Impact and Context Report: Sligo Centre of Mission

Church Army’s Research Team

## Introduction

This short report provides an overview of the work that’s been taking place at Sligo Centre of Mission (CoM) throughout the financial year 2022-2023, then situates that work within its local context using national census data.

The first section of this report summarises data provided by Church Army evangelists in order to describe the activities undertaken by the CoM, as well as the CoM’s social impact and the ways in which people are exploring and developing faith through the work of the CoM.

The second section of the report uses data from the *Central Statistics Office’s* 2022 census of the Republic of Ireland to describe the population who live within the area local to the CoM.

## Section 1: Activities and impact

Due to the availability of data, the statistics and figures in this section of the report summarise the Centre of Mission’s activity between April 2023 and December 2023

### CoM Activities

This year Sligo CoM has facilitated over 1078 hours of activity for approximately 2232 people - an average of 135 hours per month. Activities coordinated by Sligo CoM include:

* Alpha Holy Spirit Retreats
* 24/7 Prayer
* ASD outreach partnership with HSE
* Alpha Mercy College
* Community Jiving Class
* Alpha Sligo Grammar School

## Growing faith

Growing faith can’t always be seen and is tricky to measure, but there have been some encouraging developments at Sligo CoM, including:

* There are at least six people growing in faith
* There are at least 15 people actively exploring faith

### Food provision

Sligo CoM have provided 220 food parcels over the course of the year. Details of this provision are given in the table below.

| Food provision | No. boxes/parcels/meals | Details |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Hot meals provided | 200 | — |
| Food packs | 20 | — |

### Volunteers

There are nine volunteers at Sligo CoM. The church backgrounds of these volunteers are shown in the table below:

| Church background | % |
| --- | --- |
| Regular church-goer | 50% |
| Occasional church-goer | 0% |
| Historical church-goer | 0% |
| Never church-goer | 50% |

## Section 2: Local context

This section of the report describes, at a high level, the characteristics of the area in which the CoM operates. Since many Centres of Mission are set up via a partnership between Church Army and a host diocese, each CoM’s area of operation is compared to the population profiles of the local diocese as well as the nation as a whole.

The tables and figures in this section describe the CoM’s area of operation in terms of:

* Age
* Ethnicity
* Religion
* Self-reported general health
* Household composition

All the data in this section of the report were collected in the *Central Statistics Office’*s 2022 census of the Republic of Ireland.

### Methodology

Researchers consulted the lead evangelist at each CoM in order to determine the specific geographical areas in which the CoM operates. These might include, for example, the specific estate on which a CoM runs its activities, or a particular area of housing inhabited by regular attendees of the CoM’s activities. The population characteristics of these areas were approximated via a weighted summation of the populations of the small areas of statistical geography (i.e. output areas) that intersected the area described by the lead evangelist. The weights for this summation were the respective relative intersections of each small area with the area under consideration.

### Age

[Figure 1](#fig-age) and [Table 1](#tbl-age) respectively show the ages of the population at the local, diocesan and national level.

The population local to Sligo CoM is home to a larger proportion of 20-29 year olds than the national population, as well as a larger proportion of people over the age of 60. Children and teenagers, on the other hand, are less prevalent locally than nationally.

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| Figure 1: Population ages in 10 year bands |

Table 1: Population ages in 10 year bands

|  | CoM | Diocese | Republic-of-ireland |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 0-9 years old | 11% | 13% | 12% |
| 10-19 years old | 12% | 15% | 14% |
| 20-29 years old | 13% | 10% | 12% |
| 30-44 years old | 20% | 20% | 22% |
| 45-59 years old | 19% | 20% | 20% |
| 60-69 years old | 11% | 11% | 10% |
| 70+ years old | 13% | 12% | 10% |

### Ethnicity

[Figure 2](#fig-ethnicity) and [Table 2](#tbl-ethnicity) show, at a very high level, the self-reported ethnicity of the population across each geography.

The majority of the local population are white, but white people comprise a slightly smaller share of the local population than the national average. Asian, unstated and other ethnicities are all marginally more prevalent locally than elsewhere.

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| Figure 2: Population ethnicities |

Table 2: Population ethnicities

|  | CoM | Diocese | Republic-of-ireland |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| White (Irish) | 76% | 79% | 77% |
| White (other) | 8% | 10% | 10% |
| Not stated | 7% | 5% | 6% |
| Asian | 4% | 2% | 3% |
| Other | 5% | 4% | 4% |

### Religion

[Figure 3](#fig-religion) and [Table 3](#tbl-religion) show the religious beliefs of the population across each geography.

The local area is majority Catholic, but slightly less Catholic than the diocese and marginally less Catholic than the nation. Irreligiosity is comparable locally and nationally, despite being lower within the diocese than the national average.

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| Figure 3: Population religions |

Table 3: Population religions

|  | CoM | Diocese | Republic-of-ireland |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Catholic | 66% | 76% | 69% |
| No religion | 15% | 9% | 15% |
| Other religion | 11% | 9% | 10% |
| Not stated | 8% | 5% | 7% |

### General health

[Figure 4](#fig-general-health) and [Table 4](#tbl-general-health) show the self-reported general health of the population across each geography.

Self reported general health outcomes are marginally worse in the local area than the national average; locally, three percent fewer people report their general health to be ‘very good’ than within the nation.

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| Figure 4: Population self-reported general health |

Table 4: Population self-reported general health

|  | CoM | Diocese | Republic-of-ireland |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Very bad | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Bad | 2% | 2% | 2% |
| Fair | 11% | 10% | 9% |
| Good | 33% | 32% | 32% |
| Very good | 54% | 56% | 57% |

### Household composition

[Figure 5](#fig-household-composition) and [Table 5](#tbl-household-composition) give a summary of the prevalence of different kinds of household across all geographies.

One-person households account for 30% of all local households, compared to 23% of households nationwide. Couples with children account for approximately a quarter of the local population, whereas in the national population they account for over 35% of all households. Non-family households are more prevalent in the local area than elsewhere, and account for over 1 in 10 local households.

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| Figure 5: Population household distribution overview |

Table 5: Population household distribution overview

|  | CoM | Diocese | Republic-of-ireland |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| One person | 30% | 26% | 23% |
| Couple w/ children | 26% | 37% | 36% |
| Couple (no children) | 21% | 21% | 21% |
| One parent family | 11% | 10% | 11% |
| Non-family households | 11% | 5% | 8% |
| Multiple families | 1% | 1% | 1% |

## Local Deprivation

[Figure 6](#fig-deprivation-map) shows a map of relative deprivation of the local area. Small areas that are coloured in red are in the 5% most deprived areas nationally, those coloured orange are in the 10% most deprived, and those coloured yellow are in the 20% most deprived. Transparent areas are outside of the 20% most deprived areas in the nation.

Relative deprivation data is sourced from the 2017 Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measures (NIMD). If you would like to know more about NIMD, you can find out about it [here](https://www.nisra.gov.uk/sites/nisra.gov.uk/files/publications/NIMDM17-%20with%20ns.pdf).

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| Figure 6: fig-cap: Map of local deprivation (NIMD2017) |