

FOOTSTEPS

No.31 JUNE 1997

READERS' FEEDBACK ISSUE

Church-based community development

by Alexis Andino

FOR A LONG TIME development workers have learnt and put into practice the principle that 'development' comes from agencies and is aimed at communities. We take for granted that we are the bearers of a wealth of 'new ideas' which we are eager to share with people, to 'take development to the community'.

Even when these theories are shared and guided by community participation, we may still find our work style is 'top down'. Ideas come from **outside** the

community and there is little room for the community to generate its own ideas.

In passing on these beliefs, each of us has been influenced by situations, models and processes which have helped us to think and behave in a certain way. In my own case, it was the experience shared by

a group of lay readers, pastors and community workers which helped me to realise that if we do not carefully think through our role as 'agents for change', we risk taking away people's roles in their own community. Clearly our motivation is our Christian love and desire to help solve the problems of those who suffer.

However, we have to draw the line between Christian commitment and paternalism.

Failing to record our own experiences and how our thinking develops can often prove a weakness. Here I will try to share some of my thoughts and conclusions about an area many of us may be involved with – Christian community development. Of course, these thoughts will not necessarily coincide with your own ideas and experiences, but they may help to challenge you to spend some time recording your own experiences and thoughts.

Let's consider what factors should be taken into account to avoid turning our role as community facilitators into that of 'development' organisers.

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Photo: Mike Webb, Tear Fund

FOOTSTEPS

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Footsteps is a quarterly paper, linking health and development workers worldwide. Tear Fund, publisher of *Footsteps*, hopes that it will provide the stimulus of new ideas and enthusiasm. It is a way of encouraging Christians of all nations as they work together towards creating wholeness in our communities.

Footsteps is free of charge to individuals working to promote health and development. It is available in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. Donations are welcomed.

Readers are invited to contribute views, articles, letters and photos.

Editor: Isabel Carter

83 Market Place, South Cave, Brough,
East Yorkshire, HU15 2AS, UK.

Tel/Fax: (0)1430 422065

E-mail: imc@tearfund.dircon.co.uk

Language Editor: Sheila Melot

Editorial Committee: Jerry Adams, Dr Ann Ashworth, Simon Batchelor, Mike Carter, Jennie Collins, Bill Crooks, Paul Dean, Richard Franceys, Dr Ted Lankester, Sandra Michie, Nigel Poole, Louise Pott, José Smith, Mike Webb

Illustrator: Rod Mill

Design: Wingfinger Graphics, Leeds

Translation: L Bustamante, R Cawston, Dr J Cruz, S Dale-Pimentil, S Davies, T Dew, N Edwards, J Hermon, J Martinez da Cruz, R Head, M Leake, M Machado, O Martin, N Mauriange, J Perry

Mailing List: Write, giving brief details of your work and stating preferred language, to: Footsteps Mailing List, Tear Fund, 100 Church Road, Teddington, Middlesex, TW11 8QE, UK. (Tel: (0)181 977 9144.)

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TEAR FUND 
CHRISTIAN CONCERN IN A WORLD OF NEED

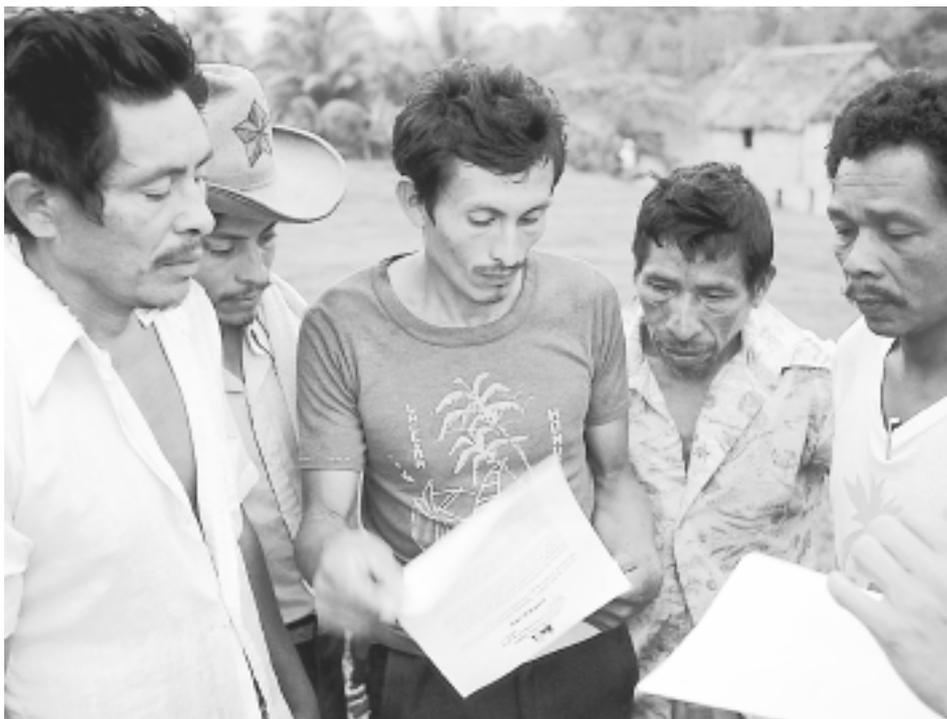


Photo: Mike Webb, Tear Fund

How do we avoid turning our role as community facilitators into that of 'development' organisers?

Understanding our identity

If we come from outside the community, we must be aware that we are strangers and may not know or understand many of the elements and situations which take place there. We may come from very different situations.

Identifying our role

As strangers who have come to serve the community, we must give up any ideas of self importance and authority. We need to adopt a permanent learning attitude. All comments and suggestions should be seen as new assets we can add to our own experience as servants of God for his glory.

Consideration and respect

We often tend to talk too much and listen too little. We like to hold on to our own standards and expectations without taking into consideration the experiences of community members. A good way to earn friendship and respect is to respect

others, especially their priorities, hierarchy and sometimes old-fashioned attitudes.

We must learn to accept that the historic roots of most churches in Latin America (and elsewhere) had few social concerns. We need wisdom to learn and understand more about those historic roots and their impact on the everyday reality of our churches. Local pastors need friends who can encourage and support them in their ministry, not so-called 'friends' who come trying to pull apart the structure and concerns of the church.

Sharing community experiences

Development agents need to become involved in community activities such as worship, playing sport and taking time to join in conversations during rest times and evenings. All these are vital parts of community life and facilitators should not keep to one side. Church leaders, members and the general community will all take pleasure in development agents who try to build up relationships with the community. This helps us develop our own understanding of the community and builds trust with community members. (Read 2 Corinthians 1:7.)

Alexis Andino wrote this thought-provoking article before we had published Issue 29 on Participatory Learning and Action. However, he raises many of the crucial issues that participatory discussion and

exercises try to encourage. How can we act as facilitators to ensure that communities are able to decide their own priorities, rather than 'helping them to develop'?

Friendships

All of us need to be accepted by others with both our strengths and weaknesses. It is easier to develop friendships with people we easily identify with. However, we also need to develop friendships with people we find harder to like so that we will be accepted by the whole community.

We must also be careful to find out about sensitive aspects of community life such as family squabbles, domestic violence, alcoholic husbands, unmarried mothers etc. We are working towards encouraging unity and cooperation and must use great wisdom in developing relationships and trust and showing tact in difficult situations.

Sharing innovations

Once we have earned the community's trust we may be able to begin a step-by-step process of sharing some ideas and experiences which may be relevant to the community. We must remember that we are not just earning the community's trust in order to pass on knowledge. Our role as facilitators is to help people find their own answers to their problems, through encouraging new ideas and community action – not by manipulating the process.

Let us look critically at our role in serving communities. Do we need to readjust our work patterns with local churches and communities?

Alexis Andino is an agricultural expert who has worked for some years as a church-based community project facilitator for Christian Service Organisations in Honduras, Central America. He is Executive Director of the Honduran Evangelical Development Organisations Council (CONSEDE).

CONSEDE
ApDo Postal 4339
Tegucigalpa
Honduras
Central America

It is often difficult for women to get their views heard.

PLA in action

Brian Polkinghorne wrote with an interesting response to Issue 29. Here are some of the points he made, together with comments from Simon Batchelor (who wrote the opening article in Issue 29).

Brian: Thank you for another stimulating edition of *Footsteps*, although the December issue on PLA raised more questions for me than it answered. My experience tells me that 'bottom-up' development is as powerless as 'top-down' development is elitist. As an ordained minister with training in agriculture, I have worked with Tanzanian development issues for over 14 years and recently handed over a most challenging reforestation project to the people I trained. In the editorial, your first sentence is about the real value of each and every individual having the opportunity to share their views. My experience is that it is most difficult for women to share meaningfully, or to get their views heard.

Simon: *It is precisely the aim of a true participatory approach to help the marginalised make their views known. If women cannot speak publicly in society, then new and imaginative approaches must be found to find out their point of view. Previously, so-called experts have spoken on behalf of women, but often with values that are completely different from those found in the village. Actions have been mis-understood causing more harm than good and sometimes even conflict. We are called to be peace makers. In the past 'development experts' have thought of solutions before the people have recognised the root causes of their problems, so when outside intervention leaves, the village returns to its old ways because they did not own the changes.*

Brian: The villages that I know well are full of personal rivalry and conflicts, traditional power structures and social class systems that severely limit the potential of real participation.

Simon: *We must acknowledge that mankind is fallen, and selfishness can be found in any society. Participatory approaches often involve public accountability, and in an imperfect society, public accountability is one of the few ways to reduce corruption and conflict.*

Brian: I fully agree that sustainable development can only come from community action – but I'm not so sure that the action must always and only be



Photo: Richard Hanson, Tear Fund

'begun' by the community itself. For example, when you have a village with inhabitants who have only ever travelled one or two days' bicycle ride from where they were born, have no newspapers, few radios, a very low level of education and an even lower level of environmental awareness and a government that has always told them what to think and to do – how are they supposed to get ideas and stimulation to see the way out of their predicament?

I believe that there needs to be an input from the outside. **Then** maybe you can start to see some signs of sustainable development taking place.

Simon: *The process begins with the people seeing a need or feeling that something is wrong. It is correct for you to say that they may not have the life experience to know the root cause of that problem, or to know of a reasonable solution. But that does not stop us beginning with their own analysis of their problems. PLA then animates the society to search for the root cause and the solution.*

Brian: If each society is so different in its sociological, economic, political and spiritual value systems, how can any one approach like PLA push the right buttons in more than a few societies to help people take the next step in their

Questions for discussion

These three men – Alexis, Simon and Brian – have raised a number of really vital issues concerning development that you may like to discuss:

- How can we enable women or other marginalised groups to express their thoughts and priorities?
- Are outside agents always needed to encourage the process of development?
- Can outside agents ever simply act as facilitators without putting over their opinions and knowledge?
- How do community members 'own' their own development?

Alongside this there are church leaders and development projects all trying to justify their work with communities and needing 'quick results' to prove their usefulness so they will be able to get next year's budget...

Let's continue raising these vital issues. Please (women especially) share some more of your thoughts.

development agendas? For example, for the vast majority of rural Africans I'll guarantee that PLA based on mapping and transects will be unhelpful because people don't use maps here. Let's encourage more experimentation and diversity. Why did God fill the world with so many varied forms and styles of life? Surely he too is in favour of diversity!

Simon: *I agree that not all tools are applicable to all societies. In Cambodia, villagers*

themselves have created new games to communicate principles to each other. They have created new tools to ensure that everyone participates and understands. We should not confuse the tools with the principles of participation. We work towards people growing in their understanding of life and of the true nature of the universe, and in their creative skills. What better mechanism is there to encourage diversity than being involved in the process of identifying a problem and working together to find the solution?



How can we ensure that community members own their own development?

Photo: Mike Webb, Tear Fund

Making the most of meetings

by Gideon Njini

GROUP MEETINGS influence the activities and future direction of groups. There are two main kinds of meeting: private and public. Public meetings discuss matters which may be of interest to all local people. Private meetings are open only to members or those with a direct interest in the subject. All meetings should give proper notice to those open to attend and should be run according to the rules of the constitution.

The language of meetings

The constitution is the set of guidelines and rules by which a society or group run their affairs.

The Chairperson should be democratically elected, allowing every member an equal opportunity to decide who is the right person for this role. This person is responsible for producing the agenda which members should have the opportunity to change.

The agenda sets out the business to be discussed in a good order.

Members must address remarks either to the Chairperson or to the meeting and not discuss issues between themselves. The Chairperson needs to keep the meeting lively and interesting as well as ensuring that the more silent members are encouraged to participate.

The minutes provide a permanent record of the matters discussed which can be filed and kept safely for future reference. The Chairperson should read out the minutes of the previous meeting at the

beginning, allow any changes or amendments to be made and then sign them as a true record.

The Secretary takes a record of those attending. This person needs to take notes of everything discussed and decided, in order to write up the minutes later in greater detail. The Secretary also needs to collect all necessary letters and written information before the meeting and may need to check facts and figures from the Chairperson's notes. Like the Chairperson, the Secretary should be democratically elected.

The value of meetings

Meetings can provide a way for poorer and less powerful members of society to share their ideas. Information can be gathered and shared at meetings with little or no cost. They are an open way of carrying out business, making corruption more difficult. They encourage participation in decision-making. They can encourage people to cooperate and work together. They



Photo: Mike Webb, Tear Fund

encourage careful and reasoned decision-making.

Gideon Njini is a consultant with Resources Management Consultants. His address is: PO Box 5011, Nkwen Bamenda, NWP, Cameroon.

EDITOR:

Be aware that sometimes meetings may be used by powerful community members to get their own way. Following these recommendations may help to prevent this happening.



FROM THE EDITOR

I AM ALWAYS VERY ENCOURAGED when *Footsteps* readers send me articles to include in *Footsteps*. Sometimes I manage to fit them quickly into issues and sometimes they may not be suitable to publish. However, I always have a number of good articles and no space to fit them in. This issue, therefore, has no main theme. Instead, we cover a number of different subjects, often from previous issues which readers have responded to. A number of articles raise crucial questions about what is at the heart of participatory development and empowerment. The source of the 'parable' on AIDS is unknown so we cannot credit the writer. Passion fruit is a fairly new crop for many farmers and though it grows easily, few people know the best ways of increasing production and avoiding disease. Jubilee 2000 is a campaign which I have been personally involved with and believe will become an important – and indeed prophetic – way of marking the new millennium.

I'd appreciate your comments on this issue of *Footsteps*. Would you like us to repeat this regularly – or do you prefer each issue to follow one subject, even if it makes it difficult to fit in other useful articles?

Future issues will look at food storage and security, infectious diseases – particularly malaria – and then ideas for small-scale enterprises.

Isabel Carter



Tools for woolcraft

IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS in Ethiopia and Kenya, we have often seen people trying to card, spin, felt or weave their wool using unsuitable tools. Sometimes more appropriate solutions may exist just a couple of hundred miles away in the same country. Sometimes the answers may be known in another continent.

Does any reader know of papers, books or magazines showing how to make textile equipment using local skills and easily obtainable materials? Or would any other project like to share their solutions with us?

For example, in the treeless highlands of Ethiopia, farmers do not have either the wood or the tools to make spinning wheels, or the cash to buy them. Bicycles, which in many countries are used as parts for spinning wheels, are unknown. So we are experimenting making wheels from grass, using traditional basketry skills and taking the necessary metal parts from broken umbrellas. Perhaps *Footsteps* could have an issue on the theme of locally sustainable craft development?

Alan Waller
Skolg 2C-4
S-450 46 Hunnebostrand
Sweden

Workshop on family counselling and pastoral work

I WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE you on the content of *Paso a Paso*. Recent issues have covered a number of matters relating to the family, such as drug abuse, street children and population issues. As an institute, EIRENE is concerned with the spiritual and emotional health of the family, so we have been very pleased with this coverage.

EIRENE is holding a Regional Congress in Cuzco, Peru from 21 to 26 July this year on the theme of *The Family in the 21st Century*, with a full programme and some very well-known Christian speakers. We would welcome enquiries from interested readers.

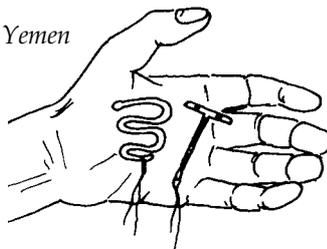
Carlos Pinto
EIRENE International
Casilla 17-08-8572
Quito
Ecuador
S America

The effect of IUDs

IN *FOOTSTEPS* 29 I noted a letter from Bert Oubre complaining that *Footsteps* had included IUDs as contraceptive methods. He believed that IUDs prevent the implantation of a fertilised egg. Since I find that many people share his view, I enclose some articles giving details of how IUDs work. They primarily prevent eggs being fertilised, mainly by altering the movement of the sperm.

There seems to be no reason to believe that IUDs cause early abortions unless they are fitted **after** an egg has been fertilised.

Barbara Kinzie
PO Box 2168
Sanaa
Republic of Yemen



EDITOR:
Copies of these articles from medical journals are available.

Drought-resistant crops

FOR SIX YEARS I worked in Binga District as manager of a nutrition and health programme. During this time we had two serious droughts. But even in the good years, harvests were not sufficient to feed the people adequately. There are few opportunities for paid employment so most people have relied on food aid for several months a year. This made me realise it would be worth trying different and more drought-resistant crops.

Last year I started focusing on the small-scale planting of drought-resistant multi-purpose trees and met with much

support. With four other people we have now formed a small organisation to promote the growing of *Jatropha curcas* and *Moringa oleifera* trees in this district. Other fruit and local trees are also encouraged. So far we have planted over a million *Jatropha* seeds.

Moringa has grown here since the 1950s. People use the leaves as relish to eat with *sadza* (stiff porridge) but people rarely have more than one tree and because the leaves are picked regularly few seeds are ever produced. We plan to produce large quantities of moringa seed and to use cuttings to propagate it as well.

We hope that oil and nuts can be marketed to industries in the cities and also used locally as cooking oil and for fuel. Nutritious weaning foods can also be prepared.

Thank you for the interesting articles on moringa which have been a great help to our programme.

Titia Warndorff
Binga Trees
Private Bag 5715
Binga
Zimbabwe

Networking of experience

I AM DELIGHTED BY THE IDEA of networking similar organisations around the world that you have tried to begin developing through *Footsteps*. Though everything is difficult at the beginning, we have to make a start because people's appetites will grow as they eat!

Through using my name in *Footsteps*, I have had useful contacts from similar groups in other countries. Is there any group who could contribute financially to this international networking of experience? Projects able to share their plans and methods of working may find all kinds of benefits in discussing them with others around the world – through letters or, even better, seminars. Sometimes a member could spend time with another organisation. What kind of role do you see *Footsteps* having in developing such networking?

I see four very positive aspects to *Footsteps*:

- It includes sections on appropriate technology.
- It shares practical experiences in development.

- It invites its partners to write in-depth articles on their work.
- You announce the themes of future issues so readers know *Footsteps* is their magazine and it will only be what we make it.

Nohoune Lèye
Project Manager
PO Box 10
Khombole
Senegal

EDITOR

In 1997 there will be an important meeting discussing future planning for *Footsteps*. Developing networking and sharing information will be two key items to be discussed.

Health education offer

THE CHRISTIAN IN HEALTH EDUCATION FELLOWSHIP has a resource centre and publishes a number of health learning materials on various

different topics, such as primary health care, drugs, hygiene, AIDS and sanitation. They will send information free of charge in exchange for 20 envelopes (of any size).

Christian in Health Education Fellowship
PO Box 401
Nnewi
Anambra
Nigeria

Correspondence farming courses

DOES ANY READER know of centres who run affordable correspondence courses in sustainable agriculture in English? Several staff members in Ethiopia would like to develop their knowledge further – but have very limited funds.

Alan Waller
c/o *Footsteps* Editor
(address as at top of page 6)

Book-keeping for mobile clinics

I ENJOY THE ARTICLES in *Footsteps*. They are practical and obviously field-tested. The one on book-keeping in Issue 26 has been very useful. I am now using this layout everyday in my work as the administrator of a small health clinic. We provide health care for the Quechua population, often travelling out to remote mountain villages with mobile clinics.

Dr Lawrence Tan
Casilla 575
Sucre
Bolivia



Breast is still best

A RECENT REPORT confirms that worrying pressures are put on mothers with new babies by companies keen to improve sales of baby milk. The Interagency Group on Breast-feeding Monitoring (IGBM) recently published a report showing that many companies – including Nestlé, Gerber, Milco, Nutricia and Wyeth – were promoting bottle-feeding among pregnant and new mothers, breaking an International Code agreed in 1981. The group found that health workers were also breaking the Code – for example, by passing on samples they had received from companies to mothers, or by using posters and leaflets that displayed the name or product of a company.

Baby milk is expensive, a poor substitute for breast milk and, worse still, if formula milk is not prepared in sterile conditions or is too weak, it can lead to infection, malnutrition and death in many babies.

Colostrum is the thick yellowish breast milk produced in the first few days after birth. Some traditions believe it should be thrown away, but it gives vital protection from disease.

Colostrum and breast milk contain special ingredients that give natural protection against disease. These protective ingredients are absent in formula milk. Breast-feeding protects babies against diarrhoea, infectious diseases and some forms of allergy. It is likely that breast-feeding improves intellectual development.

Breast-feeding can also be of benefit to mothers. It lowers the risk of ovarian and breast cancer. Exclusive breast-feeding also helps to prevent pregnancy, helping to space births.

What can health workers do?

If you are aware of companies promoting bottle feeding in your area, make a complaint to the company and do all you can to convince mothers that **BREAST IS BEST**. Encourage mothers to...

- begin breast-feeding within half an hour of birth
- breastfeed exclusively for the first 4–6 months – no water, food or other drink is needed
- give the breast whenever the baby wants, day or night
- avoid using a bottle or pacifier (dummy/soother).

If a baby becomes ill, it is even more important to continue breast-feeding. For a very small

baby who may be too weak to breast-feed, the mother can express milk into a clean cup and feed it from a spoon until the baby gets stronger. Surprisingly, even mothers eating poor diets have good breast milk.

In some countries groups have formed to make it easier for working mothers to continue breast-feeding. BUNSO in the Philippines have campaigned for hospitals to promote and encourage breast-feeding, for working mothers to have two months paid leave after birth and for factories and workplaces to become 'baby friendly' and support breast-feeding mothers.



Photo: Richard Hanson, Tear Fund

Passion fruit



by Isabel Carter

IN RECENT YEARS passion fruit has become a popular new fruit for many farmers around the world. They grow well and the fruit is tasty and refreshing. Unlike some fruit, passion fruit travel well to market. They can also be processed to make juice. There is increasing interest in exporting them to Europe where they are becoming a popular luxury fruit. Passion fruit will often grow well up trees but few people know much about the best methods of growing them to produce large quantities of fruit.

Varieties

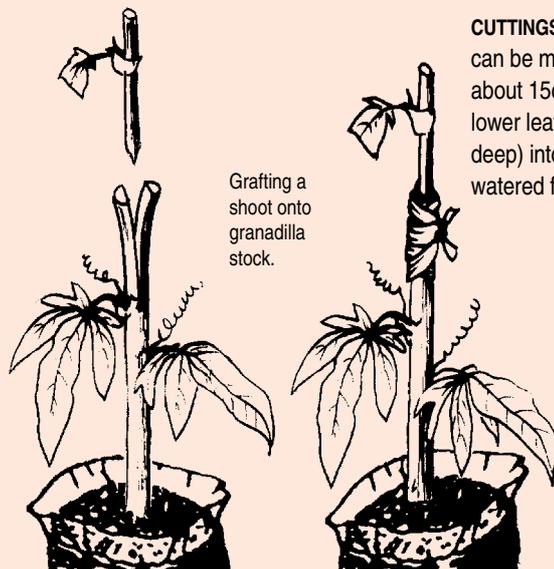
The name comes from the flower which looks like Christ's crown of thorns and the nails on the cross. The purple passion fruit grows well in higher altitudes. The yellow fruit is more commonly known as the granadilla. This has larger fruit and higher yields but a more acid taste. It grows best in hot, low-lying areas.

Grafting purple passion fruit onto granadilla stock can prove very successful.

Plant breeders continue to produce new hybrids, though as yet these will not grow true to the parent plant, so can only be reproduced through grafting. The hybrid plants also sometimes need help with pollination of the flowers.

Raising seedlings

Seedlings can be grown in open beds but grow much better in small containers – usually plastic tubes, though tins, milk cartons and banana leaves can also make good containers. Containers should be 10cm in diameter and 20cm long. Fill them with good soil and plant several fresh seeds in each. Water regularly and cover with mulch until germination. Allow two or three seedlings to grow in each container. Plant out when 8–10 weeks old.



Grafting a shoot onto granadilla stock.

CUTTINGS from healthy shoots of particularly good plants can be made with a sharp blade. Cuttings should be about 15cm long with two or three leaf nodes. Cut off the lower leaf at the node. Plant cuttings firmly (about 5cm deep) into containers under shade and keep well watered for a month. Shading can then be removed.

GRAFTING uses strong seedlings of granadilla which are 20–30cm tall. Cut off the seedling, leaving a stump about 10cm high and make a 3cm cut into the top. Place into this a wedge-shaped shoot from a good quality, high-yielding variety. Cover the graft with plastic tape (cut up an old plastic bag) and keep the seedling under shade and well watered for one month. Remove shade and allow to grow for another one or two months before planting out.

Training young plants

Passion fruit grow best on trellises where they are well supported and planted 3m apart with 2m between the rows. At first the plants are trained up on stakes to produce what are called *leaders*. Allow two strong shoots to grow and remove all other shoots regularly. While the plants are growing, build the trellis system (see below).

Tangling like this encourages disease.



Cut off shoots before they reach the ground to prevent diseases. Never throw shoots which have trailed along the ground back over the wire. Over the seasons, regularly cut out weaker or diseased secondary shoots – but never the leader shoots. Cut back shoots which have finished producing fruit.



Harvesting

The plants will begin to produce fruit 8–20 months after planting out. Fruit is produced throughout the year, but there are usually peak times for harvesting. Plants will produce for 3–6 years. Often the highest yielding plants will die back first. When ripe, the fruit will fall to the ground where they can be picked up. The ground should be kept clear of weeds, though some low ground cover can help to avoid damaging the fruit.

The roots of passion fruit cover a very large area – up to 6m in diameter – and are often very near the surface of the soil. Even slight digging may cause damage. Planting low cover crops, such as cow peas, grass or lablab may be the best answer.

It is always best to let ripe fruit fall off. Picking the fruit means the juice is less sweet, the quality is reduced and wounds may be caused on the plant, leading to disease.



Photo: Isabel Carter

Diseases

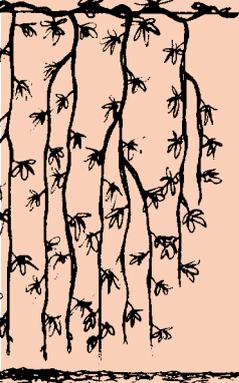
Most diseases result from wound damage. Sometimes diseases can be controlled by cutting away the infected parts.

Build a reputation!

Passion fruit is a cheap and easy crop to grow. Building the trellis system is the major effort or cost, but if done well will last many years. If you are wanting to try passion fruit, it is worth asking around for advice on the very best variety and paying a lot of money to buy one or two

excellent plants. Within a year or two you can have hundreds of young plants from the seeds of your first plants. Of course, you can also visit a market and select good fruit from which to plant seeds.

Why stop there? Continue to experiment with different varieties and try out grafting on a small scale. If you are successful, you may be able to sell grafted plants and build up a reputation. Consider forming a co-operative and trying to find a regular market to sell your crops – maybe to a local factory producing juice.

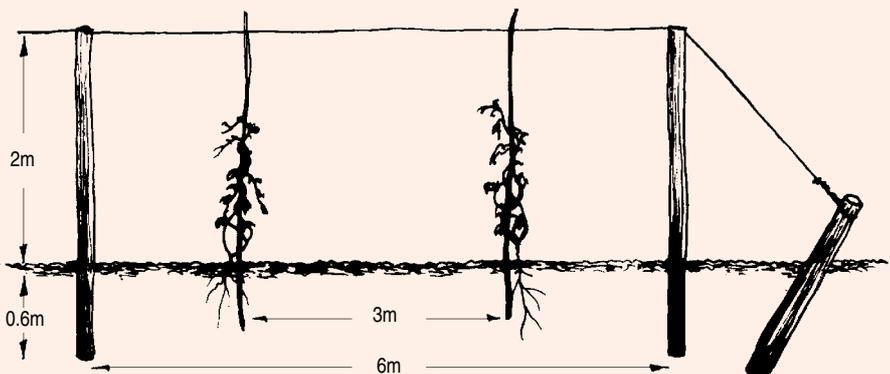


Once the leader shoots reach the wires they are allowed to grow along them. Secondary shoots will form and hang down, forming curtains of shoots. Try to keep these secondary shoots from becoming too tangled. Tight knots encourage diseases.

Building the trellis

It is common to see trellises which collapse due to termite damage after a year or two. Use good, strong timber which is either termite-resistant or treated with preservative.

Ideally, use stakes which are 20cm in diameter and 2.6–2.8m in length. Drive them 60cm into the ground and fasten fencing wire to them. There are various ways of anchoring the wire and rows or posts to keep them upright. Space the poles every 6m with two leader shoots between them.



The fire of AIDS

AN OLD MAN was speaking to the village elders about AIDS and told them a story...

One day a young mother, Philomena, was talking to other ladies in the village while they weaved baskets. She told them how her new baby was fascinated by the fire that burnt day and night in the middle of the floor in her home. He loved to see the sparks fly into the air and would try to crawl towards the dancing flames. Only that morning he had tried to pick up a glowing ember and cried when she pulled him away.

'We have to have the fire in our houses,' she said, 'but how did you teach your children to avoid getting burnt and to use it safely?'

One lady said, 'Children have to learn by experience. I let my son find out by himself. He soon found out that fire burns – and he never went near the fire again.'

'Yes,' thought Philomena, 'your boy's hands are so deformed he cannot hold a spade or a pencil. I don't want my son to be like that.'

Then a second lady said, 'No – children must be taught to fear the fire. I drew a circle round the fire in the dust and told my children I would beat them if they put a hand over the line.'

'But your daughters are quite big now and cannot cook the porridge,' thought Philomena. 'I don't want my children to be like that.'

A third lady said, 'No – children have to learn to use the fire safely and experience its blessings. I, too,

made certain rules and told them if they disobeyed them I would punish them severely.'

'Yes,' thought Philomena, 'it was your son who made one little mistake and was burnt in the house because he was afraid of being punished if he called for help. I do not want my child to be like that.'

Then the wife of the chief spoke and said, 'Yes – fire is a very wonderful thing and we cannot live without it. It cooks our food, it scares wild animals and warms our bodies. But it is also hungry for fuel and burns anything it can. It will harm us if we do not use it properly. It can be a gentle friend, or a destroying giant when out of control. So I taught my children how to make fires, how to use them and what to do if they made mistakes and something caught alight. I also told them never to be afraid of asking for

help if they made a mistake, because though I might be angry, I would not beat them and did not want them to get hurt.'

'Yes,' said Philomena, 'it was your children who pulled a baby out of a fire one day. That is what I shall do. I shall teach my children that fire is wonderful, but also dangerous. I will help them understand and slowly teach them how to use it safely.'

'Ah,' said the chief, who had been listening all the time, 'that is very sensible. I have lived a long time and know that young people will experiment and play. But if we teach our children properly, the whole community will benefit and not be at risk.'

When the story was over, the people discussed it for a time and then asked the teacher to explain what the story meant, and this is what he said...

The sexual urge is like a fire – given by God for our pleasure and for our use. Because of this urge, men and women join together to have children. The urge is very strong and, like fire, can be both a wonderful comfort or a destroying force that can tear a family apart or cause men and women to kill one another in jealousy. It can hold men and women together or bring disease and death. That is why every society has rules about how to use it – tribal rules, Moslem rules, Hindu rules, Buddhist rules and Christian rules – all trying to help us use this gift from God well.

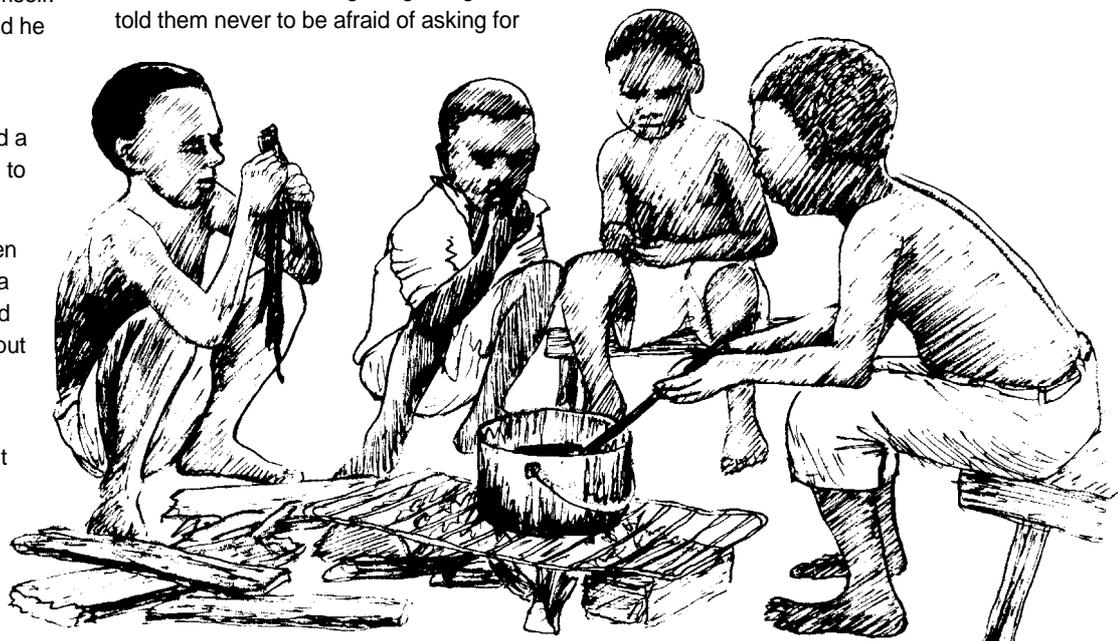


Photo: Richard Hanson, Tear Fund



We cannot just allow our young people to learn from experience. They will pay for that experience with their lives.

Nearly all of them say that the gift of sex should only be used after some sort of legal agreement between families. There should be a public declaration so that everyone in the society knows that this man and woman belong to one another. Most societies expect the girl to be a virgin, and are much quicker to condemn the girl who makes a mistake than a boy who 'gets experience'.

Our Christian way is very clear. We believe God teaches that the gift of sex should only be enjoyed within a marriage relationship. It should not be used before marriage or with other partners outside it. This is the ideal way because young people cannot bring disease into the marriage. However, we know that we **do** make mistakes and there is always a way of forgiveness.

Now AIDS has come among us and is like the wind suddenly blowing the fire and turning a small mistake into a killing blaze. We pass it from one person to another by mis-using God's gift. We go with just one person and find that we have condemned ourselves to death.

We cannot be like the first lady and just allow our young people to learn from experience. They will pay for that experience with their lives. If we are like the second lady and do not explain things or discuss the problem, they will not understand and take needless risks. Even the third lady, who tried to explain a little, relied on threats and fear.

Like the chief and his wife, we must explain the dangers and allow our people to make their own decisions and to use the gift of sex

'The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light.'

ROMANS 13:12

wisely. A fire can be started by anyone and lead to many innocent people burning. This is why we Christians have the responsibility of teaching things like 'safer sex' which we might not agree with ourselves but can help those outside the church to avoid infection.

Jesus moved with prostitutes and sinners and always responded to both sin and disease with love and compassion – so must we!

Discussion Questions

- What traditional customs can affect the transmission of HIV infection? Are there any ways in which these customs can be changed?
(Answers might include polygamy, polyandry and matrimonial inheritance and prostitution.)
- What are the two main ways in which AIDS is transmitted?
(Sexual intercourse accounts for nearly all cases of HIV infection in Africa, with transmission through blood – circumcision, tattoos, blood pacts and cuts – responsible for about 5%.)
- Is it best for parents, teachers or church leaders to teach young people about sex?
- What kind of preparation or training might be available?
(If there is none, would it help for people to join together and discuss the issues before talking with their children?)

With thanks to Dr Alexandre Saúl of AEA, Angola, for initiating these discussion questions.

AIDS Resource Materials

STEPPING STONES

This is an exciting new training package with 240 page manual and video developed by Action Aid. It is very helpful in encouraging people of all ages to express their feelings and learn about AIDS through discussion and role-play (though it does not have a Christian perspective). The video is available in English, French, Luganda and Kiswahili and the manual only in English and French. The full package is approximately \$150, but could be shared widely in churches and organisations. For more information contact one of the following...

TALC, PO Box 49, St Albans, AL1 4AX, UK
Stepping Stones, PO Box 676, Kampala, Uganda

STRATEGIES FOR HOPE

The *Strategies for Hope* series now has 11 booklets in the series with most titles available in French and English. These booklets are free to groups working in sub-saharan Africa. Details from TALC (above).

Other useful contacts for training materials and the *Strategies for Hope* booklets:

AMREF, PO Box 30125, Nairobi

AMREF Uganda, PO Box 51, Entebbe, Uganda

AMREF Tanzania, PO Box 2773, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

Natural Family Spacing

Issue 27 on population prompted several responses, especially from people who felt *Footsteps* had not given enough encouragement to natural family spacing methods. From a medical point of view these methods have a higher risk of pregnancy and involve great commitment on the part of both husband and wife. However, with proper training and commitment they can prove satisfactory in many situations, especially for spacing births. Here is a useful and practical contribution from Evelyne Maire.

I AM PARTICULARLY INTERESTED in the topic of family spacing and would like to make some observations about Issue 27 which tackles these issues. Though you mention natural methods of spacing births, you say little about them and mention them as unreliable.

Many associations in developing countries are working effectively to promote these methods which have proved well accepted by thousands of couples. One of the advantages of natural methods is that helping women to understand what is happening in their bodies gives them more confidence in themselves. It allows parents either to choose the timing of a baby or to delay the arrival of a wanted child. Couples become more responsible and independent in managing their fertility.

Life, fertility and maternity are some of the highest values in the African traditional world view. By valuing these aspects and using their knowledge of natural body processes, this can link scientific knowledge with African traditional knowledge. By training couples to talk together about these issues, to respect each other and to be in control of themselves, we encourage them to understand their bodies. These are steps which help couples to respect and wonder at God's creation and one of his greatest gifts – the gift of life.

This method has shown itself to be reliable when correctly taught to many couples and practised with care. Full

'I will praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.' PSALM 139:14

A normal cycle...

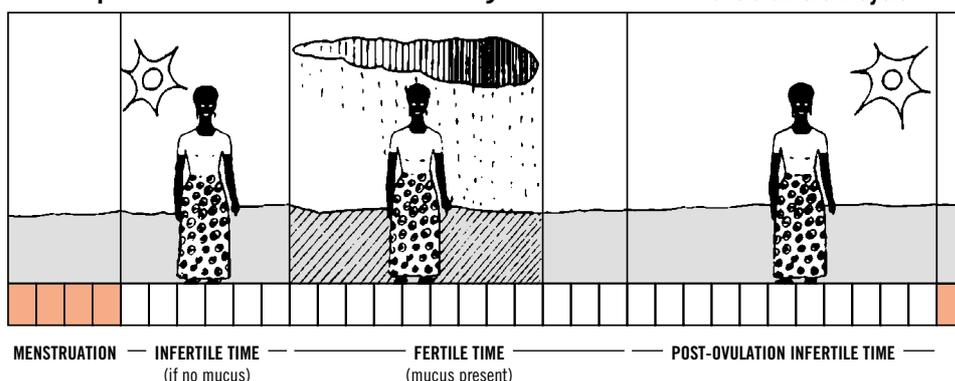
Menstruation is the time when the woman's body loses the lining of the womb. The feminine cycle begins on Day 1 with the loss of this lining or blood (which tells a woman she is not pregnant). This bleeding usually lasts for 4–6 days.

Possible Infertile Time For some women there is a time just after menstruation when 'nothing happens'. An egg is not yet maturing in the ovary – it is a period of rest. The neck of the womb is closed, sealed by a mucus plug which makes it hard for sperm to enter. The sign of this time is the feeling of dryness. The length of this time is very variable.

Fertile Time During this time an egg matures in the ovary until it is released on the day of ovulation. The neck of the womb

Example chart: one woman's cycle

NOTE: Every woman will have a different cycle



understanding of a woman's fertility requires careful training. In this article we can only give an idea of what is involved. We do recommend that readers request full training before using this method.

A time for everything

If we observe nature we see that there is a time to sow the fields. It would not usually be during the dry season. For a woman, there is also a time during her cycle to give life. This could be compared to the rainy season. A woman who is aware of what happens in her body, will notice different signs. There will be times when she feels 'dry' (at the vulva) and times when she feels 'wet' with secretions coming from the vulva. This is her fertile period when she can give life. The cycle of a woman alternates fertile and infertile times, each with specific signs that can be observed. (BE CAREFUL: this method is not a matter of using calculations but of day-to-day observations.)

remains open and the mucus secretions are moist, stretchy and helpful to sperm, allowing them to live for several days (until ovulation day).

Post-ovulation Infertile Time Once the egg is released the body waits for about 2 weeks for a signal to show whether or not the egg has been fertilised. The neck of the womb will be closed, become hard and change position. The mucus will form like a plug. The body's usual temperature rises slightly. The sign of the time is a feeling of dryness, no mucus and the difference in temperature which will remain high and stable. Once the beginning of this time is clearly identified, this is a much 'safer' time for parents who definitely want to delay a pregnancy, than the earlier possible infertile time.

If an egg is not fertilised, the body temperature will go down after 12–14 days, menstruation will occur and the cycle begins again. If an egg is fertilised then menstruation will not happen as the egg

has implanted in the womb. A new life has started. The temperature remains 'high'.

Waiting Time For the first 3 'dry' days after the fertile time, it is still possible for the egg to survive and be fertilised.

Recognising the signs

In order to recognise the fertile and infertile times of the cycle, the couple have to look out for three main signs:

1 Mucus secretions Just as wet weather is needed for planting seeds in the fields, so secretion of mucus (which is a special kind of secretion, very easily recognisable from other kinds of secretions) show a woman she is at her fertile time.

2 Changes in temperature The small change in temperature indicates the beginning of the infertile period. These changes are so small they can only be measured with a thermometer.

3 Variations in the position of the neck of the womb If the neck of the womb is hard and low and there is no secretion, this indicates an infertile period. If the neck of the womb is soft and high and there are secretions, this indicates a fertile period.

It takes training, time and experience to correctly 'read' all the signs of a woman's body. After several months of recording details of the cycle, couples should feel more confident of understanding the fertile and infertile periods. If a couple do not want a child, they should refrain completely from intercourse from the beginning of the fertile period to three days after the end of the fertile period.

These methods will only work once couples have reached an understanding and are in complete agreement.

Below are some useful contact addresses for further information and how to obtain full training in these methods.

CONTACT ADDRESSES FOR INFORMATION AND TRAINING

E: English
F: French
S: Spanish
P: Portuguese

Evelyne Maire
Chardon
26160 Le Poët-Laval
France

E Family Life Counselling
Association
PO Box 18077
Nairobi

E Family Life Movement
PO Box 50796
Lusaka
Zambia

E F Action Familiale
Royal Road
Rose Hill
Mauritius

F Pastorale Familiale
01 BP 149
Bobo Dioulasso
Burkina Faso

F Association Education à la
Maîtrise de la Fécondité
BP 335
Bangui
République Centrafricaine

F PROVIFA
BP 525
Abidjan 12
Ivory Coast

P CENPLAFAM
Ave Bernadino de
Campos 110
04004 n São-Paulo
Brazil

S CENPAVA
Avenue 28
37-21 Bogotá
Colombia

Drama for communication

by B Mounkoro

DRAMA CAN BE A VERY VALUABLE TOOL to encourage participatory learning. When used with a community in Mali, through a development programme, it was found the villagers' sketches expressed certain problems which stopped people participating in development work.

In one drama the actors showed forestry workers setting the jungle on fire and then accusing the villagers of this act and fining them. But they are caught in the act, reported and dismissed. Such a suggestion would be very hard to make in a meeting, but was much easier to share as a story in drama. Discussions after the drama showed that it had not been based on fact, but on rumours. As a result, the forestry service took the matter seriously and after useful discussions, new written agreements were made between themselves and local villagers.

People meeting with a development service often hold back from saying things, for fear of losing favour or looking bad. In drama, actors can share messages without having to go into all the details. This process is particularly useful if there are discussions afterwards. In one village, women said that drama had helped them to have open discussions with men.

A drama was developed to explore why participation in anti-erosion work had reduced. In meetings, villagers seemed in favour of the work. However, through drama it became clear that they felt they did not really 'own' the work. They had joined in, expecting rewards from a tree-planting competition. When this did not happen people began to lose interest and changed their activities to earn a little money instead. This was a complete surprise to the development organisation.

Another important point that emerged from watching many such dramas, was that people preferred to choose themes dealing with social issues such as family security, village harmony, rural exodus, polygamy and care of orphans. Organisations, on the other hand, see their work as providing a path for communities to improve their situation through adopting better technologies such as tree nurseries, protecting drinking water, more soil erosion control and more income-generating activities.

Drama can provide a situation where ordinary people can feel at ease in sharing their true feelings, laying a basis for understanding their motivation and concerns by development organisations.

Adapted from an article by B Mounkoro in Echos du COTA, June 1996.

Evelyne Maire and her husband spent 25 years working in Africa in various ministries (including with Service d'Entraide et de Liaison, Tear Fund). She is now working as a medical research assistant in France.

E-mail: cdmaire@siam@cal.fr



Photo: Mike Webb, Tear Fund

Life on the streets

WORKING WITH STREET CHILDREN

Community values

IN MANY CITIES AND TOWNS streets are increasingly becoming homes for countless children.

Insecurity, AIDS, poverty and other factors push many African children onto the streets, but the breakdown of the extended family structure and the related decline in religious and cultural morals make the situation much worse.

Traditional African education gave young people values of respect, hard work and good behaviour. Religious education used to be a must at home and school for every child. The traditions and religious beliefs that guaranteed faithful marriages are steadily disappearing.

Bringing up a child used to be a collective responsibility for the whole community. Anyone would discipline a naughty child. Today the responsibility to discipline a neighbour's child has gone.

The extended family used to be morally obliged to care for orphans. Today, however, economic pressures, selfishness and individual rights have robbed African society of much of the hospitality and sympathy that Africans held so dear.

Children are a gift from God. They are the leaders of tomorrow. If they are on the streets today, tomorrow our leaders may hold street values and morals.

Sent in by Jjuko D Robert, AEC, Box 2056, Jinja, Uganda.

Awareness-raising

THERE IS A HUGE NEED to raise awareness of the needs of street children. I offer the following suggestions...

Governments should:

- make sound policies to reduce the gap between rich and poor

Non-Government Organisations should:

- enable children to participate in determining their own goals and grassroots development
- become involved in practical ways of problem-solving with street children.

Film makers and artists can do a great deal to raise people's awareness.

Parents can try to solve problems before they become serious:

- make home life interesting and have fun with their children

- talk with children about their interests
- be tolerant of harmless hang-ups
- build up their children's self confidence and assure them of their potential in life
- encourage them to join in church or youth camps.

*Bomnsa Thaddeus Jini
Resource Management Consultants
PO Box 2185
Bamenda
Cameroon*

Talented Tigers

In Kampala, Uganda, over 100 street boys meet to play football each week on a make-shift pitch. They call themselves the Tigers' Club. Amazingly, they have organised themselves and entered national youth competitions and won!

Their success has not gone unnoticed. A local church is now helping them with meals and a nurse is providing medical care.

A small success story to bring encouragement to those working with street children.

Source: Jubilee Action

Children are a gift from God and tomorrow's leaders.

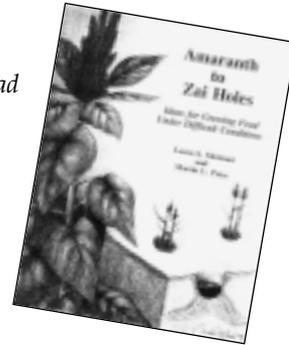
Amaranth to Zai Holes: Ideas for growing food under difficult conditions

by Laura Meitzner and Martin Price

This 400 page book is a compilation of all the information from *ECHO Development Notes* over 15 years. Material has been re-ordered and expanded. It provides an excellent source of information on all kinds of subjects, including staple crops, agroforestry, pest control, seeds, animals and food science.

For readers in developing countries it costs US \$25 surface post and US \$35 airmail. For readers in developed countries it costs US \$35 surface post and US \$51 airmail.

Please order from
ECHO
17430 Durrance Road
North Fort Myers
FL 33917-2200
USA



Where There is no Artist Development drawings and how to use them

by Petra Röhr-Rouendaal

Visual aids can help provide information, encourage discussion and discovery and make difficult ideas easier to understand. Pictures help make books and posters more accessible, simply by making them look more interesting.

This new book contains more than 500 drawings on a wide range of educational and health issues all of which are copyright free. There is an introduction which gives good practical advice on how to use pictures, how to enlarge them, change them and how to use them in all kinds of different ways – posters, comic strips, games, flannel boards, etc. Another chapter gives help, advice and tips to the many who say, 'but I can't draw...'

A very useful book for all who use visual aids in their work. Highly recommended. It can be ordered from IT Publications and costs £16.00



including air-speeded postage, (£15.55 in Europe).

IT Bookshop
103–105 Southampton Row
London
WC1B 4HH
UK



People Give To People: Guides to successful fundraising

The Developing Countries Farm Radio Network (DCFRN) has obtained support to produce a series of six booklets for agencies in Eastern Europe, Asia, Latin America, Africa, and the Caribbean who want to begin or improve their fundraising programmes. The booklets will be flexible, easy to use and revise, and economical. They will be available in English, Spanish, and French at very low cost.

Elizabeth Wilson is looking for case studies of fundraising successes and failures, anecdotes, good quotes about fundraising, and organizations who are interested in increasing funding worldwide. There will be a small payment in US dollars for any original case study or anecdote that appears in the booklets. If you can help please contact:

Elizabeth Wilson
31 Baldwin Street
Port Hope
Ontario
Canada
L1A 1S3

E-mail: ewilson@eagle.ca

Oasis Counselling Centre

Oasis Counselling Centre run a number of useful seminars. Subjects to be covered include Trauma Counselling, Leadership Training, Gender in Development and Youth Counselling. Courses are held in Nairobi, Kenya and Kigali, Rwanda and are open to all. Please write for more details to:

Oasis Counselling Centre
PO Box 76117
Nairobi
Kenya

Natural Resources Institute

A number of useful materials are printed by this institute, some shown below. Many are aimed at researchers, but some are of particular interest to grassroots development workers. Educational groups, research institutions and non-profit-making organisations in countries receiving British aid can apply for a free single copy. Write, using your official title (not name), to:

NRI
Central Avenue
Chatham Maritime
Kent
ME4 4TB
UK



Crop Production Workbook for Arid and Semi-Arid Lands

by V Gibberd

This book is designed for easy use in the field by extension workers, teachers and development workers. It looks at the work of one of the first farmer-participatory applied research projects based in a semi-arid area of Kenya.

It looks at time of planting, soil fertility and moisture, pests, soil conservation and useful tools, comparing farmers' findings with official recommendations.

It has useful practical tips on how to run trials and how to set up an adaptive research programme.

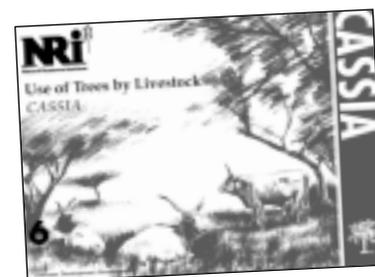
Available from NRI at £10 each (unless you qualify for a free copy – see above).

Use of Trees by Livestock

A series of six booklets, looking at the importance of trees and shrubs for feeding livestock in the tropics, especially in drier areas. Each booklet looks in detail at the characteristics of one genus, with recommendations on their growth, use and management. The series includes:

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Prosopis | 4 Anti-nutritive factors |
| 2 Acacia | 5 Quercus |
| 3 Gliricidia | 6 Cassia |

Available from NRI at £2 each (unless you qualify for a free copy – see above).



BIBLE STUDY

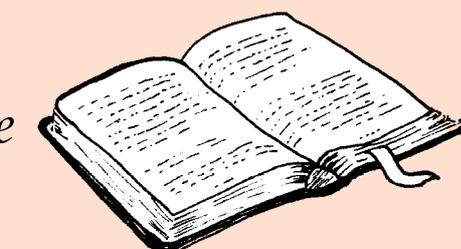
The Principle of Jubilee

by Isabel Carter

Read Leviticus 25:8-31

Leviticus is the third book of the Old Testament and it provides guidelines for our relationship with God and our neighbours. Chapter 25 talks of two major festivals – the *Sabbath year* when land was left fallow to rest every seventh year, and the *Jubilee year*, every fiftieth year.

The Jubilee was God's answer to long-term poverty. People become poor for all kinds of reasons; they struggle to improve their situation. However, the Jubilee allowed for a new beginning in every generation. For people caught in the poverty trap, it gave hope and new opportunities as land was restored to its original owners, debts were cancelled and slaves set free. Land, slaves



and loans were all to be valued-based on their nearness to the Jubilee year.

No-one is sure if the radical principle of the Jubilee year was ever carried out. Today many people want the new millennium, the year 2000, to be celebrated as a Jubilee year (see p 16).

- What are the differences between God's answer to poverty and the world's answer?
- What do you see as the main benefits of a Jubilee year?
- What would be the main difficulties in actually carrying out the Jubilee principle?
- Read page 16, pray for the Jubilee 2000 movement and consider your involvement.

A fresh start for a new millennium

MENTION THIRD WORLD DEBT to most people and a puzzled look appears. Mention lack of funding for health clinics and schools and most people would agree and want to add their own experiences. However, in most Third World countries the two are closely linked.

How it began

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, when richer nations were keen to lend money at good interest rates, the governments of many Third World countries took out loans. The money was used to build roads, hospitals, government buildings, dams and – all too often – weapons.

For a few years everyone was happy. Then two things happened which sent the debt crisis spiralling out of control. Prices for many of the goods exported by Third World countries, such as cotton, coffee, copper, rubber and tea dropped sharply. Interest rates soared all around the world. Loans which had been reasonably easy to repay suddenly became huge burdens to governments now lacking foreign exchange. Repayments could not be met in full and the debt burdens began to build...

Debt in the 1990s

Today the situation has become worse. Many governments are forced to spend far more on debt repayments than on providing health care and education for their people. For example, Africa now spends four times more on interest on its loans than on health care.

Governments don't like to talk much about the issue either in the lending or borrowing countries – for both it has become an embarrassment. Ordinary people find the situation quite complicated to understand – debts have been sold on to all kinds of banks and companies. But the simple truth is that Third World debt has become a kind of slavery, depriving millions of their rights to health care and education.

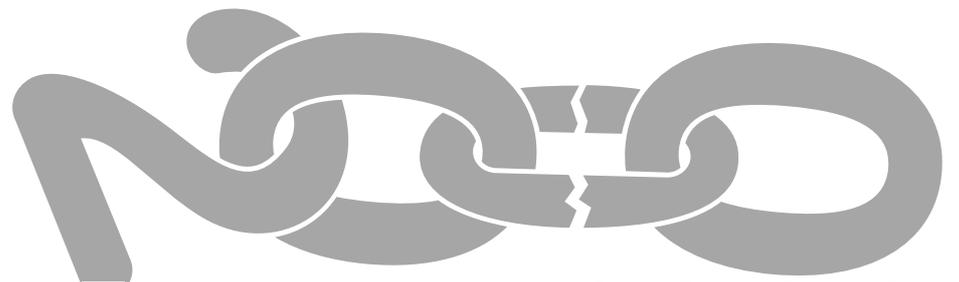
What can be done?

One group – of which the Editor of *Footsteps* is a founder member – believes it



Photo: Richard Hanson, Tear Fund

Growing debt repayments mean that many Third World governments now have far less to spend on education.



JUBILEE 2000

A debt-free start for a billion people

has a solution. Jubilee 2000 is asking for the beginning of the new millennium to be a time when the backlog of the unpayable Third World debt is cancelled. They have a detailed charter with conditions for all kinds of situations.

Many economists and business people believe this is a business-like approach to solving an awkward situation. Caring people believe this is a moral solution to an impossible situation. Many Christians believe this to be prophetic and in line with God's purpose to celebrate the new millennium as a year of Jubilee.

This campaign will only achieve its aims through massive public awareness and action. Already, many groups in Europe are taking action. Tear Fund and CAFOD are among the first to launch awareness campaigns with their supporters. This will be a theme of next year's Anglican Lambeth Conference and the World Council of Churches 200th celebrations.

What can you do?

- Talk about these issues with friends. Raise them with church leaders.
- Study the biblical teaching on Jubilee in Leviticus 25 and pray for the campaign.

- Write to your government representative, asking them to request debt cancellation in the year 2000.

- Find out more about the situation in your own country.

Jubilee 2000 is launching a worldwide petition asking for the cancellation of debts and for a fresh start to celebrate the new millennium. A copy is enclosed for you to ask friends to sign. Ask for more, when you post back the completed petition. Jubilee 2000 would like to see a network of action groups in every country. If you could help, please write to:

Jubilee 2000
PO Box 100
London
SE1 7RT

E-mail: j2000@gn.apc.org

Published by



CHRISTIAN CONCERN IN A WORLD OF NEED

100 Church Road, Teddington, TW11 8QE, UK

Editor: Isabel Carter, 83 Market Place, South Cave, Brough, East Yorkshire, HU15 2AS, UK