Method of the ‘Pilgrims’ Progress 2008’ Research Project

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1. ‘Final statistics’ published by World Youth Day Administration on the WYD website (no longer extant) after WYD.

**Final Statistics**

**Pilgrims and attendance**

- 70,000 international pilgrims took part in *Days of the Dioceses* throughout Australia during the week before WYD08
- 150,000 attended the Opening Mass at Barangaroo and CBD sites
- In excess of 400,000 people attended the Final Mass at Southern Cross Precinct
- 500,000 people came out to welcome His Holiness on Thursday 17 July on the Boat-a-cade, Official Arrival at Barangaroo and Motorcade
- 223,000 people registered for pilgrim services during WYD08 (110,000 international pilgrims + 113,000 local pilgrims)
- Over 170 nations were represented at World Youth Day Sydney 2008
- 168 international flags took part in the *Procession of Flags* at the WYD08 Opening Mass

**Audience**

- WYD08 events were watched live by an estimated international TV audience of 500 million, with TV and internet audiences combined reaching 1 billion
- XT3.com, the WYD08 official online social networking site, is expected to attract 225,000 pilgrims as a result of the event
- The World Youth Day website received over 500,000 unique users from Saturday 12 July to Sunday 20th July with the biggest spike in hits occurring Thursday 17th July.
- WYD08 online streaming received over 250,000 visits during the event period, watching events live all around the world
- Top countries watching online streaming included USA, UK, Italy, Canada, Spain and Germany
- There were 2,000 accredited media for WYD08

**Activities**

- 450 Youth Festival events took place during the week from Tuesday to Sunday in over 100 venues
- 30 large national gatherings took place during WYD08
- 134 international pilgrims from 58 countries were part of the International Liturgy Group (ILG), as well as a representative from each Australian State and Territory. The ILG undertook the main duties of the liturgies including readings, offertory procession, altar servers, testimonials, flag bearers.
- In Terrey Hills, more than 350 cardinals and bishops from overseas enjoyed a lunch hosted by the Archbishop of Sydney, Cardinal George Pell.
- An average of 2,500 pilgrims walked through the Vocations Expo every hour
- Catechesis was delivered at 235 locations across Sydney in 29 different languages
- The WYD08 Choir consisted of 300 members, the WYD08 Orchestra was an 80 piece orchestra
- 1,000 priests heard confession during the WYD08 week
Journey of the Cross & Icon

- Once the Journey of the Cross and Icon reached Wollongong for the 15 Day walk, it had travelled nearly 80,000km around Australia
- The Cross and Icon visited over 900 Australian communities during the 12 month pilgrimage around Australia
- Nearly 500,000 people touched the Cross throughout Australia
- The WYD Cross is 3.8m high and 1.75m wide, weighing some 40 kilograms
- The WYD Icon is 118cm high and 79cm wide, weighing some 15 kilograms
- 4,000 pilgrims took part in the final day of the Journey of the Cross and Icon on Monday 14th July when it travelled on a Manly Ferry before being walked through central Sydney

Pilgrim Services

- 6,000 blankets were donated by Qantas to pilgrims from across Oceania
- 37 lucky Burmese pilgrims overcame VISA difficulties to finally make it to Sydney for WYD08
- At the WYD Big Aussie BBQ, 220,000 slices of bread were consumed - if laid end to end, it would cover the Sydney Harbour Bridge 21 times
- 100,000 pilgrims slept in 400 schools and parishes
- Over 12,000 pilgrims stayed in Sydney Olympic Park throughout the week
- 40,000 were billeted as part of the WYD08 HomeStay program

Papal Facts

- The Pope's flight to Sydney took 19 hours and 45 minutes
- The Pope's flight home will take 21 hours
- From Rome the flight travelled a total distance of 16,500 kilometres
- The Pope will fly back to Rome on a Qantas flight, stopping off Darwin for a brief refuelling
- The Pope sent six daily inspirational text messages
- The Pope met six native Australian animals from Taronga Zoo when in Kenthurst - a wallaby, koala, python, lizard, baby crocodile and an echidna
- 12 lucky young people lunched with the Pope on Friday 18 July. This included Australians Craig Ashby from Sydney and Teresa Wilson from Melbourne
- 24 people were confirmed by the Pope at the Final Mass including 14 young Australians and 10 international young people
- The Pope lunched with 50 current and retired Australian Bishops in St Mary's Cathedral House
- The Pope kissed four small children during his Motorcades

Volunteers

- 8,000 WYD08 volunteers assisted during WYD08
- His Holiness held a special event to specifically thank the volunteers at the Domain prior to his departure

Clergy

- There were 4,000 priests and deacons, 420 Bishops, 26 Cardinals and one Pope present at WYD08
- 500 special WYD08 chasubles for the Bishops and Cardinals were made
- 4,000 stoles were made for the priests
- 1.1 million communion hosts were made for the WYD08 Masses

Food

- 25 million food items were ordered for WYD08
- 3.6 million meals were distributed across approximately 400 venues during the week
- 215,000 meat pies, 360,000 lamingtons and 100,000 litres of Dairy Farmers Milk were consumed
Services

- 400,000 people attended the Final Mass at Randwick Racecourse and Centennial Park
- 235,000 faithful attended the night time Vigil at Randwick Racecourse.
- Over 200,000 pilgrims camped at Randwick Racecourse overnight in anticipation of the Final Mass
- 232,000 candles were used during WYD08
- 100 actors took part in the Stations of the Cross performance
- 4000 toilets were in use at the Southern Cross Precinct

2. Brief description of the Pilgrims’ Progress 2008 project

The World Youth Day (WYD) research project ‘Pilgrims’ Progress 2008’ was a three-stage project that was conducted at Australian Catholic University and Monash University, with the support of the World Youth Day Administration.

The main events of World Youth Day 2008 took place during the week of July 15th-20th. Stage I of the research, prior to the event, consisted first of semi-structured interviews with youth intending to attend WYD. Forty-nine interviews, averaging 38 minutes in length, were conducted over the period from October 2007 to March 2008. Forty-four were face-to-face and 5 by telephone. Thirty-six were with school-age youth and 13 with post-school youth. Thirty-one were female and 18 were male. All but one participant was living in Australia at the time of the interview.

Next, WYD administration sent emails or SMS messages on behalf of the research team to all English-speakers who had registered as to attend as of early May, 2008, inviting them to follow a link to an independent website and complete a survey canvassing their spiritual background, worldview, values, past civic engagement and hopes for WYD. 12,275 responses were received. The respondents constituted 24% of the entire population of English-speaking registrants, and matched the population closely in age and gender.

Stage II was conducted during the WYD08 week in July. An extended research team of 12 engaged in participant observation of all the main events and as many of the subsidiary events as possible.

Stage III took place after WYD. Shortly after the team’s return, they attended group debriefing sessions for returning participants, and conducted a further 26 individual interviews and two focus groups. In November-December 2008 a second internet survey of English-speaking registered WYD attenders was undertaken. Participants were again invited by email and SMS messages. The survey received 4,776 responses, including 1,449 identifiable as from respondents to the pre-event survey. Ninety-nine percent of the respondents indicated their religious identification as Catholic. The aim of this second survey was to explore a wide range of the experiences of participants in WYD08, and to discover the impact of these experiences on WYD attenders’ spirituality and civic behaviour.

3. Pre-WYD Survey: procedures and response rates

a) WYD Administration provided the following information to the research team:
1) 56,765 pilgrims, volunteers and group leaders were registered as English-speaking.
2) 1,116 file entries were duplicates, leaving 55,649 valid registrations
3) 5,257 had not given permission, when registering, to be contacted with further WYD info
4) 608 entries had blank email addresses, leaving (56765–1116-5257-608 =) 49,784
5) 31,956 of these had unique personal email addresses not shared with anyone else.
b) WYD Registration provided these addresses to Australian Survey Research Ltd. (ASR) the company hosting the internet-based survey, and ASR sent out individual email invitations.

c) 17,828 people (the remainder of the 49,784) had shared email addresses (3,580 addresses). ASR sent emails to these addresses inviting those sharing them to complete the ‘open’ version of the survey at http://wyds.com.au. This version was identical to that accessed by clicking the link in a personal email invitation. The personal invitation method was preferred because it enabled the respondent to come and go from the survey without having to put in a username and password to re-enter and continue.

d) 5,402 mobile phone numbers were in the file sent to ASR. These were sent SMS messages inviting them to look for an email from WYD containing a link, or go to the ‘open’ version of survey.

e) WYD Registration sent a special email to all group leaders (of English-speaking groups) asking them to contact their group members and get them either to check their email for an individual link to the survey (if they were individually registered), or to go to the open version.

f) The survey opened at 5.04 pm Friday May 2, 2008 and closed at 9am on Friday 16th.

g) Reminders sent during the survey period: between Thursday May 8th and Sat 10th, reminder emails were sent to all who had not completed the survey; also reminder SMS messages, and on Tuesday 13th, a reminder email was sent by WYD Registration to group leaders.

h) Response to individual survey invitation emails:
31,956 individual email invitations were sent
  1,894 of these ‘bounced’ (were undeliverable because of invalid addresses)
17,895 were not opened over the following 2 weeks before the survey closed
12,167 emails were opened (38% of emails sent; 21.86% of valid registrations)
10,703 followed the link to the survey site
  1,215 entered the site but answered no questions
2,148 answered some questions but did not complete the entire survey
7,340 completed the whole survey
9,488 answered all or part of the survey – 77.98% of the 12,167 who were able to be contacted by email (i.e. who opened the invitation).

i) Response to the open version of the survey – the emailed group invitations
3,580 email invitations were sent
  138 of these bounced (undeliverable because of invalid addresses)
2,171 (60.64%) were not opened over the following 2 weeks before the survey closed
1,271 (35.50%) emails were opened

In addition,
- group leaders were emailed and asked to notify their members;
- 5,402 SMS messages were sent to registered pilgrims who had provided mobile phone numbers
- advertisements for the open survey were placed on the WYD site’s home page
- and in a press release sent to the Catholic press.
As a result of these multiple forms of publicity for the open survey, 3,486 went to the ‘open’ survey site
   699 looked at the survey but answered no questions
   936 answered some questions but did not complete
1,851 completed the survey
2,787 answered all or part of the survey on this open site.

j) Totalling the responses obtained by all methods to the personal and open surveys:
   9,191 completed the entire survey (7,340 personal + 1,851 open)
   12,275 answered all or part of the survey (9,488 personal & 2,787 open)

k) Estimated numbers of attenders
159,229 English-speaking pilgrims were estimated by WYDA on 15/5/2008, to eventually attend. These forecasts, based on earlier surveys of likely numbers from various countries, are revised weekly as registration proceeds. The survey could only contact directly those who were individually registered, but publicity (probably through group leaders) drew 319 survey responses from pilgrims who were not yet registered.

l) Incomplete responses
These are often discarded in survey research; however, recognising that some respondents were quite young, and anticipating that a proportion would find the task of responding to the questionnaire tedious and not persevere with it to the end, the research team placed a set of crucial questions about WYD close to the start of the survey, together with age, denomination and country of residence. A high proportion of those respondents who did not complete the survey all the way to the end, nonetheless answered these important questions adequately, and so provided significant usable additional data.

m) Representativeness of the pre-World Youth Day survey
The total of 12,275 responses (some of them incomplete) is unusually high for a survey of any kind, and permits very detailed analysis. It is far from fulfilling WYDA’s hope that all pilgrims would participate, since the 11,956 responses from registered respondents represents only 21.5% of the 55,649 valid entries in the registration file at May 1, and only 319 replies were received from the unknown number of intending pilgrims who are not yet registered.

However, although only 12,167 pilgrims could be contacted via email (only 21.9% of those registered), 78% of these – an extraordinarily high proportion for a survey of this kind – provided a response. This result vindicates the research team’s early conviction that, if we could only reach them, those planning to attend an event such as WYD08 would be most willing to enter into the reflective process entailed in responding to the survey, and would find it most profitable.

In February, when the proportion of estimated attenders who were individually registered was much lower, we were concerned that the survey response might be strongly biased: that those who were from overseas, or had enrolled earlier, would be disproportionately from among the most serious, dedicated and enthusiastic pilgrims. By mid-May, the numbers registered were rising steeply, and estimates were also being reduced to figures judged more realistic. The proportion of expected Australian pilgrims registered was approaching half, and our concern about bias abated. While it is likely that later registrants may be more Australian, younger, and less devoted than average, we are confident that the respondent group is not only
representative of those enrolled at the time of the survey, but likely to be representative also of the eventual full population of English-speaking pilgrims.

4. Representativeness of responses

The term sample is not used here because no sampling techniques were employed in either sample. So the term respondent group’ is used. In both surveys, the entire finite population of English-speaking attenders was surveyed. Of course, not all responded, and it is necessary to estimate the extent to which their responses can be considered representative of the whole population. But technically they do not constitute a sample. Nor are we attempting to draw inferences from this group to the (theoretically infinite) population of Catholics attending similar events – so our respondents are not a sample in this sense either.

The responses obtained in the survey conducted two months prior to WYD are representative of those who were registered with WYD administration at the time, and the characteristics of the respondent group match those of the target population – those registered at 1 May, 2008.

The survey conducted five months after WYD received fewer responses, but again the respondents closely match the population (all registered English-speaking attenders) on age and gender, and are representative of the registered English-speaking WYD attenders from Australia and overseas who were present at the event. Weighting has been used to correct small imbalances in age and country of origin.

[When fully developed, this paper will include a fuller account of the procedures used to recruit respondents to the post-WYD survey.]