

Urban Mission Networks Evaluation Report (Outcome 2)

Outcome 2 of the UMDA Project 2004-7 was to:

- ascertain and create the appropriate 'Self-sustaining mechanism for networking between second level contacts (possibly a Christian Coalition of metropolitan or regional networks)'¹

These networks are to be part of 'developing broadly-based collaboration [on urban mission] which is transgenerational and multi-ethnic, inclusive of denominational and para-church; evangelical and ecumenical, black and white, new church and traditional church, charismatic and non-charismatic'².

NB: The complexity of the UK means that 'regional' is being used as a catch-all term including large 'city-regions' e.g. Birmingham and London; small nations i.e. N Ireland, Wales and Scotland, and/or English Government Office Regions e.g. Yorkshire & the Humber; North West etc.

This Report covers the Regional development process and some of the national developments that have taken place between September 04 and July 07.

Purpose

Regional networks of local urban mission practitioners to be set up where wanted for:

- furthering mission in urban areas
- providing mutual support and encouragement
- connecting to other organisations providing information, training and guidance especially on funding issues and government policy and legislation (particularly important for those practitioners from the less well-resourced denominations or church traditions?)

The precise action plans for each network to be developed by them.

Identification of Regions

The strategy is to develop a network in each of several pilot regions that could then be offered or adapted as needed in other parts of the UK. The first pilot region, Yorkshire & the Humber, was identified by the Project Joint Sponsors before the Project began.

Interviews with 128 urban mission practitioners across the UK in 2004/5 helped to map where networks are already strong. (See *Next Steps Report* summer 2005)

Wales was then selected as pilot because of the complexity of the historical divisions in that country, and Scotland because of its different statutory and denominational structures.

Representatives of the major national Christian social action/community development/urban mission agencies, and the Ecumenical Urban Officers Lunch are also consulted and kept informed of progress via the Eccleston Group, the Lunch meetings and the annual UMDA reporting event.

1. Process – Yorkshire and the Humber Region

1.1 Research

1.1.1 Key gatekeepers and intermediaries from different denominations and traditions were identified and met.

E.g. Anglican Bishops and Diocesan Social Responsibility Officers or similar, Churches Regional Commission staff; Methodist Training and Development Officers and Chairs of District; Catholic Bishops and Justice and Peace Commissions; leaders of charismatic prayer networks,

¹ Background Information in UMDA Job Application Pack, 2004

² 'Collaboration in Urban Mission for the 21st Century', paper by the Ecumenical Urban Forum, 2000.

Black-led denominational bishops and pastors; URC District Moderators etc., key urban mission organisations – e.g. Shaftesbury Society, independent practical Christian projects
Conversations took place with gatekeepers that the first tranche of interviewees identified who had not already been met.

1.1.2. Their networks were mapped.

1.1.3. A limited number of local practitioners identified through the ‘first-tier’ gatekeepers and other local research were met with and their networks mapped. These people were encouraged to link in to existing city-wide networks if they did not already do so. There was especial attention paid to the African-Caribbean churches. In Sheffield there is no network and so all pastors were written to and those connected to four congregations were met. In West Yorkshire there is an active Council of African and Caribbean Churches, and a CRC Worker was employed until Mar 07 to work with them. The UMDA therefore attended one of their meetings in

1.2. Exploration – Yorkshire & Humber Region

1.2.1. A sufficient number of respondents considered that there is the need for greater networking and for a ‘regional’ urban mission network and an exploratory meeting was convened in Feb 06, including representatives of other national Christian social action/community development/urban mission agencies.

1.2.2. The meeting agreed that such a structure would be helpful, and a second was held in March 06 in which the UMDA worked with the group to clarify the things that particular network might do, and identify on-going administration and convening structures.

1.2.3 At that stage the Churches Regional Commission was identified as the point of admin back-up, the purpose of the network was identified as:

“a voluntary network of networks and individuals where all those working for God’s kingdom, who are concerned about making our urban areas/cities good places for all people to live in, can share ideas and practical information. It will not cover the same sorts of matters as other CRC work and a key element will be getting action and prayer to work together more powerfully.

The Micah Declaration on “integral mission” was felt to be helpful in this.”

Taken from notes of the xx 05 meeting.

1.3. Strategy for extension and connection – Yorkshire & Humber Region

1.3.1 The UMDA role thereafter was expected to be keeping in touch with the admin and convening bodies and encourage the widening of the network, and it’s connection to national bodies and events.

1.3.2 There was a change of staff at the CRC and a ‘launch meeting’ held on 25 Sept 06 was poorly attended. Notes taken by the CRC were neither written up nor circulated.

1.3.3. This lack of action became apparent in late autumn 06 and more work was done with the CRC to develop contacts. This led to a further meeting called for March 07, cancelled due to v low take up. Further work stimulating contacts led to a more purposeful meeting in May 07.

1.3.4 Meanwhile work was also being done with a CRC staff member to extend contacts with the black-led churches in West and S Yorks. This has been hampered by the ending of a specialist CRC workers’ contract at the end of March 07.

2. Process - Scotland

2.1. Research

2.1.1 A limited number of second-tier gatekeepers were met – Methodist Church Chair of District; Church of Scotland Parliamentary Officer and Urban Priority Area Officer; Catholic

Diocese of Glasgow, Parliamentary Officer; Iona Community, Leader; Edinburgh Prayer Network, Convenor. Their networks were mapped.

2.1.2 Some local practitioners were met at the City Centre Churches Network held in Cardiff in Sept 05.

2.1.3 There was no appetite for a new network coming through from those meetings, and also quite a bit of resistance from anything 'coming from England'. People felt more interested in meeting across the UK than in any new Scottish forum. A meeting of churches from the major 'celtic' cities – Glasgow, Cardiff, Edinburgh and Belfast already happens

2.2 Strategy for Connection and extension - Scotland

2.2.1 After further discussion it was agreed that the UMDA would link in to the Scottish Churches Social Inclusion Network meeting, where contact could be maintained with a good range of denominational and agency reps engaged in issue based mission. Meetings happen every six weeks and have been regularly attended.

In agreement with SCSIN, the UMDA role was to seek out those newer and non-denominational churches and encourage them to link in to the structures

2.2.2. It was hoped to meet also with the ACTS Mission Committee, as the idea of holistic mission was not being modelled by linking only to a social action forum. Time pressures prevented this.

2.2.3. The presence of the Methodist Conference in Edinburgh in June 2006 was used as a trigger to call a public meeting on the *Faithful Cities Report*. This was attended by about 15 people external to the Conference although no-one not already in touch with the project, despite advertising relatively widely.

2.2.4. An event on Faith communities and regeneration held by the Church of Scotland Transformation Team and Glasgow City council on 5 Sept 06 was attended in the hope of meeting new church contacts. This was especially successful in making contact with an Episcopalian Church vicar who is tasked with making links with the new Africa diaspora churches. This led directly to a meeting with the pastors in Nov 06 and to the UMDA facilitating a day on goal-setting and developing mission in Jan 07. The UMDA brokered the presence of a Transformation Team member in order to link the pastors in to local support structures.

2.2.5 The UMDA also triggered the organising of a day event in Nov 06 on *Faithful Cities*. Again some local church contacts were developed out of that.

2.2.6 *Jesus in the City* was promoted via SCSIN, and a reasonably well-attended planning/promotional meeting was held in early Sept 06.

3. Process - Wales

3.1. Research

3.1.1 Contacts made at the Sept 05 City Centre Churches Group – largely in Cardiff were followed up with individual meetings in Cardiff in May and July 06.

3.1.2 Through the Eccleston Gp., contact was made with the CEO of Gweini – a network for the Christian Voluntary Sector in Wales and their northern Conference attended in Rhyl in March 06. Contacts from that meeting were met over the following months.

3.1.3 A meeting was held with various second-tier intermediary people - Church in Wales – Chair and Officer for Social Responsibility, and the SRO for Abertawe Diocese (Swansea); URC Moderator and through him convenors of Churches Together Groups in Newport, Wrexham, and Pontypridd. A later meeting was held with the Methodist Chair of S Wales District.

These revealed the extent of current division between the Welsh churches. In many areas the more evangelical churches do not attend Churches Together or CYTUN structures. Gweini comes from an Evangelical Alliance Wales background (one of the EA sponsored Christian

Action Networks) and Tearfund funding and although open to all people, requires its local and national office-holders to be in agreement with the EA Statement of Faith.

3.2. Strategy for extension and connection - Wales

3.2.1 Few urban areas in Wales are large enough to justify setting up a separate local network of urban activists, and there was no great appetite for this at a local level. Therefore the approach was to try to ensure that urban mission issues are effectively covered on the agenda of local churches groups and that they are inclusive.

3.2.2. The meetings with local church pastors of various denominations in several urban areas revealed that few of them were happy with both of the CYTUN and Gweini networks – some would affiliate to both, but most to only one.

3.2.3. Work was undertaken with Gweini to see if the necessity to adhere to a statement of faith could be more clearly defined to facilitate maximum involvement across all denominations.

Meetings happened with EA reps in London, the EA Wales President and the Gweini CEO to develop this. An agreed briefing sheet resulted. This has been shared with Faithworks who have taken over support of the Christian Action Networks, elsewhere in the UK, from EA.

3.2.4 No-one was strongly in favour of a new network, locally or nationally. The UMDA role agreed with both CYTUN and Gweini was to work largely with the CYTUN constituency to see if they would engage with the Gweini structures that are being developed for each local authority area, where the authority is one that has a substantial urban presence (including post-industrial and sea-side areas).

3.2.5 A further series of meetings with local practitioners was held in Sept 06 and Spring 07 on that basis.

Those met were encouraged to attend the Gweini conferences, (the UMDA again attended that in the n of Wales in late March 07).

3.2.6 Very few contacts have been made with the Catholic Church, and none with black-led churches.

4. Process – England and UK

4.1 Research

4.1.1 Early contact was made with all the ECUM partner agencies as part of the initial research phase, and several of the English denominational bodies with an urban emphasis – notably Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, and Methodist.

4.1.2 Key Christian community development/social action agencies were also met with – e.g. Church Action on Poverty, Churches Community Work Alliance, Faithworks, Evangelical Alliance (Christian Action Networks 'til summer 07), Faithworks, Housing Justice etc. These had formed an informal process to encourage greater working together under the title the Eccleston Group in May 04.

4.1.3. The ecumenical instruments (Churches Together in England – CTE, and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland – CTBI) were contacted but showed little interest in urban mission per se. One meeting was held with the CTE Northern Officer to ensure that the city-wide leaders networks being uncovered did not overlap with Churches Together structures in an unhelpful way.

4.1.4 The role of new church networks and non-denominational charismatic leaders in creating relatively 'neutral' points of contact began to be uncovered.

4.1.5. A complicating factor in these structures is the variety of geographical areas covered by the 'national' bodies – some declared as England only, some aspire wider but are England-only in practice; some Britain only; some UK-wide. This was an unresolved issue in itself as the Projects' co-sponsors considered that the Project should cover the UK (ECUM) and Britain and Ireland (Methodist Church). The practice was that the Project was in contact with N Ireland but undertook no proactive work in Ireland.

4.2 Strategy for extension and connection – England & UK

4.2.1 The Eccleston Group Process became the key point of contact for the Project with Christian agencies. It met roughly five times per year. The UMDA aimed to attend all meetings, and also became involved in the Communications/IT sub group that was working on developing a shared information system. This was seen as a key mechanism for the Project Outcome about the delivery of information on funding and government policy and legislation to local practitioners. (See Report Two – Information)

Jesus in the City was advertised through this network and its members.

4.2.2. Three denominational bodies were attended on a fairly regular basis – the CoE Urban Strategy Group, the Methodist City Centre Network and the Catholic Urban Round Table Network. The second two were most useful in terms of publicising regional network and the UK Urban Mission Congress to local practitioners, as the meetings were open to them. Contact was also sustained with the Baptist Urban Officer. Very limited contact with other denominations, except URC Church Related Community Work Team and Salvation Army through the Eccleston Group.

4.2.3 The Network of Urban Evangelicals (annual) and the Ecumenical Urban Officers' Lunch (twice a year) were also attended.

4.2.4 Contact with other specialist urban networks include The National Estate Churches Network (NECN), the City Centre Churches Group (CCCG) and the Methodist City Centre Group (MCCN). Regular meetings had happened with NECN personnel and their conferences attended. The CCCG grew out of a Conference attended in 2005, and the UMDA has worked with their committee to offer publicity for the Conference reports via the website, and to broker discussions about combination with the MCCN.

MCCN bi-annual meetings have been attended and access to Methodist database brokered for mailings.

4.2.5 No effective links were made at a national level with the Black-led churches, although occasional contact with the London Baptist Association's office working on this issue, through ECUM, has been helpful.

4.2.6 Links have been slowly built with some of the newer church movements such as the New Wine UPA Leaders' Forum.

4.2.7 One of two major pieces of national work was involvement in the planning and delivery of *Jesus in the City*. The original intention was to concentrate upon widening the range of people and groups involved and attended that. This was the main strand of work during early 06. Lack of dedicated admin support meant that other tasks encroached on the UMDA time in the run up to the event was largely devoted to behind the scenes work. The UMDA contributed to a process whereby greater contact between people from within the same nation/region took place within the event and there was a process of commitment to working towards the 2010 event.

4.2.8 The other major piece was work around training issues for those in urban mission that culminated in the very well attended Symposium in November 06. The Report of this event is written up separately.

4.2.9 Contact has been maintained with the Director and Chair of the Commission for Urban Life and Faith, and the recently appointed Bishop for that area. The *Faithful Cities Report* was promoted at various regional and national meetings and the Project put on two events on the topic in June 06.

5. Evaluation of work undertaken

5.1. Yorkshire & the Humber

The Evaluation Process undertaken by interviews with mainly intermediary people in April/May/June of 07 (process outlined in Appendix xx) revealed part-way through the lack of

enthusiasm and clarity of need for the network. The exercise was abandoned in favour of a renewed piece of work to reach local primary practitioners and re-stimulating awareness of the network.

This resulted in a May 07 meeting that had a much clearer sense of purpose.

5.1.2 The identification of the network as a network of networks was in retrospect not a helpful one, and was largely driven by the needs for a listening place of one national agency.

A re-orientation of the network as a place of support for local practitioners should give a clearer focus.

The addition of a theological reflection element might be a helpful, as well as less formal discussion items, although the Leeds Churches Institute does that and has a catchment area that covers a substantial part of the Region

Frequency of meetings might also be looked at.

5.1.3. The **process and style** by which the meetings were brought about was in retrospect much too 'head' and logic based.

The first meeting in Feb 06 included a presentation by the UMDA about networks and networking, and the result of the mapping exercise of people's networks, to demonstrate the gap that the network might fill. What was actually needed was a more passionate stirring up of commitment to the need for a voice and place of support to sustain urban mission and its practitioners.

A more passionate advocate should have been found who could have balanced the more facilitatory approach that the UMDA took. Evangelical and Pentecostal pastors, especially, who are used to a leadership rather than convenor model were puzzled by this lack of engagement and the fact that the UMDA was not a leader and intended to drop out of the process. Ironically they were the people more in need of support in that particular region.

5.1.4 The presence of several city-wide, open, ITC facilitated networks in the Region has also complicated the need for in-person meetings. Network Leeds is the largest and most developed of these, led by an independent, charismatic person. (See Section 5)

5. 2. **Evaluation - Scotland**

5.2.1. All but two of the SCSIN meetings have been attended.

Information has been passed on *Jesus in the City*, Hope 08, on initiatives concerning asylum seekers (a strong common thread in almost all areas and meetings in the UK) and the growing agenda for a UK anti-poverty campaign. During this period both Church Action of Poverty and the Churches Community Work Alliance has not been able to attend the meetings, and on occasions the UMDA has furthered pieces of business on their behalf.

5.2.2. The two events that were stimulated around *Faithful Cities* – the public fringe event at the Methodist Conference June 06 in Edinburgh, and the *Faithful Cities* Day Conference in Glasgow in November 06, were useful in raising the urban profile generally, but there was not a clear process to sign up urban enthusiasts, although *Jesus in the City* was promoted.

5.2.3. The UMDA also attended an event in Sept 06 run by the Church of Scotland Priority Areas Team with Glasgow City Council on regeneration issues and the faith communities. There were several black churches present and the piece of work with the African Pentecostal Pastors, helping them define their purpose and linking them in more closely to support networks, arose out of this.

5.2.4 The lack of contact with ACTS has meant an imbalance towards the social action side of mission. The work with the African Pastors in Glasgow is the one exception to this.

5.2.5. Resistance to engaging with a process from England has caused some problems. This was evidenced in the very low Scottish turn-out to *Jesus in the City* UK Urban Mission Congress in Bristol in June 07.

The recent appointment of the Scripture Union Scotland Urban Officer may well lead to a more proactive process to uncover whether there is need for a dedicated urban network. A meeting with that officer in early Sept will clarify this. As will a review discussion with the SCSIN secretary.

5.3 Evaluation - Wales

5.3.1. The UMDA role as agreed with those bodies, is to support Gweini in its development from its Evangelical Alliance roots to be a truly inclusive network, and to encourage non-evangelical churches to engage with local Gweini networks.

The process of developing greater trust between churches of different traditions is extremely slow. The UMDA as a single person not even based in the Principality can only really hope to contribute to a climate of greater warmth.

Further discussions are needed with CYTUN about how and where to best link in with the ecumenical structures.

5.3.2 One positive outcome is a productive working relationship between the Gweini CEO and the Social Responsibility Officer for the Church in Wales, following the UMDA suggestion of a meeting between the two. It is hoped that this will contribute to gradual closer working between the different traditions.

5.3.3. Several people have been found, who seem to have a heart for joined up mission, and enough grace and local credibility for people from a very wide range of traditions to meet with them. They are all people who have had faith journeys that include several church traditions, and who are now operating in a Pentecostal or independent charismatic context.

The UMDA has put them in touch with each other. It is hoped that their work will complement that of the formal ecumenical bodies.

5.4 Evaluation - England and UK

5.4.1 Eccleston Group

The Project's involvement with this Group has been very costly of time. Much effort was put into its Communications/Information Sub Group during late Yr 2 and early Yr 3 (attending these meetings as well as the main one) as this looked as if it would provide the medium through which Outcome 4 - delivery of information on funding and government policy to the local practitioners - might take place.

However the Eccleston Group reviewed the process in early Yr 3 and decided to end the pilot (see *'Summary Report on Outcomes 1, 4 and 5 for the Urban Mission Development Advisor Project'* – for more detail).

In Yr 3 the UMDA accepted becoming one of three co-convenors of the main group. In Yr 4 she will be lead convenor, and has taken on the task of re-invigorating interest from some of the agencies that have not replaced their reps. when people have changed jobs.

Up to date, this Group has involved a large input of time, which has been disproportionate to the direct Project benefits, although the relational aspect has been important. Its existence, although not purely urban, has been of importance to the Project however, and without it, the national networking work would have been much more difficult to achieve.

Consideration needs to be made as to whether the Project should offer admin support to the Eccleston Gp. through the UM Networks Support Worker, and whether any sort of financial contribution can be sought from the membership.

5.4.2 denominational bodies

Links with these have been of limited use, with the exception of the Methodist City Centre Network (MCCN) where discussions with them about becoming a more ecumenical body (a suggestion that arose from the City Centre Churches Conference organised by Cardiff University in Sept 2005) led to ecumenical guests coming to their Feb 07 Conference and a process that is part-completed of MCCN supporting a wider ecumenical network.

5.4.3 Network of Urban Evangelicals (NUE)

The Project has worked with ECUM to help make the NUE day a more varied and better-attended event. The Reporting of this still needs more resourcing in terms of IT. The Ecumenical Officers' Lunch has also been fairly low-key. To be more effective non-traditional denominations should be invited to take part.

5.4.4 NECN and MCCN/CCCG

These both suffer from lack of admin continuity and closer links with the Project through the services of the UM Networks Support Worker and representation on the Management Gp. will help in the strategy of developing a national urban mission body. These events should continue to be attended.

5.4.5 Black-led churches

The fact that the Black denominations do not attend the sorts of national events that the Project has linked with so far, means that casual meetings to establish some sort of personal relationship do not take place. The building of better links with the Black churches will take a dedicated piece of time. Some contact was made concerning the training Symposium convened in Nov 06, and this seems to form the best basis of continued linking, as it provides a concrete issue to be tackled – see 5.4.7

5.4.6 new church networks

These are also a separate strand that does not always engage with mainstream events. One way forward is with those networks that have an interest in urban church planting about how to sustain urban presence. In discussion with the Bp for Urban Life and Faith, the Project is planning to convene a meeting on this topic in November 07.

5.4.7 JITC UK Urban Mission Congress

The process enabled for succession-planning for the successfully Congress led to the identification of a proto-Exec for 2010.

The UMDA role in advance of extending the range of attendees and participants needs to be consolidated.

The amount of admin at the event meant that networking took a back seat, which was unfortunate.

If this event is to form a core element in the strategy for creation of momentum for urban mission in the next three years, it will be appropriate for the UM Development Advisor to take a more strategic role with a higher profile in the planning and execution of the event, with the admin being provided by the Networks Support Worker.

5.4.8 UM Training

This strand should be followed up. A working day on course content is planned for October 07. A clearer view should be gained at that of the real energy and commitment available from others for this process will then be clearer. (See *Summary Evaluation of Urban Mission Issues Work – Outcome 3* for more detail.)

A side process will be work with Black-led churches on whether the Project can do anything to assist the availability of training for their leaders, especially in formats that accommodate the fact that they often need to be in full-time employment alongside their training.

5.4.9 Regular meetings need to be sustained with the Bishop of Urban Life and Faith for exchange of ideas and to ensure continued synergy between the two pieces of work.

5.4.10 Progress towards the building of a wider coalition has been un-explicit, apart from within ECUM, until very recent months, and has been undertaken through the medium of the *Jesus in the City* planning and event, the Eccleston Group and conversations with individuals. There has been a shift in the attitude to and resonance of the word 'urban' in Christian circles since the Project began – e.g. the change of name of the *Crusaders* to *Urban Saints*. This has been partly due to the work of the Project and partly due to the interest caused by the *Faithful Cities Report* and also the *Soul in the City* and similar initiatives.

The expansion of the Project's management group to include representatives of those urban networks that decide to opt in to the support from the Networks Support Worker, will help to provide a wider grouping for discussion about moving to a national urban mission coalition. A more defined and deliberate strategy to develop this process will be needed with more than the Project staff taking proactive action.

6. Network Development Process Review – Y&H focus

No research on setting up and developing networks (as opposed to analysis of existing networks) has been found. Two other network development processes have been identified for comparison. Both of these have worked to a very similar timescale.

6.1 UKCRN

By happenstance, the Project made contact with the UK Clinical Research Network (UKCRN) which is tasked with setting up cross cultural networks for several medical topics. A useful meeting to learn from their methodology took place in August 07.

This was set up in 2005, and receives NHS funding to set up national networks of clinical researchers in particular medical specialisms, with sub-networks at a regional level in up to 8 regions (this does not give full UK coverage). Currently these cover 5 topics. There already was a UK-wide Cancer Research Network that has 33 regional sub-networks, giving complete England coverage, and a further 7 give complete coverage in Wales, Scotland and N Ireland.

The purpose of the topic networks is to co-ordinate the research projects involving patient participation in each hospital, and to ensure that best practice is developed and shared around patient involvement, confidentiality etc.. Money for undertaking the actual research currently comes from elsewhere. But there are moves to change the funding stream so that govt research money will be tied to participation in the networks.

There will also be the development of Comprehensive Networks that bring together researchers in the more specialised areas.

UKCRN itself has a team of 60 working nationally to facilitate the developments. Each topic network has paid part-time Clinical Directors at UK and regional level (who act as figure-heads), and full-time Network Managers at UK and regional level, plus admin staff at these levels, appointed through the central UKCRN plus part-time admin support in the hospitals taking part.

6.1.1. Similarity between UKCRN and UMDA processes

1. Complexity of coverage

The major similarity with UKCRN, that surprised me given the linkage with NHS funding, is that of geographical area. Coverage is not complete and the sub-networks do not parallel existing NHS Regional Health Authority boundaries – most HAs have two or three networks covering part of their area, for each topic. The sub-networks are different shapes for different topics. The parallel here is with specialist networks such as Nat. Estate Churches Network and City Centre Churches Group, both of which have greater concentrations of activists in certain parts of the country.

2. Non-participants

Membership of all the networks is voluntary, and there are clinicians undertaking research in the topics covered by the networks, most of whom have drug company or charitable trust funding, who choose not to participate in the CR Networks. They can be contacted to entice them to join through the annual conferences of the academic bodies – these are key partners in publicising the networks, and in increasing participation. The UKCRN has a major budget to publicise its networks.

The ability to function perfectly well as an urban mission practitioner without taking part in a network is probably a fact.

The parallels to the academic conferences are things like Faithworks Conference, events held by Grooms-Shaftesbury, and possibly denominational gatherings.

6.1.2 Difference between UKCRN and UMDA processes

1. Affinity

The reason for the geographical complexity in the UK CRN field is that sub-networks are based upon patient ‘flows’ – i.e. the geographical areas within which GPs all tend to refer their patients to the same group of hospitals. This means that clinical practitioners will already be in some level of contact with each other, and can help each other track patients as they are referred from GP, to general hospital to specialist unit. The patient flows differ for the different medical conditions, hence the different sub-regional areas.

There is no real parallel for ‘flow areas’ in the urban mission context. The parallel might be the denominational unit – i.e. dioceses, districts etc. - but these don’t particularly pull urban practitioners together. Thus there is no linking factor between an urban mission practitioner in an estate in Bradford with one in an estate in Rotherham.

2. Admin back-up

The employment of managers and admin staff within UKCR Networks means that there is no need to rely upon voluntary time to keep the networks functioning. This means that the practitioners can concentrate purely on doing the research and things that give direct benefit to their work.

The lack of any paid staff in almost all of the urban mission networks means that a significant number of the practitioners have to be sufficiently motivated to run the network as well as engage with it.

3. Benefits

The participant researchers have access to a better corpus of knowledge and support and this means that they are more likely to be successful in securing research funding. This in turn benefits their reputation and career development. In future the linkage between research money and participation in networks will enhance this substantial carrot.

Most of the urban networks do not benefit their members sufficiently clearly to have a particularly large carrot.

4. Leadership

The Clinical Directors at UK and regional levels are appointed in the first instance by UKCRN to a standard job description. They are the figureheads. The Network Managers do most of the legwork and their person specification includes a requirement that they be ‘highly motivated with

the ability to influence and inspire others'. The UKCRN also approve the UK and regional Management Board Executive Groups. These Management Boards will elect replacement Clinical Directors as necessary, and appoint the Managers.

The UMDA process has been much less directive.

5. Purpose

The UKCR Networks have a clear remit to 'improve the speed, quality, and integration of research, ultimately resulting in improved patient care'.

The Yorks. & Humberside UM Network states that it is 'a network of networks whose focus is making our urban places better places, but which will be largely multi-purpose'. This is much more diffuse.

6.2 Gweini

Gweini's work in Wales has had a direct impact on the Project, and is also a useful comparator.

Tearfund have funded EA Wales for the past three years to set up Gweini, a Wales-wide Christian Voluntary Sector structure, and to establish a Local Gweini for each of the 22 local authorities in Wales.

The full-time Chief Executive Officer and a part-time policy officer are funded.

There is an 'off-the-peg' constitution for a local Gweini which requires a set pattern for the local leadership council and engagement with the national council.

The CEO recruits people to fulfil particular offices for each local Gweini and their task is then to run the local Gweini and develop the full range of activities and forums for specialisms like drug and substance abuse, housing and homelessness etc..

6.2.1 Similarity between Gweini and UMDA processes

1. geographical focus

The local Gweinis are set up to cover particular geographical areas and not for particular types of urban mission, which is a direct parallel with the UMDA work.

6.2.1 Difference between Gweini and UMDA processes

1. Geographical area

The Welsh local authority areas are generally smaller even than metropolitan boroughs in England, and therefore there is a much greater geographical affinity. The focus on practical social action alone means that the topics covered sit clearly within the statutory remit, and there is an obvious purpose in representation and advocacy for the churches to the statutory bodies.

The Churches Regional Commissions fulfil many of these functions in England.

The UMDA process has tried to bring people together from a larger area.

2. Leadership

The Gweini process is to identify the leaders of the local network (from existing EA Wales contact lists) and let them grow the process.

The UMDA process was to bring people together in the hope that leadership would emerge.

3. Membership

The EA provenance of Gweini makes the issue of membership complex in that all those in leadership have to be in agreement with the EA Basis of Faith. This means that some people who do not agree with it self-exclude from Gweini altogether, although they are not precluded from membership or activity in the Forums.

The UMDA networks are explicitly aiming at being inclusive, although some people would self exclude for this reason.

6.3 Overall learning

Given the evaluation of the work undertaken by the UMDA and the comparisons with UKCRN and Gweini, the following learning points can be gained:

1. Membership and purpose

In the Y&H area, a very active Churches Regional Commission meant that a Gweini-type purpose was not needed. There was a gap identified in terms of holistic mission, and resourcing people about how to integrate their social action, their worship and their proclamation. The proposal was to do this through a network of networks, this would then feed down to the local person.

Sufficient momentum and identity for this has not been created, partly because there are too few network intermediary people with sufficient urban interest to engage with this, therefore the shift should be to the individual local practitioners.

Of the three elements of support that the Project was originally tasks with providing – work on issues facing UM practitioners, information on funding or information on government policy, the second and third are fairly readily available through other channels.

Work on integrating mission and the space and capacity for theological reflection is less available and can continue to give a clear purpose to the networks.

2. Geographical area

The Region is probably too large to build up any real sense of affinity between local practitioners – however it does work for the network of networks model that was initially agreed upon at the consultation meetings.

The areas where general urban mission networks for local practitioners are needed, are those where specialist networks like Nat. Estate Churches Network have not got a regional presence, rather than the other way around.

Taken together with point (1) this means that urban networks are most needed where the Christian infrastructure is less developed than in Yorkshire & the Humber. However, the testing of the shift to a local practitioner model needs to happen, to see if even if highly supported areas, the local practitioner can still feel isolated.

3. Leadership

The identification of who was to lead the new network was not given enough attention from the outset. The UMDA probably should have acted more as a leader and less of a facilitator in the initial meetings. Figureheads with the energy and drive to recruit new members and motivate existing ones to participate should be appointed initially, even if a more democratic selection follows.

4. Commitment and urban identity

In the 1980s there was a substantial cohort of practitioners who had a radical commitment to improving the lot of people living in urban areas. This was helped by a political climate that was largely positively turned against any such commitment, which fostered a common identity of resistance.

At the start of the Project it was hard to identify this passion about the urban, especially in practitioners under 40yrs old. Over the three years there has been a growing buzz around combating increasing urban malaise, and an increasing realisation that neither Conservative ‘trickle-down’ methodology nor New Labour ‘regeneration and renewal schemes’ have actually improved the lot of many of the individuals who remain stuck in certain urban localities. This passion needs to be focussed and tapped into to provide energy to the networks.

5. Recruitment to the networks

This was largely done through 'gatekeepers'. However, most of them had no interest in promoting the network, as it would tend to take time away from the limited capacity 'their' practitioners had to engage with their pre-existing structures. The Urban Officer for Ripon & Leeds Diocese and the Baptist Regional Minister are cases in point.

A more aggressive marketing of the networks would be a move away from the gentler role of catalyst, would imply that a network was definitely going to happen, and would give out very different and less collaborative signals.

However there are potential, isolated urban practitioners who would benefit from greater support from colleagues. The URC, Methodist and independent church structures are probably the least resourced in this respect, although as Social Responsibility posts are lost at diocesan level this leaves a gap.

A renewed approach would have to work through a changed strategy, making direct contact with potential members by attending Faithworks national conferences, local denominational meetings etc.

This would require more expenditure on publicity material.

6. Style of process

The UKCRN and Gweini processes are quite head-based and logical. An intellectual argument can be easily made - join our network and there will be direct benefit for your work.

The UM networks were promoted in this way in Y&H, but as re-defined above are much more about support and affinity to a common purpose. The presentations about the advantages of joining probably need to shift to focus more upon big picture Kingdom goals, and the sense of personal links with people who will understand and want to talk with you about your work and the issues you face from a position of sympathy and common knowledge.

The benefit to the member, and therefore the quality of input to the meetings (external speakers, clear agenda etc.), needs to rise in direct proportion to the size of the area of the network and the distance travelled.

7. Possible on-going tasks

7.1. Yorkshire and the Humber	Time allocation	
	UMDA	UMNSW
7.1.1 working closely with CRC in convening continuing meetings – arranging joint meeting with Bp for Urban Life and Faith	1 hr per fortnight	2hrs per fortnight
7.1.2 continuing to urge/encourage first tier people to promote the network to their members – inserts/editorial in mailouts	2-3 hrs per month	½ hr per fortnight
7.1.3 networking with Black-led churches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sustaining links with West Yorks. ACCC - building stronger links with Afro-Caribbean churches in S Yorks. - building links with African diaspora and other mother 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2-3 hrs per month - 1 day per week for at least four/five months - ½ day per 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ½ hr per fortnight - 1 hr per week - 1 hr per

tongue churches across the region	fortnight for at least four/five months	week
7.2 Scotland		
7.2.1 working closely with the SC Scotland Urban Officer and the Church of Scotland Urban Priorities officer to examine the need for a series of conferences about holistic urban mission and sustaining urban presence.	1 day per month	2 hrs per month
7.2.2 follow-up meeting with Africa Pastors in Glasgow	2 days to set up and deliver	4 hours to service and follow-up
7.3 Wales		
7.3.1 Review effectiveness of Project with both CYTUN and Gweini and CiW Social Responsibility network	1 day	occasional
7.3.2 Review whether the town/city wide approach is sufficient to identify isolated practitioners in the larger cities and work on strategy to meet them if not	5 days	occasional
7.4 England and UK		
7.4.1 Continue to take lead role, and proactive work to re-engage the 'sleeping' members of the Eccleston Group	1 day per fortnight	2 hrs per fortnight
7.4.2 Continue to attend denominational meetings, including meetings with Bp for Urban Life and Faith	2 days per month	
7.4.3 Support ECUM in organising the NUE Day	3 days	6 hours + ongoing website work
7.4.4 Support urban networks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - assist MCCN and CCCG combination - ongoing support for MCCN/CCCG - webpage and publicity and conference support for NECN - meeting administration for UK UM Congress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 days one-off yr 1 - 1 ½ days per event 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4 days one-off yr 1 -2 days mailouts per event + 2 hours pr wk database maintenance, ongoing - 1 day pr mnth + 6x1/2 days conference admin - on going 1 day pr qtr, yrs 1 & 2, 3 days pr

- publicity mailouts for UK UM Congress		mnth yr 3 - 5 x ½ days yrs 2 & 3
7.4.5 Links with Black-led churches - proactive meetings with denominational leaders	10 days, yr 1	- ½ day per mnth
7.4.6 links with non-traditional network churches - sustained urban presence meeting autumn 07	8 days, yr 1	- ½ day per mnth
7.4.7 UK Urban Mission Congress development - Yr. 1 attending Exec meetings and proactive contact with potential Exec members - Yr 2 attending Exec meetings and proactive publicity work, content planning - Yr 3 attending Exec meetings, proactive publicity work, content planning and attendance at event	- 5 dys, yr 1 - 10 days yr 2 - 20 days yr 3	- ½ dy pr mnth Yr 1 - ½ dy pr mnth - average 2 x ½ dy pr wk, yr 3
7.4.8 Training issues follow-up - proactive work with Black-led churches (see 6.4.5) - one-day meeting Yr 1 - on-going working group	- (see 6.4.5) - 4 days, yr 1 - 2 days pr qtr	- (see 6.4.5) - 5x ½ days, yr 1 - ½ dy pr qtr
7.4.9 Keeping in contact with Bp for Urban Life and Faith (see 6.4.2)		
7.4.10 Other work to form the wider coalition	- average 2 dys pr mnth	- ½ dy pr mnth
Wider Coalition Time Sections 7.4.1-7, 7.4.9, 7.4.10 - per month - per quarter – per month x 3 plus occasional - per year – per quarter x 4 - per year - per month x 12 plus one offs - Total	- 6 dys - 72 dys - 33 dys - 105 dys yr 1	- 5 ½ dys - 16 ½ dys - 1 ½ dys - 72 dys - 11 ½ dys - 167 x ½dys
Total time allocation - per month - per quarter (per month X 3, plus monthly work) - per year (per quarter x 4, plus one offs)	- 10 dys - 128 dys - 203 dys yr 1 - 208 dys yr 2 - 218 dys yr 3	- 17x ½ dys - 59x ½ dys - 214x ½ dys - 219x ½ dys - 219x ½ dys

NB working year for UMDA for 5 day week is 226 days , for UMNSW is 226 x ½ days.

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