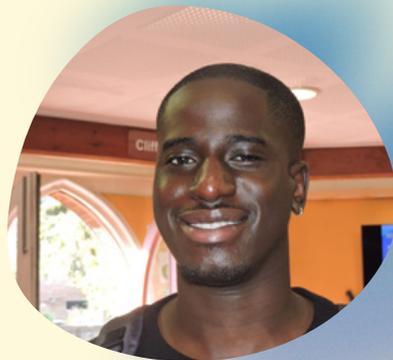


URC Youth Work Report



About Me

My Name is Femi Onanuga; I took over the role of Youth Pastor at Mill Hill East Church from Georgia Venn-Dunn when she went on maternity leave in 2021. I'm passionate about bringing Jesus to young people in contextual and accessible ways. The methods I use are through art, words and relationships. I also have a passion for seeing young leaders in the Church given space to develop their gifts and grow into Disciples who make Disciples. I have been at Mill Hill East Church for two years now. It's been a privilege to serve the youth of the surrounding community and the church family.

Building out of Covid

I initially started this role at the tail end of the COVID-19 pandemic; this meant that a large part of my first year consisted of trying to regain numbers in our programs. This went successfully, as we were in contact with 35 young people and kids weekly and took 41 young people on residential trips. These numbers reflect fruitful programs that have the space to grow even more. We have been able to reach these young people through various programs that have changed over the years. The flexibility of the church and Josh and Rachel has meant that I have felt a sense of freedom and support to try new things where I've felt led.

The Programs we currently run are:

- Youth Cafe Weds from 3:30 - 6 pm
- Kids and Youth Club 5-6 pm / 7- 8:30 pm
- Youth Church during the Worship Service
- Lifestyle Leaders Meeting/Bible Study Weds 6-8 pm
- Lifestyle every Half Term on Saturday



Youth Cafe

We started the Youth Cafe as a chance to have more contact and relationship with the Youth of the area and church while also helping practically by giving them food, a warm space to be in after school and offering help with homework. This has been a success. We've seen many families in the community join this program. The success of this program can be reflected by the increase we have seen in Families connecting with our church, some opting to come along to our Friday clubs and other activities.



Mentoring

A large part of my role has been meeting and mentoring some of the young people on the fringes of our Church family. The meetings have been one-on-one and have been a time to walk with the young people as they make decisions about university, careers and life in general. These meetings have been excellent for the discipleship of these young people, as there are times when they ask profound questions about faith. Over time, the relationships have gotten more profound, and I have seen more congruence and transparency come into these sessions. Resulting in some of the young people taking a more activity role in our church life.

Mission Week

In 2022, we ran a mission week with the Message Trust and Advance Youth. During this week, we had 17 young people come to stay at our church for a week and serve our community in different ways. During the week, we had a football game we opened up to the community. After the game, the young people shared the Gospel. We also had a BBQ on the estate. We do a lot of our outreach work. The young people also assisted in running a holiday club for the kids of the community from Monday to Wednesday in the morning until early afternoon. They also evangelised in the area and organised a youth event with games, food, a live performance, song worship and a gospel presentation. It was a great week, which allowed our young people to rub shoulders with people their goes doing the mission of Jesus.



Kids/Youth Club

On Friday, our Youth Club is a chance to do outreach to the community's youth. This session is a way for us to disciple and evangelise as we always have a God slot to which we share some stories of the bible or discuss topics that the youth will be engaging with. We aim to subvert and look at these topics through a biblical lens. These sessions have been excellent as we have seen how the youth have grown in understanding of God. We have also seen some of them lead the God slot this year, which has been excellent. We also run a kids club for ages 4-10, which is an excellent opportunity to bless the kids of the community. During this time, we do songs and crafts and share bible stories. It's vital for us to be able to plant seeds of the Gospel at this age. I am also amazed at their profound questions and answers, showing that wisdom relies not on age but on knowledge and understanding of God.



Youth Church

We also have Youth church on Sunday, a time during the service where the youth can come together and learn and share about their walks with Christ. This has been a very fruitful ministry, and we have been blessed enough to see some overlap with The youth of the community coming to engage with these programs on Sunday without their parents.



Lifestyle

This year, we also started a new creative art worship event. It was created to develop the young people in the community leadership skills while allowing the surrounding community to explore faith in a way that would be more familiar to them through the creative arts. We have called it "Lifestyle". We have run three events this year and have seen real growth in the young leaders we have invested in. Two of our young leaders have given sermons in the church. Another young leader has started a bible study at her school. Another young leader was baptised this year. We have also received positive feedback from the youth of the community, who have expressed the benefit of having this space to explore the tough questions of faith and religion.



Trips and Residential

We have also been on trips and residential, which have been an excellent opportunity to widen the vision and perspective of our young people, as well as build community amongst the group. We went to the Isle of Wight in 2021 and Rock UK Northampton in 2022. We have also been on trips to youth concerts, Christmas markets and adventure parks. We would love to have more of these trips and residential as we have seen how they have been essential to building rapport and relationships in the groups we have. They are also a great way to bless and expand the thinking of our young people as they explore what the world has to offer.



Detached Work

We visit our local housing estate, Inglis Barracks, weekly to engage with the kids in the community and develop connections with families in that area. The estate has seen development over the past years, which has led to some flats being knocked down and people being asked to move elsewhere. These weekly detached sessions are an excellent way to be a hope and light for this community that can sometimes be overlooked and neglected. This is one of my favourite programs as we go and give freely but also build meaningful relationships in an incarnational way, going to dwell and be amongst those we seek to serve.



Holiday Clubs

We run Termly Holiday clubs, which are a great way to disciple and get to know the young kids of the community. These clubs consist of Songs, Games, Crafts, Bible stories, and lots of fun. We have seen the blessing these holiday clubs are as we form relationships with new kids and reinforce relationships we have with others. We use Scripture Union resources, which are great for contextually sharing the Bible's story in a fun and engaging way for the kids. We have seen a lot of kids return after coming once, and we have also seen kids coming to our other programs as a result of attending the Holiday clubs.



Thank you

We are so thankful to God for what he has been doing in this community amongst the youth. Your funding has allowed me to be employed and work for God's purpose in this fantastic area. We hope to build on the work we have been doing and continue to make disciples that make disciples.