



Equal rights

Access to justice in Peru

by Ruth Alvarado and Alfonso Wieland

Paz y Esperanza (Peace and Hope) is a Christian organisation in Peru that promotes social justice by defending the human rights of individuals and communities that are marginalised, or have no access to justice.

Peace and Hope believes that because all people are created in the image of God, everyone has an equal worth. This must be defended and promoted. All people should therefore have equal rights, but often this is not a reality for those who are poor. Access to justice through the formal legal system can be difficult for poor people for many reasons:

- lack of economic resources
- corruption
- bureaucracy
- geographic isolation
- limited education and literacy

- lack of awareness of human rights
- lack of knowledge of how to use these rights within the system
- lack of understanding of official language
- fear and lack of trust in the justice system.

All people are created in the image of God, and all have equal worth

Poverty is not the only barrier to equality. There are many examples of injustice in our society. The legal system often treats people differently according to their social status, or whether they are men or women. The Bible presents another way of seeing life. God gives equal value and attention to all people – men, women and children, of all races and social groups. This equality and respect for differences should underlie all social relationships.

Systems and inequality

However, people experience the world in very different and often unequal ways. The situation of indigenous people in Peru is particularly difficult as they constantly suffer racial and social discrimination from the legal system and the State.

Children often have little access to legal justice. There are not enough officials trained to investigate child abuse crimes, or enough care centres and resources to help children at risk.



Photo Peter Clark

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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.

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Tearfund is an evangelical Christian relief and development agency working through local partners to bring help and hope to communities in need around the world.

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Photo Peter Clark

God gives equal value to all people – men and women, of all races, ages and social groups.

Sexual discrimination can also be seen, for example in the negative behaviour of the police and people within the legal system towards women who approach them for help. This gender inequality is reflected across society, as generally our culture tolerates domestic violence. We must not close our eyes to such injustice.

Peace and Hope provides legal, pastoral and psychological support for

victims of violence within the family, particularly women and children.

Justice for all

The work of Peace and Hope is based on the biblical concept of justice. We understand this to mean making human rights possible for all, as well as restoring good relationships between God, his people and creation. We believe that biblical justice demands the defence of the poor, as they are at a disadvantage and often defenceless in society. Working for justice means building a society which affirms the rights and responsibilities of all people.

Peace and Hope works to help change institutions and legal systems that go against human rights. In this way it hopes to improve the administration of justice in Peru.

It is important that justice is defended and promoted nationally through the creation or reform of laws. But we need to go further than this – the laws must actually be respected in practice or they are meaningless. Peace and Hope also help educate communities about their rights. We empower them to be able to take action to challenge unjust systems and practices in the State and to lobby for their rights.

In our advocacy work we use public campaigns, education and research.

CASE STUDY Rosa's story

In many areas of Peru, children born outside marriage may remain without a surname if the father denies paternity. This causes serious problems later, making it difficult for the child to be enrolled in school or have access to the funds that a father should legally provide. In addition, when such children come of age they cannot get an identity card and are therefore excluded from the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

One of the people Peace and Hope has supported is Rosa Ayala. She is a single mother aged 38 who lives in the Alto Mayo region of Peru. She brought charges against the father of her youngest son so that he might have his father's surname. Rosa received legal, spiritual and emotional support from Peace and Hope. With Rosa's agreement, Peace and Hope used the case to raise public awareness about this issue through local media.

Finally, Rosa won her case. Her son, Pedro, now has his father's surname and legal status. The case set a new legal example in the Alto Mayo region, since it was the first to be won without requiring a DNA examination. In an interview, Rosa said: 'The lawyers I hired before did nothing at all. My ex-husband talked with them and paid them off. After that they took his side. When I came to Peace and Hope, I knew that people had rights, but I did not know how to claim them for myself. It was very hard for me to expose myself to the media and to talk about my situation and say things in front of others that concerned my private life. I am grateful to God for all that now.'

We work through networks, with the media, and by lobbying authorities directly. We educate people within the legal and social systems about human rights issues.

Peace and Hope also offers free legal help for people or communities who are victims of human rights abuse, to make sure that they have good quality legal representation.

We work to increase access to justice within poor communities by increasing their access to information, giving them a voice in local government

and making sure the legal system is accountable and accessible to all.

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Photo Peter Clark

From needs-based to rights-based approaches

Many organisations now use 'rights-based approaches' to development. These approaches hold institutions and powerful people accountable for their responsibilities to those with less power. Rights-based approaches differ from 'needs-based' or 'welfare' approaches that create dependency on development agencies. They use participatory and empowering approaches and start by identifying violations of human rights rather than focusing on human needs.

Becoming aware of rights

Internationally agreed human rights are legally binding agreements between states. They define their duties and obligations towards their citizens. They provide a sound legal basis for advocacy work at international and national levels, and a practical framework for programme planning. Rights-based approaches strengthen the ability of vulnerable groups to address the root causes of poverty and to claim civil, political, social and economic resources to meet their needs and to live with dignity. These resources are recognised as their human rights by international treaties.

Because of their vulnerability and lack of power, children have their own set of rights. These are laid out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, (CRC) www.unhcr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm. Increasingly, government

ministries are using a children's rights framework to guide policy and practice and to monitor children's wellbeing. In Colombia, for example, the Ministry for Social Welfare bases its policy and programming on the CRC and holds NGOs accountable in upholding children's rights.

Children's rights are helpful for bringing justice, services and protection to children. They provide a common basis for NGOs, churches and government authorities to work together to improve children's lives.

Christian motivation

Many Christian organisations work in difficult environments – situations where human rights abuses take place on a daily basis. Several come to mind: freedom of religion, the right to participate in the political process, freedom to meet together and the right to education. Christian organisations

need to be fully aware of human rights, but with a distinctly Christian perspective. Christians and the church may be called to accept injustice and violation of rights against themselves but at the same time to be committed to actively seeking justice and upholding other people's rights. It is a motivation of love rather than law (Christopher Wright, *Human Rights: A Study in Biblical Themes*, Grove Booklet No 31 on ethics, 1979).

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CASE STUDY

Jessica, aged 14, explained how she learned about her rights as a member of a Children's Network in Colombia. She lives in a community displaced by the civil conflict. However, she recognises that she and the other children can lobby the government to address their rights to education, health, protection and peace. Jessica and some of her friends marched in Bogotá to protest about some of these issues. A local TV channel interviewed them. It may be a small beginning, but the children now feel empowered and respected. They are hopeful that they can change things for the benefit of their community.



Editorial

The Bible tells us that God created all men and women with equal value and that we should love our neighbour as ourselves. The UN Declaration of Human Rights says that all people have equal rights, no matter what their gender, race, nationality, religion, politics, opinions or social status. And yet when we look at our world today we can see so much injustice, discrimination, violence and suffering caused because people do not respect the rights of others.

It is easy to feel angry and sad at the injustice in the world, but harder to find practical solutions to the problem. In this issue we look at some of the ways people are addressing problems in their communities, and advocating for their rights.

The people who suffer most are usually the poor and marginalised, who may have no access to formal justice systems. Unequal power relations in society mean that women and children across the world are often denied even their basic human rights to equality and freedom from harm.

God calls us all to speak up for the rights of the poor and oppressed. I hope this issue will challenge and encourage readers to work together to recognise and address injustice.

I hope you like the new design of *Footsteps*. Future issues will look at urban renewal, and reconciliation.

Maggie

Maggie Sandilands
Sub Editor

Restoring hope

by Baliesima Kadukima Albert

Gender-based violence (GBV) is violence, sexual or otherwise, that is due to gender inequalities. It is recognised as a human rights abuse. Women and girls are the main victims, as gender-based violence is rooted in traditionally unequal power relationships in society, although boys and men are also targets of sexual violence. It is particularly common during armed conflict, where it is often used deliberately as a weapon of war, and in post-conflict situations.

Gender-based violence is a violation of a woman's right to equality and freedom from harm. It undermines achievement of the Millennium Development Goals on gender equality and women's empowerment.

There has been conflict between different armed groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) for nearly ten years, and this has left deep scars in society. About 3.5 million people have died as a result of the conflict, large numbers of people have been displaced and there is poverty and malnutrition. The problem of rape and sexual violence is widespread. This has also contributed to the rapid spread of HIV. The effects of both violence and HIV and AIDS are not just physical, but psychological and social too.

La Province de l'Église Anglicane du Congo – PEAC (the Anglican Church

of Congo) has eight dioceses in DRC. It seeks to serve God by contributing to the fight against HIV and AIDS, and trying to restore hope among people who have suffered so much through the conflict. PEAC understands that if the church is to be a source of hope that people can trust, then we must demonstrate the love of God in practical ways. For example, PEAC works with women who have been raped.

Some of the activities that PEAC organise include:

Raising awareness – raising women's awareness of the issues surrounding



Photo Marcus Perkins Tearfund

Men and women should be able to live and work together without threat of violence.

rape, to encourage women to report cases. Many women are afraid to speak up because they fear social rejection, and that their husbands will abandon them. Young girls, often encouraged by their parents, prefer to stay silent because they fear that otherwise they will not be able to find a marriage partner. It is important to raise awareness among men and the older generation to punish rapists and not to reject raped women.

Providing medical help – helping women obtain medical help to prevent sexually-transmitted diseases, including HIV and AIDS. It is important to take anti-retroviral drugs within three days of the rape for them to be most effective. However, fear of stigma means that many women hesitate to come forward. There is also the problem of enabling women in remote rural areas to receive help in time.

Providing prayer and counselling – regular prayer and counselling sessions are provided by trained female counsellors. It is important that the counsellors are women, as many women who have been raped find it easier to share their feelings and talk to another woman.

Income-generating activities – practical training in various income-

generating activities can give the women a new focus and self-reliance to help them get through their trauma.

Making progress

PEAC has found many difficulties in this work, particularly the social discrimination faced by women who have been raped. Husbands will often reject their wives, as if it were their fault. In a country where armed men can do as they want and where the justice system is corrupt, many attackers are never punished for rape. It is important to increase awareness of the problems and mobilise communities to prevent these attacks, condemn the attackers and to look after women who have suffered violence. Women also need training to advocate against sexual violence.

Despite these problems, most of the women we work with find relief and comfort in counselling. They value the support and the opportunity to express their worries, and they gain peace and hope to live positively.



Photo Marcus Perkins Tearfund

In emergency situations women and children are particularly vulnerable.

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CASE STUDIES

One girl who came to us was an 18 year old student who had been raped by a neighbour. She only came forward several months afterwards when this man died of AIDS. Unfortunately, she also tested positive for HIV. When she came she was suicidal and felt worthless, but regular counselling has helped her regain confidence and hope.

Another case was a 35 year old teacher who had been raped on her way back from market by a group of men. Because of her shame and fear of social discrimination she had decided to leave her home and return to live with her parents, but after counselling sessions along with her husband, they have decided to continue their life together.

> Reducing the risk of sexual violence in emergencies

- Design and locate camps for refugees or internally displaced people in consultation with refugees and displaced people to increase physical security.
- Ensure that public water points, latrines and other facilities (schools, health posts) are located in secure areas and within easy walking distance of people's shelters.
- Where possible, assist each family to have its own latrine, and provide tools and materials for this.
- Public sanitary facilities for men and women should be separate, especially for bathing.
- Ensure there are women health staff, security staff and interpreters.
- Include women in the distribution of shelter, food and other supplies.
- Provide clothing and sanitary packs for girls and women.
- Provide fuel-efficient stoves to reduce the need for firewood, as women are vulnerable when they go to collect firewood.
- Include women in camp decision-making processes about health, sanitation, reproductive health and food distribution.
- Ensure communities are informed about the services available for survivors of violence, such as emergency medical help. Identify those who are particularly at risk such as orphans and single female-headed households.
- Identify, train and support community-based support workers to prevent, recognise and respond to gender-based violence, to provide emotional support, information, referral and advocacy.
- Train women in their rights, such as refugee status.
- Develop support groups for survivors of gender-based violence and their families.

Adapted from Protecting the Future: HIV Prevention, Care and Support Among Displaced and War-Affected Populations, IRC, Kumarian Press, 2003.

The UN Declaration of Human Rights

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares that all people have the same equal and undeniable rights, no matter what their gender, race, nationality, religion, politics, opinions or social status.

The Declaration states that recognition and understanding of these rights is the basis of good relations between people, communities and nations. This promotes peace, justice, freedom and social progress for all. Not respecting these rights leads to suffering and injustice.

Rights and responsibilities

The Declaration says that everyone is entitled to live within a society that realises these rights and freedoms. To make this a reality, everyone –

individuals, churches, communities and governments – has a responsibility to uphold these rights and freedoms for others.

The Declaration was signed by all the member states of the United Nations on 10 December 1948. The Declaration is not a legal document, but is a common international agreement about what are the fundamental rights of all people. By signing the Declaration, governments have committed to govern in justice and compassion and to treat their citizens according to these basic principles.

Human rights and law

The Declaration itself is not legally binding. International UN agreements have since been drawn up which transform the principles of the Declaration into international law. There are specific groups that monitor how these agreements are put into practice.

At a regional level the African Union, Organisation of American States, and Council of Europe have translated the principles of human rights into regional legally binding agreements. Each agreement has an associated court before which cases can be brought, but only if the country has first signed up to the appropriate agreement. Even then, the person bringing the case cannot appeal to this level until they have first been through the legal system in their own country. Those who have suffered human rights abuses should seek advice from reliable human rights lawyers or NGOs within their own country.

Raising awareness

International and national advocacy groups have formed to publicly lobby



Photo Jim Loring Tearfund

Many people lack access to justice.

for change when governments abuse the human rights of citizens. These groups use a variety of methods such as international media reports, petitions and public demonstrations, all designed to condemn the behaviour of governments, to raise awareness of the wrongdoing and to promote change.

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USEFUL WEBSITES

The full Declaration

www.un.org/Overview/rights.html

World Legal Information Institute

www.worldlii.org

Inter-American Court of Human Rights

www.corteidh.or.cr

Amnesty International

www.amnesty.org

Human Rights Watch

www.humanrightswatch.org

European Convention of Human Rights

www.echr.coe.int/echr

African Commission on Human Rights

www.achpr.org

> Declaration of Human Rights

Freedom and equality are the basis and aims of these rights. In summary, they state that:

- All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.
- Everyone has the right to life, freedom, and to be safe from harm.
- No one shall be a slave or suffer torture.
- Everyone shall have the equal recognition and protection of the law, and the right to a fair and public trial.
- Everyone is entitled to freely hold and express his or her own beliefs and opinions.
- Everyone has the right to participate in the political and cultural life of society, and to take part in the fair and democratic government of his or her country.
- Men and women of full age have the right to marry and found a family, but only with the free and full consent of both partners.
- Marriage, motherhood and all children are entitled to protection by society.
- Everyone is entitled to an adequate standard of living, to education, to work for a fair wage, to own property.

Participatory learning about HIV and AIDS

It is vital to use a participatory approach for introducing and also for building competence around the many different issues relating to HIV and AIDS.

As it is said of learning:

I hear ... I forget.

I see ... I remember.

I experience it ... I can do it.

We need to create and facilitate learning experiences which individuals and communities can apply practically to address issues around HIV prevention, support, treatment and positive living. These need to be linked to achieving what people most want and value in life – their goals and dreams.

Bridges of Hope is a helpful package offering a range of participatory, learning techniques and training activities. For more information, check the website www.bridgesofhope.info

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Breaking the silence surrounding HIV and AIDS

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), many people have died as a result of HIV and AIDS but these terms are rarely referred to. Many people in our country thought AIDS was a myth or a mysterious illness that people were reluctant to name. Instead they would refer to HIV and AIDS as *the malaria of Eastern Africa, poison, the rusty nail, or the 'ka kidudu'* (bug).

Thankfully, people here now recognise that HIV and AIDS is not a myth but an illness that leads to death. However, people are still reluctant to speak openly about it. Although most people know others

> WHO declares TB an emergency in Africa

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has declared tuberculosis (TB) an emergency in Africa. The number of new TB cases each year in many African countries has quadrupled since 1990, due largely to the link with HIV and AIDS, poverty and weak health systems. The disease is killing more than half a million people in Africa every year. Around the world, TB accounts for two million deaths every year. Urgent action is needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goal targets for reducing deaths by TB.

'It is tragic that this disease has not been brought under control, because I am living proof that TB can be effectively treated and cured,' said Nobel prizewinner Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who along with former South African President Nelson Mandela is a survivor of the disease. 'The problem is huge and medical authorities cannot overcome it alone, they need help.' Lack of funding makes fighting the epidemic difficult, but more financial resources alone will not solve the TB problem. Dedicated efforts must also be made to strengthen health systems.

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with HIV and AIDS, it is still seen as a source of mockery and shame for the sick person and their family. Our people have now understood the importance of breaking the 'silence' surrounding HIV and AIDS. Not talking about AIDS is more dangerous than living with HIV. Parents now explain to their children the damage caused by HIV and how it can be avoided.

However, the number of people living with HIV and AIDS continues to rise, despite an increasing number of campaigns to educate people. While conferences on AIDS are held, the virus continues to spread. Why is this? *Footsteps 60* highlighted the difference between facilitation and traditional teaching. DRC needs many more good facilitators to help people to 'own' this information and to change their attitudes and behaviour.

Jean-Pierre Ndaribitse Kajangwa
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Vehicle batteries

Do any readers have suggestions either for safely disposing of old vehicle batteries or for recycling them and using them in some other way?

This is an issue of concern for health and safety reasons with our staff working in remote areas.

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Breeding termites!

We heard that local chicken-breeders used termites to feed their few chickens. Would it be possible to use termites as food for a large chicken farm? That might mean breeding termites! Have any readers ever used large quantities of termites as chicken feed in this way? How could we go about it? We would appreciate any suggestions.

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Using drama in community advocacy work

1

Identify the problem

Choose the human rights issue that you want to focus on. This should be a general problem known to the group or community. Identify who in the community suffers from abuse, and who is responsible. For example, one problem might be domestic violence, where a husband beats his wife.

Show a scene of a possible abusive situation. This should not be a specific case, but should show what happens in general.



2

Emphasise the injustice

Follow this scene with another scene showing the abuser carrying on with their business as if nothing was wrong. The purpose of this is for the audience to feel the injustice of the situation. The more angry people become, the more they will want to participate and try to change things.

3

Encourage participation

Now explain that the audience can ask questions of any of the characters in the play. The facilitator should ask the audience which character they want to speak with, and then encourage the audience to ask questions, such as:

- Why did you act in this way?
- What do you think about the other character?
- Why didn't you speak up?

The role of the facilitator is very important. They should repeat each

question from the audience to confirm the meaning and make sure everyone has heard. They can also challenge the audience to think beyond their own experience with questions like, 'Did it have to be this way?' 'Will it always be like this?'

The actors should reply as if they were the character they are representing. Before the play they should think carefully about their character. Why might they do what they do and what might they think about the situation?

This process allows the community to begin to discuss problems together and identify underlying attitudes.

4

Practising advocacy

The audience can then break into small groups to discuss how they could solve the problem. They should then share their ideas with the other groups.

Another technique is to encourage volunteers from the audience to join in the play, taking the role of one of the characters, talking with the characters and trying to convince them to change. The facilitator should explain that the play will be shown again, and if at any point the audience wants to change what is happening, they should raise their hand and shout 'stop'. It may be that the audience wants a new character, such as a friend or family member, or the police, to intervene in the



situation. A volunteer from the audience, or another actor, can take this role.

The facilitator needs to:

- explain the task, and invite people on stage
- stop the action if it is going nowhere, or if things might get violent
- summarise the learning at each stage, by asking the audience questions like 'What did they do there? Did it work?'

The actors respond to the audience participation as their character would on a bad day. For example, they might walk away, not listen, or grow angry.

In this way the community can explore different ways to approach the problem, and try to make a difference. They can try to agree a realistic way to advocate for the situation.

The author, Joy Borman, is a freelance Theatre for Development consultant experienced in working with a range of groups including churches, internally displaced people and people with disabilities.

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Photos by Alex Mavrocordatos, Centre for the Arts in Development Communications.



5

Summarise the learning

The facilitator should end the session positively by thanking the actors and the audience. They should summarise the learning and any practical suggestions as to what worked and didn't work. For example, the role play might have shown that when dealing with conflict, it is better to approach someone when they are not drunk or angry, and it may be helpful to bring someone with you.



Working with disability

There are around 20 million people with disabilities in low-income countries who need wheelchairs. Most of those available locally are gifts from charities in the West and may not be suitable for rough paths and tracks. They are usually old models and are passed from user to user. Because these chairs were made to fit well-fed Westerners, they are often the wrong size and shape, which can lead to serious accidents.

In the UK, life expectancy for someone confined to a wheelchair is the same as for an able-bodied person, but the World Health Organisation estimates that the average life expectancy of someone in a low-income country who loses the use of their legs is just two to three years. Badly fitted wheelchairs

and lack of mobility may cause pressure sores which can become infected. If people have no access to antibiotics they may die as a result of these infections.

Each year many thousands of people injure their backs, are injured in conflicts or by land mines. One in 400 people worldwide has cerebral palsy. Many of these people will require a wheelchair.

Appropriate design

Motivation is a UK-based organisation that helps provide suitable and affordable wheelchairs for disabled people across the world. At first it worked with local disabled people's organisations, setting up workshops where local people could build and repair equipment. However, their new design is mass-produced in China for local assembly worldwide. This makes the chairs cheaper to produce. They can then be adjusted locally to fit the size and needs of each user. The chair has a simple design and uses common materials and parts so it is low-cost, and easy to maintain and repair locally. Its design allows it to cross most potholed tracks and fields. *Motivation* has designed a short training course for assembling the chairs to fit local



Photo David Constantine Motivation

Wheelchairs give independence to people with disabilities, like Kithsiri Perera.

users – each chair usually takes four hours to assemble and adjust.

Regaining independence

Motivation has helped to distribute 22,000 wheelchairs so far. David Constantine, co-founder of *Motivation* explains, 'We are handing people independence and control over their own lives'.

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CASE STUDY A better life

Kithsiri Perera is 37 and lives in Pokunuwita, Sri Lanka, with his mother and two sisters. He used to run a successful fish stall until an accident three years ago left him unable to walk. After 18 months in hospital he returned home, but because he didn't have a wheelchair he was unable to leave his home.

Some of Kithsiri's fellow market traders shared their savings to buy a chair for him, but it was an old one and had no seat, just rope strung across the frame. Although it helped him to move from room to room, it couldn't carry him over muddy paths.

'Most days, I did nothing at all,' he says. 'I'd just sit or lie down. I had not been out of the house for 18 months. There were times when I thought my life was pointless. But I wanted to find a way to work again. Before the accident I ran a fish stall that had belonged to my father and my grandfather. It was very successful. I had a good life. I had everything I wanted. And now I want my life back.'

Kithsiri Perera's dream of a better life now looks within reach. *Motivation* has supplied him with a new wheelchair, a three-wheeler designed for use on the rough terrain of rural areas. He is making great progress, rebuilding his self-confidence and regaining mobility. He says, 'I see active people and it makes me think that I would like to be like them and have my business again. That is my plan.'

Advocacy practitioners

Many people who suffer injustice feel unable to take any action. They may fear further injustice, they may be poor and feel they are of no importance or they may lack understanding of their rights. The advocacy department in Kale Heywet Church in Ethiopia has been training church leaders as advocacy practitioners to support people when they suffer injustice.

The practitioners have received training for one month a year over a four-year period. The training is given by six lawyers, all of whom are church leaders within the Kale Heywet Church and other evangelical churches. The courses cover:

- the Ethiopian constitution
- introduction to law
- human rights
- a detailed study of laws concerning business, public finance, labour, civil society and penal law
- Sharia law (as over 30% of the population are Muslim)
- support courses in English and mathematics.

The underlying basis for the training is a biblical quote from Proverbs 31:8-9, 'Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.'

Forty-six trainees graduated in 2005. Their certificate is recognised by the government. Indeed, two trainees have already been offered work by the government, though the church is reluctant to lose people with these skills. The practitioners, who come from all over the country, have formed themselves into local and national networks to support each other. Some would like to become full-time advocacy workers. Their training has

given them the understanding and confidence needed to speak out and challenge injustice in the courts.

An example of advocacy in practice

One of the practitioners, Endale Ero, found two girls crying. When he asked about the problem, they told him that they had applied and been interviewed and accepted for posts within the local government. However, when they reported for work they found that others had been given the posts. Endale asked for permission to speak on their behalf. He took the issue to court and won the case for them. Not only did they receive their jobs but they were also compensated.

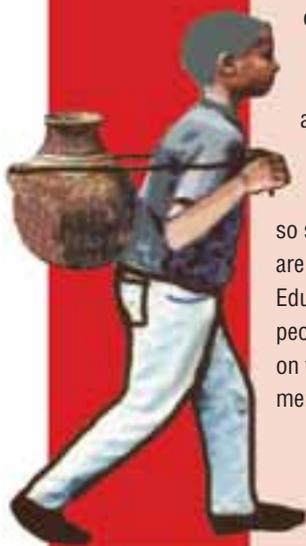
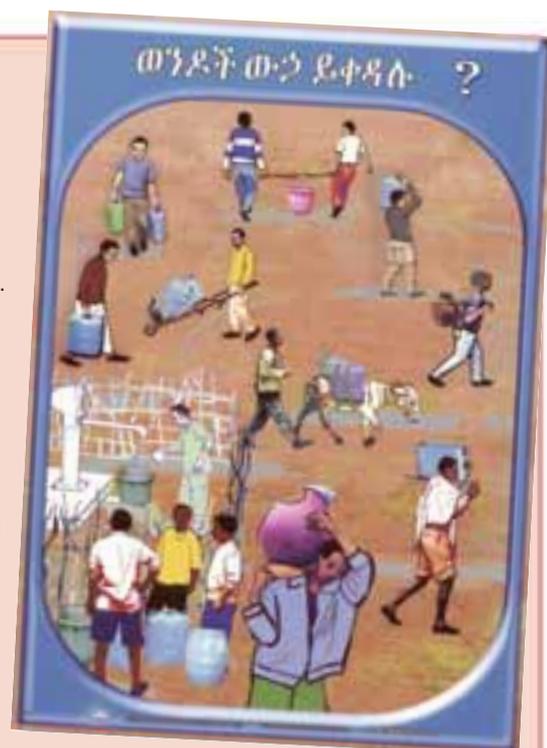
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Poster with a gender challenge

Tearfund's partner in Ethiopia, Kale Heywet Church, has supported work in water and sanitation over many years in Ethiopia. They have a team of health educators who work with communities, raising awareness of hygiene, sanitation and capacity development. Water and Sanitation committees are elected and the educators train the committee members in hygiene and management. Many of these committees are now well organised and effective. However, changing attitudes is a slow process. The Water, Sanitation and Irrigation department has produced educational materials in Amharic on key topics such as hand washing and sanitation to support the committee's work.

One of their most recent projects may prove very controversial. It is a poster of people collecting water in a variety of different ways. Not so surprising until you look more carefully and realise that all the pictures are of men! Addise Amado, Co-ordinator of Community Development and Education, created the idea for the poster. He comments, 'We know that people are particularly concerned about an image of men carrying water on their back, but we need to challenge attitudes about gender so that men take a more active role in providing household water.'

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Self-help groups: empowering women

by Kuki Rokhum

The Indian constitution grants equal rights to men and women. Yet the reality is that women's lives are still shaped by customs and traditions that work against them. Daughters are viewed as less valuable than sons. Girls are taught to believe that they are less important than boys. The number of women dying in childbirth is among the highest in the world and more than 40% of women are unable to read. Women currently make up only 6% of the Indian Parliament.

However, although social conditions continue to work against women, changes are taking place even in rural India. Women have risen to the challenge and their lives are being transformed.

Community improvement

The women survivors of the Orissa cyclone of 1999 have not only recovered from the disaster but are establishing themselves into strong enterprises and improving their economic situation. Tearfund partner EFICOR worked with the women from the affected coastal areas and formed several women's self-help groups. One of these groups, called Basanti Durga, of Jamunaka village, received a loan of 150,000 rupees from the State Bank of India. They invested 60,000 rupees in rice production and used the rest to buy a rice-milling machine. All 17 members of the group are actively involved in the whole process of making the rice ready for sale. The villagers are happy

to have a rice mill in their village and are very proud of their self-help group.

Not only are these women becoming involved in business, but they have all become literate through attending literacy classes. They are now confident in dealing with business people who may have cheated them before. The self-help groups in the area have also joined together to form federations and are now looking at the possibility of starting bigger businesses.

Individual women are also making a difference by learning new skills. Tulsi Ben, age 35, of Ghotval in rural Gujarat, was a migrant worker earning barely enough money to feed the family. With the help of EFICOR she planted 17 pomegranate trees in the wasteland surrounding her house. In spite of being criticised by her neighbours and not getting any rewards in the beginning, she worked hard. To irrigate the young trees she fetched water from a lake half a kilometre away from her house. Today she sells the fruit in the nearby local market. Not only is she able to take care of her day-to-day expenses, she is also able to afford education for her two daughters.

Leadership

Women are also being encouraged to take up leadership positions. EFICOR partner SEBA works in rural Chattisgarh (Central India). Mrs Sonmati belongs to Kaikagarh self-help group. As a member of the group, she attended a number of training programmes. Her confidence increased as she began interacting with men and women outside her home. She heard from other women who held key leadership positions. This motivated her and her hidden potential began

*Women have risen
to the challenge and
their lives are being
transformed*

Photo Geoff Crawford Tearfund



Women in India are working together to improve their economic condition.



Photo Richard Hanson Tearfund

to surface. With her new confidence and encouragement from fellow group members she stood in the local Panchayat Elections. She is now the Sarpanch (Head) of the village and has become an inspiration to other women in and around her village.

Through the work of EFICOR and its partners in rural areas across India, women are being empowered. Not only are their lives being changed but their daughters and other women now have more opportunities to improve their lives in a country where women are still marginalised and where many baby girls continue to be killed even before they are born.

The author, Kuki (Lalbiakhlui) Rokhum, is an Interserve Partner working with EFICOR as Co-ordinator of Donor Relations.

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Bible study

Men, women and God

It is easy to let our own cultural ideas and assumptions influence our understanding of biblical texts. For example, the idea that men are called to lead in the church, and women only to follow, has dominated the thinking about gender for centuries. This is in spite of the large list of women leaders whom Paul greets in the last chapter of Romans. It's also in spite of the fact that he refers to Phoebe, who has taken the letter to Rome, as a *minister*. He uses exactly the same Greek word for her (*diaconos*) that he uses to describe his own ministry, and that of Timothy. It doesn't help us that translators have so often watered down this word, in Phoebe's case, to simply *servant*.

We need help from the Bible to understand God's plans for all areas of our lives, including sexual relationships. Throughout the world, women are very vulnerable to sexual violence. Both rape and assault are happening now on a large scale. Even within marriage there can be violence, often justified by some misguided Christians who hold the view that wives are in subjection to their husbands, and this includes in sexual relationships. St Paul, however, has very different ideas.

Read 1 Corinthians 7:2-7

This passage challenges our attitudes to the sexual relationship between a man and a woman. First of all, Paul places it firmly within the commitment of marriage. Next, marriage is always to be between one man and one woman. Already, those two provisions are protective towards women.

But the most radical part comes when Paul talks about sex between husband and wife. The wife does not have authority over her own sexuality: but her husband does – nothing surprising about that. The surprising thing is the next sentence. The husband does not have authority over his sexuality either – but his wife does. This is dramatic indeed. It is the only passage where Paul uses the actual word *authority* within the marriage relationship, and it is to be entirely mutual. Husbands and wives are to consider each other's bodies with respect and consideration. If this biblical teaching were followed in sexual relationships throughout the world, it would mean an end to so much human brokenness, sexual violence and sex-related epidemics.

- *What does this passage tell us about God's views on people having more than one sexual partner?*
- *Why is this biblical view protective towards women?*
- *What happens to the idea of gender inequality in this passage?*
- *What are Paul's underlying principles in the sexual relationship between husband and wife?*
- *What stops the worldwide church from living out this vision for men and women?*

*The writer,
Dr Elaine Storkey,
is UK President of
Tearfund*

Created in God's Image

This is a manual for churches on gender awareness and leadership development, produced by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches to help men and women to work together in equal partnership within the church, community and wider society. It is a helpful guide for facilitating workshops, with a workbook for participants.



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1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland
Email: warc@warc.ch
Website: www.warc.ch

Eye care website

Vision 2020 e-resource is an online collection of resources for eye care programmes around the world. It shares valuable tools that help assess, plan, implement and manage high quality, efficient, and sustainable eye care programmes in the developing world.

S Sharmila
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Aravind Eye Care System
Madurai – 625 020
Tamil Nadu
India
Email: eyesite@aravind.org
Website: www.laico.org/v2020resource/homepage.htm

KiSwahili issue of LEISA

Mambo LEISA is a new KiSwahili version of the long-running magazine on sustainable agriculture. For more information contact:

KIOF
PO Box 34792
Nairobi
Kenya
Email John Njoroge or Damaries Muikali
Munyao at: kiof@connect.co.ke

Macmillan Education

Macmillan Education has developed a range of educational materials to support teachers, including a teacher's guide and a series of graded readers for pupils of different reading ability.

TEACHING ABOUT HIV AND AIDS

A very practical book to help teachers begin teaching about HIV and AIDS. It provides clear, accurate information, together with actions to encourage

reflection and better practice. The book covers over 60 topics, each with information and suggestions for classroom activities, including quizzes, discussion questions and role-plays.



A LETTER TO PEARL (Level 2 reader)

A convincing story about the lives of young teenagers dealing with their relationships, sexuality and the need to keep safe from HIV and AIDS.



The readers (there are nine others) are £2 each (US \$3.66, €2.96)

Available from distributors of Macmillan books worldwide.

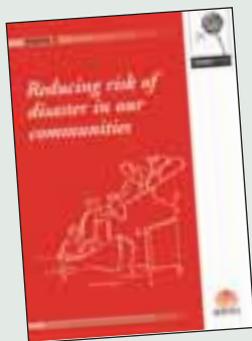
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Tearfund publications

Reducing risk of disaster in our communities

Disasters affect millions of people every year, causing damage to life, property and livelihoods. Many disasters can be avoided or made less destructive by reducing the risks that people face. This ROOTS book looks at one method to achieve this, called Participatory Assessment of Disaster Risk. The process involves working with local people to identify hazards and their vulnerabilities to



those hazards. They plan action to address those vulnerabilities.

Encouraging good hygiene and sanitation

This new PILLARS guide helps communities to reduce disease and infection from poor sanitation, poor hygiene practices and dirty water. The guide aims to build understanding of the basic facts around good hygiene. It is full of practical information on low-cost ideas to encourage hand washing,



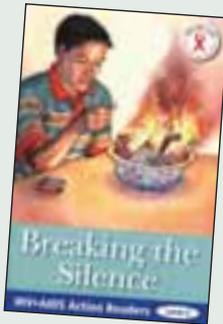
keep food safe, provide safe drinking water and maintain good health. There is advice on improving water supplies and building different types of latrines. Group Bible studies concerning hygiene, water and sanitation are provided. As with all PILLARS guides, the learning comes through small group discussion that can lead to changes in attitudes and practice. These resources can be obtained from:

Tearfund Resources Development
PO Box 200
Bridgnorth
Shropshire
WV16 4WQ
UK
Email: roots@tearfund.org

BREAKING THE SILENCE (Level 2 reader)

A young teacher dying of AIDS realises she must break her silence and writes to tell her pupils of her sickness and to warn them of the dangers of HIV and AIDS.

However, her relatives burn the letters to keep the silence. Will Miss Chabi be able to pass on her last lesson? A powerful story of the shame and silence surrounding HIV and AIDS.



USEFUL WEBSITES

The **Human Rights School** helps people to participate at a local level in the promotion and protection of rights, and to share information. This website has *Teaching modules* on different human rights issues. These encourage discussion and taking action. There is also a *Themes and Issues* page with further information and links to other organisations working on human rights issues.

www.hrschool.org

UNIFEM is the women's fund at the United Nations. It provides financial and technical help to new programmes and strategies to encourage women's empowerment and gender equality and to improve women's human rights.

www.unifem.org

The **United Nations Population Fund** (UNFPA) promotes the right of every woman, man and child to enjoy a life of health and equal opportunity.

www.unfpa.org/gender

The **Child Rights Information Network** (CRIN) is a global network that shares information about the Convention on the Rights of the Child and child rights.

www.crin.org

The following website lists hundreds of books on women and development from 60 publishers worldwide.

www.womenink.org

Small World Theatre

Small World Theatre is an educational charity that uses performing arts in community development, advocacy and awareness-raising. They train local theatre groups in participatory drama methods, and work with communities to explore governance, rights and environmental issues.

Using participatory drama methods means that the plays are interactive, developed with community participation and based on local cultural traditions.

Using local situations

Specific local situations and opinions can be put into the performance. Popular stories, proverbs, games or dances can also be used. This helps strengthen a feeling of ownership and helps sustain any social action that the event may bring about.

Facilitating these participatory processes can be challenging, even for experienced actors. Ideas are not always easy to express in words and it is often very difficult for people to share their thoughts publicly. The act of speaking out is an empowerment in itself.

Voters' rights in Tanzania

Small World Theatre trained a group of Tanzanian actors to carry out research and then act out a drama which would inform people of their rights and encourage them to vote in the parliamentary elections in Tanzania in 2000. The actors were shown how to use realistic life-size female puppets for research in local communities. When people gathered round the puppets, the team asked them questions about the puppet, such as her name, age, marital status and situation in order to create a life story for her. They then asked people questions about her, such as what she did for a living, whether she voted in the last election, why she voted and what were the issues that made her vote, until an imaginary picture of this 'woman' emerged.

The act of speaking out is an empowerment in itself

Audience involvement

The process was then repeated in other shanty towns until over 300 people had contributed to this research into the reasons why women from poor communities had not voted in the previous election. A play was then written, based around the issues people had highlighted in the research and performed.

The actors encouraged community audiences to react to the issues raised in the drama. They used a participatory approach to encourage audiences to solve their own problems. The debate often continued so long that it was difficult for the actors to leave. Each time the play was performed the script was adapted to reflect information and attitudes expressed in the previous performance. A large puppet of Mr Democracy featured as a sort of chairman in the final performance. He was used to share information about practical issues such as where and when to vote.

The author, Bill Hamblett is Artistic Director of Small World Theatre.

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Transformation

through courage and partnership



Photo Robert Slocombe Tearfund

Agnes (second left) has a new life through working together with others.

Many widows and orphans in Africa are denied their inheritance rights to property or land, which often go to the husband's brothers or other male relatives instead, leaving the family homeless and destitute.

Agnes was born in the province of Makamba in Burundi. Her parents were farmers and lived a peaceful life with their nine children until 1994, when violence began to sweep through their province. Believing their lives to be in danger, the family fled with what they could carry into neighbouring Tanzania. Thousands of others also fled Burundi to live in refugee camps. The family left the camps because of overcrowding and the constant threat of disease. For five years they moved around, trying to make a living, but then Agnes' father died. Her mother decided to return to Burundi where she thought she could find support from her relatives.

But in 1999, Agnes' mother died suddenly. Agnes and her younger brothers and sisters were forced to find a new place to live. She sought help from her uncles, but they would not receive or protect them. They

had taken her father's lands and left nothing for his children.

Desperate, and with nowhere else to go, Agnes looked around for help. A neighbour offered them an old ruined house next to his farm. Agnes made a roof for it out of banana leaves and for two years the family lived there, scraping a living, helped by the kindness of neighbours.

The government of Makamba made some marshland available for cultivation as part of a Tearfund food security project. People were encouraged to form agricultural associations where people could work together and support each other. In 2003, Agnes joined one of these groups, and began to farm. The group provided her with help and advice, as well as seeds and tools. She was now part of a positive and supportive network. The group helped Agnes and her family

build a house. They built the walls of brick and used skills within the group to provide the carpentry. Agnes used money she had earned herself from the sale of seed to buy doors and windows for the new house.

In 2005, Agnes started income-generating activities to help support her family. She has now rented more land and hires other people to work it. She continues to serve her community by being active in the campaign against HIV and AIDS. Agnes is also taking a leading role in the association's application to the bank for loans to increase their productivity.

Agnes is now 21 years old and living a life she could never have dreamed possible. She was a young girl left destitute and vulnerable with responsibility for the welfare of her brothers and sisters. She now has property, a little land and a recognised position within her community. All this is a result of working hard in partnership with others.



Photo Geoff Crawford Tearfund

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How did Agnes lose her inheritance rights?
- What were the key factors that helped her rebuild her life?
- What opportunities are there in our community for people who lose their inheritance rights?

The author, Benoit Barutwanayo, works for Tearfund as Area Co-ordinator for Makamba.

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