"… this stuff affects you, so the questions that we're posing are: 'As young people of faith, what does your faith teach you about the issue of caring for other people? What does your faith teach you about treating other people well?' So it's really asking people to reflect upon themselves and their own belief system, and look at the world that they're living in through the context of the faith that they belong to."*

Education and Faith Socialisation

The central importance to participants, (albeit to different degrees), of processes of faith socialisation as an educational concern, can be seen in the majority of the data. This is evident in the place given by participants to the influence of faith texts, mentoring and the intergenerational transmission of faith values and practices via dialogue and experience. Many of the participants highlighted the centrality of applying faith texts in their youth work curricula in enabling young people's learning and development in navigating personal, social and moral issues.

> *"… we also do Jewish text learning so we do stories from famous Rabbis, and people talk personally about how this relates to them, and so last time we had some really amazing discussions about, like, authenticity and lying and being fake and to what extent you should, sort of, fully reveal everything about yourself, or should you keep some stuff more hidden, and more personal. And a lot of people have some amazing reflections, particularly on the tensions of revealing Jewish identity in certain contexts."* (Daniel)

> *"There are a lot of stories, Buddhist stories that are applied and used in sort of quite creative ways… to get a message or an understanding across so…in a way it's all Buddhism, or at least Buddhism in daily life and then being able to explore the types of things they're facing."* (Kana)

Intergenerational Transmission

Religious socialisation can also be seen at the core of respondents' practice. This entails a mixture of direct youth work practice, religious observance and engagement with faith leaders and/or older members of religious communities. Some of the participants expressed this in simple terms; others reflected more fully on the complexities and challenges they faced in this aspect of their work as related to the inclusivity of wider religious bodies. Whilst some of these practices appeared to be more mono-directionally adult to young person, other respondents highlighted a healthy intergenerational ethos, where discussion of young people's experiences and beliefs catalysed dialogue and learning in the wider faith community.

> *"…, so we have like an imam who comes down and he's their spiritual leader… [he] visits them at least once a term, and then they have like questions they can ask him."* (Warsan)

> *"We also practice a traditional Judaism; we do the prayers in Hebrew…we keep the Sabbath, we abstain from work, and we encourage our members to live out as much as they can, traditional Jewish experiences…a lot of our members are not super super-observant, but when they're with us on the summer camps or events we have a high level of observance that we expect everyone, at least in public, to adhere to."* (Daniel)

"…it's really a movement that comes through young people or adults sharing their own experiences of practicing Buddhism in the way that somebody else might become interested or want to know more." (Kana)

Promoting Understanding and Challenging Ignorance

A key sub-theme to emerge was a commitment to deconstruct and challenge misconceptions regarding faith. This can be seen in particular practice examples in which workers endeavour to debunk stereotypical ideas regarding their own faith traditions, and others in which practitioners work to build bridges and learning opportunities between different faiths in the pursuit of inclusive understanding.

"*…it's like well you go to church, you're not really a normal person, you don't know what it's like to do this and to do that, because you're not allowed or whatever, and I think we've really tried to push down those barriers to say, 'Well actually we might not be who you think we are, and maybe we don't believe in the God that you don't believe in either... Maybe our God is somebody who you haven't discovered yet, you've just got this preconception.' So we really push the social stuff mainly because it's a way to show that Christians are normal people and they enjoy things, they can have a laugh just like you can…"*(Beth)

"…our passion is about helping young people to learn how to talk to one another about faith, share their beliefs, share their experiences, build bridges, make friends, change lives, you know, create all those experiences they might not ever have had." (Steven)

Engagement: Faith Beyond Walls

A spectrum of practice encompassing different purposes and modes of engaging young people within faith-based youth work can be seen in the research. This ranges from open access youth work to more specific faith teaching for those belonging to, or wanting to explore the beliefs and practices of specific faith traditions. Another realm of engagement was inter-faith work with the purpose of bringing young people of different faiths together.

Challenging the Deficit

Respondents were keenly aware of how their work with young people and communities contributes to civil society. They were aware of gaps in provisions for young people, particularly in a climate of austerity, and identified how the work they did was able to challenge this deficit. This work spanned small social action projects, to taking over local authority provision which was no longer funded, as in Beth's case:

"So we have, well we have a centre… a council property… that was going redundant because of the lack of youth work that there was in the city. So we took on that and picked up an existing, sort of existing project that they ran as a youth, open access youth project provision there. And we had previously ran one here, which we'd closed down due to residents' complaints, we had a very high volume of young people, roughly about, well between 120 and 140 on a Friday night, and of that about 90% of those were traveller young people. So they caused significant issues in a quite affluent area of York so we had to shut down before,

before we were shut down, but the council approached us and asked us to re-open that at this new youth centre which is nearer the traveller sites and also it's a real area of need in York where it is. So, we agreed."

Whilst Beth was the only example of a youth worker taking over the running of local authority provision, others were also keen to frame their work as contributing to civil society. For example, Steven explained how through social action projects such as litter picking, Muslim young people in particular were able to challenge stereotypical perceptions. Similarly, Balraj explained how socio-political engagement was a key element of his practice, with his young people engaging in protests and campaigns. Jim, who is more explicit about the ultimate purpose of his work as sharing the Christian faith, runs social provision to serve local young people, which he described, as having "no agenda".

Relationships, Community and Belonging

Relationships and community were key themes across the youth workers' narratives. Forging relationships with young people and between young people and the wider faith community were viewed as key aspects of practice. Whilst this was explicit in all respondents' practice, the idea of mentoring was perhaps most central for the Buddhist youth workers. Here, mentoring was predominantly framed around offering guidance and encouragement to young people with both practical and spiritual issues.

Another dimension of relational practice is to foster friendships between young people.

"Our main really focus is friendship, really to forge the friendship among them because in that, during that kind of teenage time, faith isn't really their focus, in their eyes really… But friendship is something that they're interested in, that's something that they really connect with… why we focus on friendship is because when they have a problem or issues, they're not necessarily listen to someone like parents or somebody older, or teacher, or whatever, but they can disclose to their friends, share their problems and encourage each other." (Saori)

The youth workers also often saw their role as a mediator between young people and the faith community. Jim, for example, described how such mediation is a significant part of his role.

"I mean great youth workers are great, like don't get me wrong, but if it's just that, we're missing something. And so… I have been really pro-active in the church, trying to integrate young people with the life of the church, recognising that they need that community…you think well why do they drop out of church, they obviously don't see it as family or a community that they can connect with, or belong to or be part of, or are valued by. So it's easy to walk away."

Warsan also explained how her role involved mediating between young people and leaders of the Mosque. Other participants also detailed this, albeit to a lesser extent.

Participation and voice were significant in facilitating relationships and community, as respondents, in their intermediary roles, facilitated young people's ability to have a say, and contribute to the faith community. This often necessitated breaking down institutional barriers.

> *"Well I think one of the roles of the youth work in this context is a sort of mediator and almost as a voice for the young people. So there's a voice for the young people speaking into the systems and infrastructure of the church which can become very rigid, very much like 'this is how we do things' and 'these are the boxes you tick' and all that stuff and obviously young people don't operate like that. So there's a role of kind of balancing the gap I think of, and trying to help young people to recognise that they can have a voice, and they can have a voice within the life of the church and that they, they are a valid, valued part of life at the church and they're not, 'oh those kids' or whatever they might see that they're seen as, or some people might even see them like. So I think that in my role there is very much that voice thing and as the mediator." (Jim)*

Similarly, Balraj outlined how he had worked to help Sikh young people have more of a voice at his Gurdwara, and to even sit on the committee.

Representing Faith Positively

This theme overlaps with the educational sub-theme of 'Promoting Understanding and Challenging Ignorance'. It relates also to Engagement, in that, it is about providing a positive representation of the faith tradition or community to the wider public. This was particularly pertinent where youth workers felt a minority faith tradition was misunderstood and subject to negative stereotyping. Mark explained how he had worked with a Muslim community to open up their mosque to people of other faiths, as well as refusing to do any inter-faith work where responding to 'radicalisation' was the starting point. Similarly, Balraj had opened up his Gurdwara with events for the wider public, with the explicit aim of allowing them to learn more about the local Sikh community through charity events, tours and visits from other faith groups.

The positive representation of faith overlaps with 'Working between faiths'. However, the distinction lies in difference in intent – one being to represent minority and, at times, misunderstood faith communities to the wider public, the other being to facilitate relationships between people of different faiths for their own sake.

Working between faiths

Working between faiths was a key theme across the interviews. This was most pertinent in the practice of The Feast for whom Mark and Steven work. Both independently outlined how creating a sense of community and friendship between young people of different faiths was central to their practice. However, such inter-faith work was also explicit in the other youth workers' narratives. Warsan, for example, outlined how her Muslim Scout group has engaged with the local Christian and Sikh Scouts group:

> *"Recently we organised a faith show, so like the Mosque, the Gurdwara and the Church which was really good, like they got to speak to like, like I think there was for the Church there was a priest and for the Mosque it was just like one of the boy trustees and I think the same for the Gurdwara."*

Daniel was also engaging in inter-faith work:

"We go outside the community and talk to other faith groups and particularly, I think, politically it's very important for Jews and Muslims to be talking as much as possible. So yeah, that's, that's part of the work."

Other youth workers who perhaps weren't engaging in as explicit inter-faith work did emphasise how young people of other faiths were welcome and had attended their activities.

Ethics: Reclaiming Moral Purpose

Inclusion 'within' and 'without'

It became apparent from the data that inclusion is multi-faceted, and, to some extent relative. To some respondents, inclusion was expressed as a practice trajectory - of the wider religious community *becoming* more inclusive. This was manifest as either providing a safe place for young people with a faith, or young people challenging the wider community towards greater inclusivity. While this kind of 'with-in' inclusion was prevalent (increasing the level of equality and participation within the community), it also represents a form of inclusion that brings people in from outside.

Inclusion 'with-in' involved creating spaces and structures so young people are not disadvantaged in comparison to their 'secular' peers, and, in ensuring that impairments do not prevent inclusion in religious experiences. However, respondents were also involved in challenging the wider community to be more inclusive:

"… where young people are they're encouraged, or the meetings or the adults, are encouraged to include them in the meetings in such a way, whether it's from the very young age of doing something that they've prepared or preparing during the meeting with somebody else, or if they're older then participating in the meetings and make sure that they're included in the, sometimes running the meetings with the adults so it's very, the idea is that they're not excluded from that process either." (Kana)

Less prevalent however were organisations' attempts to be overtly inclusive towards people of other faiths (and none). Typically, organisations were engaged in ensuring young people who were part of their faith community were able to be included in wider society, or, within the religious community. This form of inclusion towards those outside ('with-out') the community was limited to those organisations with a centrifugal mission, or an explicit aim, to work between faith groups. Beth, for example, explains how she and her team came to open a youth centre with universal provision:

"The council approached us and asked us to re-open that at this new youth centre which is nearer the traveller sites and also it's a real area of need in York where it is. So, we agreed. So we run that on a Friday night… it is open access for anybody from 11 up to age 18, that particular group. We run it as a, quite a fluid group I guess, the activities change depending what's offered, we pick up partnerships with various groups in the city so we run a football project with York City Football Club, they come into the Friday night session, run some training with the young people."

She later comments on how the faith community have a more 'open' attitude towards young people coming in without paying (but later working off the debt) compared to the local authority she works with.

Sex and Sexuality

workers described their understanding of sexuality through making sense of their faith, doctrine, and young people's lives and norms – and at times living with the tension between them. Daniel, for example, self-identified as a gay man who felt that Judaism in the UK was inclusive of the LGBT community through the legalising of gay-marriage.

Jim was more cautious about sexuality. He appeared to find it challenging to reconcile aspects of his interpretation of the Bible with elements of practice.

> *"I really believe what the Bible says about homosexuality, that you might want to say I am convinced in the way that I have interpreted it, either, but so that's a struggle with youth work because in terms of like, youth work values, because I suppose I like, like personally I don't agree with homosexual practice, I don't think it's right. But at the same time, if there's young people who are homosexual, I'd still want to like, love them and kind of, show them that they're welcome and I care about them… it's easy to be labelled as like anti-gay or homophobic, which I don't [think] I am…through coming to know God, he has shown that he loves people, and he's given me that love for people… Well there's a young person who's a lad who's become a Christian and become very involved with the church in the last year or so. And he's absolutely great… but he wrote little letters to some key people in the church… basically saying, something like, 'I think I might be gay', or something like that, 'but I fear that the church wouldn't accept me if I am?' … We're like, Bob, we love you, like, you know, we love you and it's not an issue. And at that point I was thinking, oh this is interesting because this could make or break I think because he's like a really new Christian and all this stuff. And the people just responded with love to him."*

Inclusive and pragmatic responses to sexuality and sex can be seen in other practice examples. Beth described working with young people to actively promote safer sex through discussion and condom distribution. And Steven reflected on how he had developed sex education programmes for young Muslims, (paid for by the local authority), in order to deliver work that took account of particular cultural sensitivities.

Discussion

Without making claims towards generalizability, the faith-based practice examined in this research bears many of the characteristics of classic informal educational practice with young people. Whilst the idea of exclusion is often rightly problematized via different analytical lenses, the concept of inclusion is uncritically accepted as a given to be strived for. This leads us to pose a number of philosophical questions which need to be considered in application to practice. 'What do we mean by inclusion?' 'On whose terms is it defined, or negotiated? Young people's? Adults'? Politicians'? As something that is shared? By youth and community work as a profession? Or, in the case of faith-based practice, by the divine?' And, perhaps most fundamentally, 'Does, or can inclusion, by definition, exist without exclusion?' Often, our inclusion in one group necessitates our exclusion from another. It is on the fluid borders of such binaries that belonging and identities are forged, and where the capacity for power to be used for good, or ill is made. These difficult questions have been framed in different ways by our respondents. However they extend beyond practitioners' heuristic reflections on practice, towards practical and critical educational engagement with young people

which recognises something of the temporal and socially constructed nature of inclusivity, in the pursuit of challenge, justice and change. This can be seen in the present data in a number of ways. Firstly, in participants' pursuit of institutional inclusivity with young people of (or those exploring) faith, where there are mixed experiences of welcome and integration from older members of religious communities (Stanton, 2013). Whilst this form of intergenerational inclusion appears an integral struggle for many of our respondents, it further prompts us to ask questions about the nature of inclusivity and identity. Shepherd (2010), for example, is one of a number of thinkers who has argued the benefits of exclusive inclusivity in faith-based practice – of the importance of providing discrete, safe spaces for young people's faith exploration and identity development. This again can be seen in different examples from the present data; for example, the inauguration of Warsan's Scout group for Muslim young people, or Jim's Bible study group. These youth workers engage young people across a spectrum of practice ranging from targeted faith teaching to open access provision. The Christian youth workers, Beth and Jim, were perhaps the most explicit example of this, with practice developed at both ends of this spectrum. This work reflects, but also goes beyond, Stanton's (2013) model of faith-based youth work which suggests there are social, spiritual and institutional domains to practice which often lack mutual connectivity. Having exclusive groups may enhance inclusivity for young people of, or those exploring, faith by providing the safe spaces noted above. The practice observed in our research however goes beyond Stanton's model, as this pre-existing work is limited to analysis of Christian youth work provision taking place within church buildings. The youth workers in the present study take their engagement 'beyond walls'. This is particularly the case in the practice of the more 'minority traditions' in their efforts to represent faith positively. This reflects a proactive effort to increase inclusion through engagement with communities and the wider public, often through positive social action.

Secondly, inclusivity can be viewed as being related to the dialogical imperative of informal education (Jeffs and Smith, 2005), where conversation acts as a catalytic vehicle which enables young people to experientially consider, deconstruct and cross physical, linguistic, social, religious, class, gender, sexual and opportunity borders in the pursuit of exchange, understanding and critical insight (Coburn, 2010; Giroux, 2005). Border crossings open up vistas and provide landscapes in which new inter-relationships and identities can be born (Coburn and Wallace, 2011). Borders are meeting points - sites where assumptions and stereotypes begin to be challenged. By crossing borders, we come to meet, understand, and osmose others' worlds, and, in doing so, understand ourselves and our place in the world more fully. We are enabled to critically recognise the power, intersubjectivities and oppression of differing privileges and positionalities. Border pedagogy challenges our existing, limited worldviews. It is education.

These border crossings are exemplified when respondents move their practices towards inclusively engaging with young people, in order to show their willingness to understand the experiential realities of their lives. Beth and Jim for example, both describe developing socially-orientated provision designed to engage with, and relationally serve the needs of young people, in the hope that this might encourage young people to cross their own borders, challenge pre-existing worldviews and discover something new. Border crossings are seen in the mentoring undertaken by Kana and Saori, in Balraj's community and political activism, and in Daniel's dialogues between faith and atheism. They are embedded in the various critical discussions fostered by participants on a

wide array of issues. Most strikingly perhaps, they are seen in promoting inclusive understanding through inter-faith dialogue. Whilst this is the explicit purpose of The Feast, which, as an organisation is engaged in some rather remarkable work, it is something which can clearly be seen in others' practice.

Youth work is about providing relational spaces for border encounters. It is a rich and multi-faceted praxis, which, at its core, is relationally committed to enabling young people's negotiated learning. It is a moral activity which encourages young people to consider how the world is, and how it should be, empowering them towards generating change. Young (2006, 2010) posits this as 'moral philosophising'. Active moral philosophising appears central to various practice narratives in our study. Perhaps the most striking of those cited in this chapter is Steven's account, which describes a pedagogy committed to asking young people of different faiths (and none) to actively engage in considering real-world moral issues and how they might act as a result. It is this form of critical practice in the faith sector which inspires hope and possibility.

Inclusion is not merely philosophical, it is both practical and attitudinal. Many participants highlighted areas which they felt they were able to practically include young people of different faiths and none. Practical inclusion prioritises the welcome and involvement of young people. Attitudinal inclusion highlights the importance of educating young people about faith values and beliefs, and, of educating wider faith communities, (and, in some instances, wider communities at large) about young people's experiences, needs and aspirations. The understanding which results creates security and relational reciprocity (Turney, 2007), enables young people's voices to be heard, and furthers work that takes account of their developing needs. Although practical inclusion is a helpful first step, the present data suggests that the usual and desired outcome of practical inclusion is attitudinal. This, in turn, deepens practical inclusion and understanding. Each therefore iteratively catalyses the other in developing learning and inclusivity in practice. This can be seen in Stanton's (2013) research into Christian youth work and in Jim's narrative account of integrating young people with church – both of which explore how practically bringing young people into church is not the same as there being an attitude of acceptance from the wider congregation. 'Them and us' cultures can exist within 'practically inclusive' settings. These deny attitudinal inclusivity. More broadly, this can occur where the existence of a religious group is tolerated, but no effort is made to engage with, or understand them. Balraj's work to involve his wider community, for example, aims to foster broader attitudinal inclusion.

Faith-based youth work is often accused of proselytization. As proselytization, is in its truest sense, about asking people to consider changing their minds, it must continue to do so. It promotes learning, understanding and inclusivity. While there are examples of practice in the data that could be described as evangelistic or disciplining, these only become indoctrinatory if they successfully deny young people the opportunity to develop - whether cognitively, morally, in identity, or in faith (Hart, 2014). As it is the pedagogic method (rather than content) that is principally indoctrinatory (Thompson, in press), removing overt acknowledgements of 'faith' from youth work only serves to replace it with other agendas of equally indoctrinatory potential (Copley, 2005). Similarly, it has been argued that all youth work is 'conversionary' in that it seeks to foster change (Brierley, 2003; Clayton and Stanton, 2008), and therefore it is better to be aware of, and, accountable to the agendas of particular work, rather than to deny or hide them. The present data suggests that faith-based workers are acutely aware of personal worldviews allowing them to critically reflect on the role their

faith plays in practice. When workers are influenced by more subtly dominant ideologies (e.g. humanism), they are less likely perhaps to reflect critically upon how these impact on their work. Secularism, in particular, is often mistaken as a neutral worldview, when it too makes assumptions about God, the world, and people (Clayton and Stanton, 2008). The promulgation of faith as an aim, however implicitly, provides a powerful motivation to ensure organisations are inclusive - whether that is ensuring the wider faith community is inclusive of young people, or, that youth work provision is accessible and welcoming to those 'outside'.

Conclusion

Youth work has its origins in faith-based practice (Bright, 2015b; Pimlott, 2015b; Stanton, 2013). Whilst youth work in the UK was supported by the state from the mid-twentieth century, state roll-out has been a short chapter in its overall history. Faith-based youth work existed alongside the statutory era, and, as illustrated in our data, is now in many cases filling the gaps left by state-induced local authority funding cuts. At the same time, there are increasing restrictions applied to faith-based youth work and continuing suspicions as to its intentions. This is seen most particularly in the Counter Extremism Strategy (2015) and the associated Prevent Guidance which suggests all religious organisations engaging young people are to soon be subject to demands for registration, monitoring and inspection (Home Office, 2015).

Youth work, as expressive of the ideals of informal education is alive and well in the faith sector. Given the present climate, it needs to be. The decimation and assimilation of the state and wider voluntary sector has hollowed out youth work's purpose (Jeffs, 2015), and left few spaces in which young people can critically think and act. Given the present environment, perhaps it is the types of practices in the faith-based sector, which this research is representative of, which are now the most inclusive. It appears therefore that the faith sector, from which much youth and community work emerged is the first and last bastion of civil society.

We have resisted the temptation to present a deficit model of inclusion in faith-based practice. While there are undoubtedly challenges to inclusion and equality across broader religious spheres, faith-based youth work is often at the forefront of promoting greater levels of inclusivity. Young people and their youth workers can drive forward the inclusion of members of faith communities in wider society and religious communities, and challenge orthodoxies regarding justice, gender and sexuality. It would not be fair, or accurate therefore, to present faith-based youth work as in need of 'saving' by adopting secular models of inclusion.

The prevalence of neoliberalism, and the concomitant pervasiveness of deficit models, preordained measures of 'success', and monitoring regarding who can access services, place many practitioners in exclusionary positions. While faith-based youth workers have often worked in contexts where they have stood against prevailing cultural conditions, now 'secular' organisations are having to find ways to be inclusive within an exclusive system. Many of the examples of practice explored in this chapter show a level of openness and inclusivity that wider funding streams often deny. Faith-based practice appears therefore to be promoting young people's inclusion at a time when neoliberalism is undermining its value by making access to youth work provision increasingly exclusive to targeted subsets of young people.

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