

In this issue we publish the ten winning articles from the competition we launched in *Footsteps 71*

Peace Promoters transform communities

by Esther Harder

The Church of Uganda Teso Diocese's Planning and Development Office (COU-TEDDO) trains community volunteers as 'Peace Promoters'. In 2005–2006, COU-TEDDO trained 80 volunteers from the conflict-prone areas of the Teso region in north-east Uganda. The Peace Promoters use peace-building, mediation and counselling skills to address conflict and improve family relationships in their local communities.



Esther Harder

Peace Promoters acting in a role-play which teaches the community how the Peace Promoters are available to help with family conflicts or to offer counselling.

Acknowledging that communities and society can only be changed by starting at the individual level, the Peace Promoters have the challenging task of ensuring that there is peace in their own families, before addressing community needs. This bottom-up approach has dramatically changed areas in which Peace Promoters exist.

There has been violence in Teso since the 1970s. Guns are readily available and Teso's neighbours to the north, the semi-nomadic Karimojong tribe, use these weapons in cattle raids both among their clans and also with neighbouring tribes like the Iteso. Because of these raids, Teso communities have shifted from their traditional

homesteads into internally displaced people's (IDP) camps. Many children have grown up in these camps, knowing no other way of life.

In June 2003, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), led by Joseph Kony, advanced into Teso, causing hundreds of thousands of people to flee from the violence. More IDP camps appeared with this increase in homeless communities. By 2007, the majority of families affected by this conflict had gradually moved back to their home villages. However, in parts of Teso which are vulnerable to Karimojong attacks, people still remain in IDP camps.

The Peace Promoters work within these different communities. In places where people are returning to traditional ways of life, the Peace Promoters assist in resolving domestic conflicts, land disputes, and other tensions. In border areas where violence continues, Peace Promoters are working in both Iteso and Karimojong communities. They report attacks and thefts and speak out against the tradition of cattle raids. They also work to solve disputes within families and communities.

In this issue

- 3 Literacy: the *Waye Kai* approach
- 3 Editorial
- 5 First aid training in schools
- 6 Local environment, local crafts
- 7 Letters
- 8 The Development Game
- 10 Keeping sanitation on the school agenda
- 12 Fresh vegetables in the desert
- 12 Planting in a sack
- 13 Bible study
- 14 Community knowledge centre
- 15 Resources
- 16 Voting and literacy

Footsteps is a quarterly paper, linking health and development workers worldwide. Tearfund, 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.

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Community members of Willa Parish join Peace Promoters in drawing pictures of conflicts that most affect their families.

Resolving conflict

Many Peace Promoters demonstrate initiative and personalise the work as they gain confidence in their skills and the positive reception of the community. Mohammed Lomong, a Karamojong Peace Promoter, leads Napak Peace Choir. This is a group of 70 young people who sing and perform dramatic presentations throughout Karamoja, urging their peers to leave their violent behaviour behind and live in peace. The Napak Peace Choir has been invited to perform at high-profile cross-border dialogue sessions facilitated by NGOs and government officials.

John Ogwel, a former Peace Promoter in Karamoja, was elected to a leadership post in the local government. He uses his position to speak about peace and to ensure that cross-border issues are resolved quickly. When tension increases and threatens to break communication between Teso and Karamoja, he calls cross-border meetings of his fellow Sub-County leaders to resolve the issues.

The Peace Promoters in Teso work together with COU-TEDDO to deliver radio talk shows on peace topics every other month. Recent topics have included reconciliation, gender issues, traditional peace-building practices and addressing rumour-spreading. These shows have proved to be popular. There are often

so many calls from listeners that the Peace Promoters are invited to return and continue the discussions at a later date.

Gaining trust

Peace Promoters report that they are asked to help with local conflicts. Community members prefer consulting the Peace Promoters because their services are free, while the local government leaders often charge a fee for hearing a case. People feel that the Peace Promoters will listen more objectively because they are volunteer counsellors and have not been paid by anyone involved in the dispute.

One family at a time, the Peace Promoters work to see peace

Communities are slowly developing trust in their local Peace Promoters. In one village, two people argued after a drunken bicycle accident. Instead of causing injury, they decided to leave their bicycles with a Peace Promoter for the night and to come back the next day to resolve the conflict when sober. Another Peace Promoter reported that he had to hide a child in his house for several days because an entire clan wanted to kill the boy in revenge for the accidental death of his friend. That people are willing to trust such precious 'belongings' into the hands of Peace Promoters shows how well

known and trusted they have become in their areas.

Female Peace Promoters are gaining influence in a culture that listens mostly to elderly men. They report that they are now consulted on conflicts by men and women alike. One woman was able to stop a violent land dispute simply by standing between the quarrelling men and firmly asking them to calm down and talk instead of fighting. Later, those same men were able to settle the dispute by planting sisal along their boundary lines.

COU-TEDDO continues to assist the 80 Peace Promoters with follow-up training and support. Pastor Sam Eibu oversees this vital programme for COU-TEDDO. He explains the importance of the Peace Promoters: 'The people themselves are the ones most likely to solve the conflicts in their community. We cannot be the ones to do it.' One family at a time, the Peace Promoters work to see peace become a reality in their homes and neighbourhoods.

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Literacy: the *Waye Kai* approach in Niger

by Laurence Buenerd

Alima is in her second year of literacy classes. 'I am 51 years old' she says with a shy smile. 'I learn slowly. I had to re-take my first year, but since then everything is going well.' Two of her granddaughters have followed her example and attend the classes with her.

Their village, Ngula, is 80km from the nearest road, on the border between Niger and Burkina Faso. Alima has never been to school as her father considered that it was a pointless expense. Now she has made her own decision to learn to read and write in her language, Djerma, and goes to classes five times a week. The classes are held at the new school, while the children are eating their lunch. Ngula's literacy centre is one of the 200 centres managed by the CADEV-Niger Literacy and Libraries Programme, one of the programmes run by a local NGO, Caritas-Développement Niger.

A second chance

According to the Niger Institute of Statistics, the literacy rate in adults (15 years and above) in Niger in 2005 was about 29%. This means that around 70% of adults in Niger do not know how to

read or write. There are several reasons for the literacy rate being so low: the most obvious being the lack of schools and the severe lack of funding for education. In the rural areas, where 80% of the population live, parents are not always interested in sending their children into a failing school system, whereas everyone is encouraged to do agricultural work. Because of colonialism, the formal education system uses the French language, which for many children is not their first language.

Literacy classes in local languages therefore represent a second chance for many people in Niger. They are not just for adults. Young people under 12 years old are often accepted at the Programme's centres either because the nearest school is too full for them to enrol, or because there is no school in their area.

The centres all follow the same *Waye Kai* approach to teaching, but in different languages according to the region. *Waye Kai* means 'awakening' in Haoussa, the most widely-spoken language in Niger, and this approach is largely inspired by the theories of Brazilian teaching specialist, Paulo Freire. In contrast to the standard method of teaching literacy, the *Waye Kai* approach wants to raise awareness: it is not simply a question of learning to read, write and calculate. The teaching involves the whole of the student's environment, their work activities, their family life, social life and leisure time. It aims, in time, to improve all these different aspects of their life.

Learning through involvement

Active involvement is required from those who wish to learn. A student does not just passively absorb teaching from an



Maggie Sandilands
Sub Editor

EDITORIAL

In this issue we publish the ten winning entries to a competition that we launched in issue 71. We asked readers to share information about a new idea related to their own work. Some of the ideas featured may not be brand new ideas, but they are new within the local context and may be new to other readers. It is exciting to see an entire issue where all the articles are written by *Footsteps* readers.

We received so many entries to the competition. Thank you to everyone who participated, and apologies that we are not able to respond to each individual entry. It was really encouraging to read about the huge variety of work that readers are involved in, and I hope that the competition has inspired people to share their work and ideas with others.

Sadly, this will be my last issue editing *Footsteps*, as I am taking up a new role in Tearfund to focus on HIV work. It has been a huge privilege and a real joy to be involved with *Footsteps* over the last three years, and I will miss it greatly.

Future issues will focus on accountability and agriculture.

all-powerful teacher. Instead, from the beginning of the course, the students choose a range of discussion topics based on common issues such as marriage, relationships, money, hygiene in the home, malaria, and bringing up children.

The *Waye Kai* approach values the student as someone who already possesses a wealth of knowledge, to which new knowledge can be added. Through the group discussion and by composing simple sentences which relate to the day's subject, each student will gradually learn the techniques for reading and writing in their own language. By making progress within the group and participating on all levels, the student will also learn about criticism and gain self-confidence. At the same time, these discussions about everyday topics can raise issues and inspire the group to address issues in their community and to change behaviour. Through learning to read and write sentences about health and sanitation topics, for example, the students can decide on simple but specific actions to take within their community.

More than just teachers

The role of the teachers is also changed: they become facilitators who work alongside their group. Depending on the topics chosen by the group of students, they may need to research a subject



Two views of *Waye Kai* literacy groups.



Both photos: Laurence Buenerd

themselves or ask a local expert such as a doctor. Hawa, aged 36, is a *Waye Kai* teacher. As she had been to school for three years, her level of French was good but she did not know how to read or write in her own language. After learning, she wanted to become a teacher. She started raising awareness about literacy among a group of women from her district. From the start, the students took ownership of the lessons. They discussed between themselves and decided together the way in which the lessons would be carried out, the timetables, and how absences and late arrivals would be managed.

The students will ask either during or after the class for explanations on those points which are difficult to understand from the day's lesson. All the students live in the same district and are neighbours, which means that after their lessons they can discuss and clarify questions or explain

points to each other. 'It's an extension of their social life', explains Hawa. Hawa herself appreciates the interaction: 'You teach things to the students and they teach you other things'. She also likes to do research in order to deepen her own knowledge before starting on a new topic.

The *Waye Kai* approach favours initiative and creativity: there is no set method and no routine teaching. However, the teachers are given teaching booklets which provide information on various topics such as health, the human body, animals and vegetation, social life, history, geography and help them to monitor their group's progress. Currently, the teaching programme is based on four one-year levels and is provided in five local languages. At the third level, French is introduced for a few hours per week. The fourth level, entirely in French, goes over the basic points from the second and third years, which were taught in the local languages.



Laurence Buenerd

Literacy is a crucial factor for development.

Case study

In the centre at Filingani, Zenaba and her sister Alila are both in their first year, learning to read and write in their own language, Tamasheq. Alila, who has recently been ill, explains that the classes have helped her to understand and follow the advice for doses of medicines given at the community clinic. Zenaba says that reading has helped her in daily life. Now, for example, she can read on food packets what they contain and check the expiry dates. But she has most appreciated learning mathematics. Now she can do all the paperwork for the management of the artisans' co-operative in the village, and has been elected treasurer for the literacy centre's management committee.

Benefits

Throughout Niger, literacy is a crucial factor for development. Literate men and women are better able to find work and more likely to send their children to school. They understand more about hygiene and common illnesses and they go more willingly to the community clinic. They are able to participate more fully in community and democratic life and more able to join savings groups or have bank

accounts. Above all, they discover that they have power – power to take charge of their own lives.

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Laurence Buenerd

Numeracy helps with many daily tasks.

First aid training in schools

by *Cintia F Rojo*

Accidents often happen in and around school. Children's natural curiosity exposes them to situations of risk, which are not always anticipated by the adults in charge. Often, it is only after an accident that the teacher realises the danger in the classroom of a chair too close to a window or furniture with sharp corners. Most teachers do not receive specific 'first aid' training and so when faced with a crisis do not know how to respond.

How do you look after a child who becomes ill in the classroom? Or what do you do if you witness an accident at the school gates? If someone has a burn, can you put something on it? Because of a lack of information it is common for teachers to take inappropriate action when looking after children who have been hurt in school. This problem is made worse when there is no efficient emergency service.

In July 2007, a group of volunteers from various Baptist Churches in São Paulo, Brazil, travelled to Paraguay to support the work of PEPE (Pre-School Education Programme). This is a programme which aims to help less privileged children to access high quality pre-school education. It also offers family support through the local churches. The teachers are volunteers chosen by their own church, and they receive specific training for teaching children aged four to six.

There is no properly equipped and structured medical emergency service in Paraguay. The medical professionals in the area have a good academic training,

but there is not enough government investment in the health system. The health professionals, therefore, are poorly paid and there are few available resources.

For these reasons, we developed a specific training course for the volunteer teachers, to enable them to provide first aid in response to common accidents in the school environment. We used role-play to practise life-saving techniques, such as mouth-to-mouth resuscitation for



Cintia Rojo

A role-play using Ritinha the doll.

someone who has stopped breathing. We role-played the situations with Ritinha, a simple doll, and clarified any doubts using written and illustrated material. Each participant had the opportunity to carry out the actual techniques on the doll, so that the training would not just be theory, but mostly practical. The teachers also shared some of their own experiences, and could learn from each other, as accidents are common in their daily work.

The initiative was so successful that, after returning to Brazil, we were invited by a government school in São Paulo to carry out the same training with their teachers. With the support of the local church, we began a training project in that district. Once again, Ritinha the doll was very useful in teaching basic life support techniques.

This experiment made it clear that it is not always necessary to make huge investments to improve the health of the community. The teachers learned what to do – and what not to do – in emergency situations. Lives are saved with this basic information and these simple but valuable techniques. There was no huge investment of resources, just Ritinha the doll, who did not charge anything.

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www.pepe-network.org*

Local environment, local crafts

by Mrs Amuche Nnabueze

I live in Nsukka township, the central town in the Nsukka region in Enugu State, Nigeria. For more than three decades, I have watched with dismay as our environment deteriorates. I have watched waste products like plastic bags and other packaging cover our beautiful green landscape.

Most of us do not even realise the harm we are doing to ourselves, because no-one challenges us as we use and throw out this rubbish in the streets. These plastics are very cheap and there is no obvious effort to either stop or control this practice of ruining the landscape with this waste. It is not just a question of spoiling the view; the plastics block the waterways, which causes heavy erosion. Water gathers and provides a breeding ground for germs and insects which spread disease – this is reflected in the very high mortality rates in this area.

Disappearing skills

Another disturbing trend to contend with is the issue of our local crafts, one of which is basket-weaving. The traditional basket weavers are growing older and the younger generation have little interest in this traditional craft, since it is not included in any curriculum in the formal school system. I am worried that the tradition of basket-weaving will die away. These baskets are woven to different shapes and sizes, and used for carrying things and for storing palm kernels, cereals and kola nuts in the house. They are usually very beautiful and carefully crafted and they last a long time when preserved.



One of the waste dumps in Nsukka town.

Traditionally, these baskets are woven with materials collected from palm fronds which grow abundantly in this area. I see this as a very environmentally-friendly material to replace the plastic bags which litter the environment.

As an artist with an interest in the environment, I have a plan which I hope will go a long way to solving the problem of spoiling the environment with plastic waste and also address the gradual loss of a traditional craft skill. I want to start a campaign for the practice of waste separation, compost-making and, most importantly, the use of locally woven baskets in the place of plastic carrier bags and containers. This campaign will

[Baskets are] a very environmentally-friendly material to replace the plastic bags which litter the environment

use all the local communication media available in Nsukka. One such medium is the opportunity provided by the tradition of a mourning house. In this area, when a person dies, the female members of the immediate and extended family all gather at the house of the deceased. They are expected to stay together in mourning for one to two weeks. Many ideas can be shared and developed there. I will also use posters, banners and leaflets.

I will organise a workshop for the best basket weavers from around Nsukka to introduce them to the new designs I have made. At the end of the workshop I will select the ten best basket makers and work with them for a period of one and a half



Basket weaving is a traditional craft in many countries.

months. I will then exhibit the products of the workshop and look for local and non-local clients. I will also seek to liaise with the environmental protection agency to have these baskets placed at strategic places, like bus stops and shopping centres, for the collection of waterproof and other light non-decomposing wastes which I will also use as materials for craft work.

Changing minds

I believe that the mass production and use of well-woven baskets will bring an amazing change in the mind-set of the younger generation and provide sustainable livelihoods for them. These baskets are a suitable tool for collecting light waste like plastics for proper disposal.

There is a local saying about 'pouring water in a basket' which suggests an effort that will yield nothing good. This is a metaphor for the present culture of greed and lack of concern for the future of our environment. However, I know that with a concerted effort, there can be a reversal in people's attitude towards their own traditions, values and culture and the way we are treating our environment.

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Hair extensions harm poultry

Synthetic hair extensions are currently very popular in many countries in Africa. However, when hair extensions are removed, they are often dumped in the street, and this is proving a health hazard to wild and domestic birds. As birds forage for food on the ground, their feet can easily get entangled in the cast-off strands of hair. The strands of hair are very fine and strong, and if they get caught round the birds' legs can gradually cut off the blood supply. Many birds die as a result.

Poultry are an important source of wealth and social well-being in many places. They provide us with meat and eggs as a source of protein and energy, and their waste is used to keep soil fertile. Other birds eat insects that can be damaging to crops and to our health. We need to take responsibility for disposing of waste products safely so that they do not harm animals and the local environment.

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Moringa

Thanks to *Footsteps*, we have discovered moringa with its many virtues. Four years ago we received three young moringa seedlings which we planted. Now we already have the seeds with a view to

starting a nursery. We want to scale up our activity and popularise the use and consumption of moringa. We also intend eventually to extract moringa oil, but we have come up against a problem of resources and support. We are also interested in growing *Jatropha curcas*, which exists naturally in our villages, and can be used as a biofuel.

We are looking for other *Footsteps* readers working in this area so that we can share experience and technical support.

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Making mango butter

I really enjoy reading the publications on your tilz website and have worked my way through most of the archived issues online. One topic I have not yet come across, but would love to have information on, is the production of mango seed butter.

I understand that this is done in India, and I am wondering whether it would be possible here in Burkina Faso (where I work with a Christian NGO). Would any other *Footsteps* readers be able to help me with information? We have an abundance of mangoes and, although we dry some and have recently started making mango vinegar, many still go to

waste. Many women's groups here are involved in shea butter production, but if a similar process was possible with the mango kernels it would open up new avenues for them. This idea came to me from seeing the ingredients of a UK-produced body butter. Many thanks for any advice you might be able to give.

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Small businesses

I found Tearfund's tilz website by chance and I was interested in the articles concerning small businesses. I think it would be a good idea to gather ideas related to creating small family businesses which would enable families to be self-sufficient. There are some business ideas which are suitable for rural families and there are others which are appropriate for city families.

I currently have a small family business in Santiago, in Chile, but I want to experiment with new projects. I am looking for ideas and experiences from other countries which I could adapt to my context.

Many people are discriminated against for various reasons, and in my case it was due to age. I became unemployed at the age of 55 and I was unable to find another stable job. I currently have my own business and I have just started to run an accounting office. Starting my own small business has enabled me to support my family. I have two young children and another baby boy who is due to be born next month. I will soon be 62 and I believe I have the vitality and perseverance to set up another business and help others who request it. I would like to encourage and help people with my experience of setting up small businesses.

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Collecting moringa seeds.

The Development Game

by Ron and Karen Stoufer

This game can help people to understand the special efforts needed to ensure that development activities really benefit the marginalised or poorest people within a community. It can be used with development workers, local government or NGO project staff, or village development committees.

Materials required

- Thirteen parallel lines marked on the ground – using tape or chalk works well indoors, or lines in the ground if outdoors. The lines ensure that everyone takes steps of the same size. The seventh line (in the centre) should be much longer than the others.
- A prize for the ‘winners’ put at line 13.
- Coloured strips of paper, beads or seeds to divide the group into three groups – Red, Green and Blue.

Count participants before the game and arrange that 10% will get red, 20% get green and 70% get blue. It is important that the colours are assigned randomly – for example, by participants picking coloured beads from a bag.

Instructions

Explain that you are a development worker bringing resources for three projects to help them ‘win’ the prize which represents success. The participants represent local farmers. Each person takes a coloured item

at random and lines up along the centre (seventh) line facing towards the prize at line 13.

When everyone is ready, read the descriptions for each colour. You should adapt the game for your context by adding local details to the descriptions.

■ **RED** You belong to a rich farming family. Your father owns two homes; one in this village and one in the capital city. You were sent to school in the city and have returned home to help run the farm.

■ **GREEN** Your parents have a small farm. Your mother is non-literate but your father can read and write. You went to the local village school, doing your farm chores before and after school. Your family owns a radio and you listen to the agricultural programmes. Your uncle works at the local health post, so as a child you always had your vaccinations and worm medicines. Your family has a vegetable garden and one cow which gives milk. With good nutrition and health, you were able to pay attention and learn in school.



Ron and Karen Stoufer

How does a development project impact the most vulnerable and marginalised people?

■ **BLUE** You and your parents are non-literate and of low social status. The women were married young and now have many children. The men work as day labourers in others’ fields. You take care of your own tiny garden plot in the early morning and late evening.

In this way, participants have been randomly assigned different social and economic statuses within the community. Now you are ready to play the game.

In response to each of the situations presented, the participants will either take steps forward or back, depending on which colour they are. A step forward represents increased economic stability and wellbeing. A step backward represents further economic hardship and inequality. This activity helps the participants to gain a deeper understanding of how development projects can impact different groups within a community.

Success story from Nepal

A women’s group was going to do a livestock project. The Reds and Greens wanted to raise goats and the Blues wanted to raise pigs. We helped them to set up a project where the pigs arrived first and when that was successfully running, then the goats came. The women with more resources (Red and Green) helped the Blues because it was in their interest – everyone’s success was linked.

It is important to consider how the project impacts all sections of the community during the project design stage. Think of ways to encourage Blues to participate.



Mike Webb Tearfund

Development projects may not benefit everyone in the community.

The game

Describe each project and then tell each group where to move and why.

PROJECT 1 Farmer training and seed distribution

A training for farmers is offered. Improved quality seeds will be distributed to all participants.

■ **REDS** You offer to rent your fields to the class for the training period. You then not only attend free (*One step forward*) but receive income. (*Second step forward*)

■ **GREENS** After seeing the notice for the class you sign up and receive seeds. (*One step forward*)

■ **BLUES** You cannot read the notices. You do not own a radio. You have to sit

outside the tea shop because of your low social status, so you never hear the discussions about the training. You do not hear about it and do not attend. (*One step backward*) You used to sell a few poor vegetables from your plot, but now you cannot compete with the improved quality seeds so you lose income. (*Second step backward*)

PROJECT 2 Community drinking water system

You hold a community meeting to discuss a new water system. You will donate the pipes if community members donate the labour. Everyone attends the meeting.

■ **REDS** You take a leading role in the meeting and donate money to help your community. (*One step forward*) After the system is built, one tap is located on your property. (*Second step forward*)

■ **GREENS** You attend the meeting. You donate your labour to help the construction and encourage your neighbour to also participate. When the system is done, there is a tap located only five minutes walk from your home. (*One step forward*)

■ **BLUES** You sit at the back at the community meeting. You cannot spare a day away from your day labour job to help with the construction. When the system design is discussed, no-one mentions putting taps near your area. Because you do not help to build the system, you do not get a tap (*One step backward*) and must continue to carry contaminated water from the stream. This means more illness and lost income. (*Second step backward*)



Richard Hanson Tearfund

PROJECT 3 Literacy classes

A literacy class is starting in your village. Emphasise that this is especially to help the Blues.

■ **REDS** You are hired as facilitator. (*Two steps forward for income and prestige*)

■ **GREENS** You send your mother to literacy class so she is no longer cheated in the market. (*One step forward*)

■ **BLUES** The men cannot attend because they farm their small plots in

the evening after they finish their day labour. The women cannot attend because they have too many small children to look after and nearly always at least one child is sick. (*Two steps backward*)

The end of the game

The Reds have now taken six steps forward and should be able to reach the prize.

The most important part of the game is the discussion at the end. Begin asking these questions while the participants are still standing in place.

- Ask what happened. What do they see? (Unintentional widening of the gap between rich and poor.)
- If we were to keep playing, would the Greens eventually win? (Yes, if sufficient prizes / resources.) Would the Blues win if we play long enough? (No.)
- Ask Blues how it felt? Was it fair? Why not? Remind people that everyone started at the same level. After the Blues answer, ask the Reds and Greens how they feel about it.
- Whose fault is it that the Blues did not participate or benefit from the projects?
- In this game, did the Reds or Greens mistreat or discriminate against the Blues?

Then invite people to sit down and talk about these issues. Discuss who the Reds, Greens and Blues might be in your community. The game should help to show why development projects often need to focus on poor and marginalised people (the Blues). It is not because the Reds and Greens are less valued or even less deserving – they are also good people and hard workers. Jesus taught us to care for poor people because they deserve justice. Because of social inequalities, Blues need special attention to ensure that they are able to take equal advantage of opportunities.

To encourage people, finish by sharing local success stories that show how you can work with Blues without excluding Reds and Greens.

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Keeping sanitation on the school agenda

by Awoyemi Olawale

Sanitation is not a priority in schools because people do not realise the need for a safe and clean environment. This attitude means that when there are many competing priorities, resources are allocated to academic activities while sanitation is neglected. But good sanitation facilities, such as latrines, safe drinking water supply, and hand-washing facilities, are important for the success of basic education.



Caroline Irby / Tearfund

Lack of sanitation facilities in schools is often one of the barriers to girls accessing education.

A study done by the Community Participation for Action in the Social Sector (COMPASS) project in Nigeria in 2005 revealed that:

- only 40% of schools in Nigeria had water facilities (covered well, covered borehole or tap)
- only 18.7% had adequate latrines and other sanitation facilities
- only 48% of these had separate latrines for girls.

There is a need for continual efforts to keep sanitation on the agenda.

Improving sanitation is not just a question of constructing latrines and facilities. The

Health and Sustainable Development Association of Nigeria (HESDAN) has been working in partnership with the Local Government Education Authority and the Ministry of Health on a 'School Sanitation' campaign. This campaign was an attempt to inform, persuade and motivate the whole community to improve sanitation and hygiene practices in schools. Through this it aimed to help reduce the drop-out rate among girls, improve academic performance and prevent disease related to water and sanitation.

The primary target group was school children, as they are more open to new ideas and are at an age when they can be influenced to develop good habits. School

teachers, parents and policy-makers were secondary target groups. The campaign slogan was; 'school health, sanitation and nutrition: a responsibility for all'.

Our strategy was based on research. A baseline survey was done in 230 schools, to give an indication of the current hygiene practices, awareness of sanitation issues and presence of sanitation facilities in primary schools. We asked questions to find out what motivated people regarding sanitation. The results were used to design the materials and messages for the community campaign. We found that issues related to social status and prestige were important. The majority of the respondents in the survey said they were influenced mostly by what their neighbours thought of them.

Communicating the message

For people to want to be involved, hygiene issues needed to be seen as appealing and a positive thing to do. The communication had to be exciting, non-threatening, socially beneficial and fun. Therefore, we wanted the message to be, 'sanitation is attractive'. Since we would be communicating to such a diverse audience we needed to create different moods and messages for the different target audiences. Here are some of the messages we used:

For school children

- Being clean is good for you and your classmates.
- Be the envy of your classmates.

For school teachers and school management

- Good hygiene facilities will make your school rank among the best schools. You might win an award and more children will enrol in your school.

For parents

- A responsible parent ensures that their children go to a school of good standard.
- Get respect from your neighbours.

For politicians

- Create a sense of national pride and development by ensuring proper resource allocation, accountability and community participation around sanitation.

The cost
[of a campaign]
is surely worth it
for the benefits of
keeping sanitation
on the agenda

established in schools. Teachers and prefects were put in charge of monitoring sanitation and hygiene. Mini water filters were provided to primary schools.

Gathering feedback

To monitor the impact of the School Sanitation campaign, we commissioned a baseline survey at the start of the campaign and a final evaluation at the end. The evaluation found that over 90% of respondents were aware of the campaign. Feedback was also received informally from peers and community members. The following are some of the immediate responses and comments on the community campaign.

- People talked about the campaign messages with friends, neighbours and relatives.
- Many in the community reported that they had made changes in their own life by improving their latrine hygiene and cleanliness at home.
- School children realised that they should wash their hands after using the toilet and that it is their right to have good sanitation at school. They said they had learned to clean toilets at school and that they encouraged their siblings to respect hygienic conditions.
- Head teachers realised that children have a right to good sanitation and that parents have a right to inspect and monitor health, sanitation and nutrition

Planning a campaign

The project implementation committee met monthly and eventually weekly as the campaign launch date drew near, to plan the campaign. After research and planning, the following activities were carried out:

PRODUCTION OF MATERIALS Posters, leaflets and banners about safe water, nutrition, waste disposal and hand-washing were produced and distributed. We found that these adverts are a good way of alerting people to keep clean and observe good hygiene.

TRAINING WORKSHOPS We held training workshops for teachers and parents. The training covered topics such as health promotion, personal hygiene, preventing diseases, safe water, hand-washing, nutrition and community participation. The teachers and parents then trained pupils to be peer educators within their schools.

LAUNCH ACTIVITIES To publicise the campaign, clubs with activities related to sanitation, health and nutrition were



Geoff Crawford Tearfund

Hand-washing is an important part of good sanitation.

in schools. One head teacher reported that previously, pupils would often fall asleep in lessons or were frequently absent because of illness. Since being involved in the school health and sanitation programme, these pupils were now participating more actively in classes and sports activities.

- The Local Government Education Authority realised that it is their responsibility to inspect schools within their locality, to ensure they have good sanitation facilities, such as water, soap, water filters and latrines.

Conclusion

The campaign reminded people of their responsibility to maintain good sanitation in their communities. It encouraged community involvement, and greater accountability between parents, schools and education authorities. Community campaigns, though costly, can be effective for sharing information and for motivating behaviour change. The cost is surely worth it for the benefits that come from keeping sanitation on the agenda. What greater benefit can you have than ensuring the health of families within your community?

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Jim Loring Tearfund

Good sanitation is important in schools to ensure that pupils remain in good health.

Fresh vegetables in the desert

by Loiboku Jeremy

This garden has proved that there can be fresh vegetables in semi-arid areas

People living in dry, infertile areas are often faced with the problem of obtaining the fresh vegetables and fruits that are essential for healthy living. At times people might have money to purchase these essential commodities but they might not be available. When they are available they may be in very poor condition after transportation from their producer to reach the consumer.

I recently met an old man who had found a solution to the problem of the lack of fresh vegetables in his town. Wamba is a town in Samburu district in the Rift Valley Province of Kenya. It is located in a dry, semi-arid area, far from the vegetable-producing towns of Kenya. There is sandy soil, high temperatures and little rainfall and the majority of the people are poor and rely on government relief supplies.

The problem

There are very few job opportunities within the town and people rely on food that is brought by traders from towns

some 100km away. Fruit and vegetables always reach the residents of Wamba in poor condition, due to exposure to heat and other adverse conditions during transportation. Also, the supply of these commodities is only once a day, meaning that residents have to wait for their arrival in the evening, and there are no supplies over the weekend.

An opportunity

In 2006, a borehole was constructed on the bank of a river that runs near the town. The borehole was meant to provide clean drinking water for the poor residents.

However, Mr Stanley Lekutai, an elderly man in the town, saw another use for the borehole. Mr Stanley was knowledgeable in farming practices and knew how to grow vegetables and take care of crops. He believed he could rely on the borehole and start a vegetable garden to supply vegetables to the local residents. The land in Wamba is mostly communal land and he knew he could acquire a piece without problems. Due to the poor quality and lack of a consistent supply of vegetables to the town, Mr Stanley knew that there was a high demand for fresh vegetables, and since 90% of his village members were jobless he knew he could team up with them and start a garden big enough to supply the town with the required commodity.

Mr Stanley decided to try the idea. He met officials from the organisation that constructed the borehole and shared his idea with them. They agreed to allow him to use the borehole water to grow vegetables. Mr Stanley went to his village and talked to some women about his plans. He outlined his idea to them and promised to teach them how to cultivate the land. He managed to convince 15 women, and together they started the garden.

The method

- 1 They divided the 100 x 50 metre area into smaller beds and assigned each bed to a specific person. Since Mr Stanley knew that the soil was not very fertile he advised his group members to first scoop up the top-soil and heap it somewhere.
- 2 They dug out the lower soil to create hollow beds and heaped the dug-out soil on the edge of the garden.
- 3 Along the lower edge of the garden they dug a trench and heaped the soil along the perimeter of the garden. This

Planting in a sack

A new idea we have learned recently is using a sack to plant vegetables in. I hope this idea will help *Footsteps* readers around the world. This idea can work in urban, rural and in remote areas as well.

- Take a 100kg sack and an empty four-litre tin. Cut off the top and bottom of the tin to make a tube, and put this at the bottom of the sack.
- Put stones in the tin, and then put good soil around the tin. Then pull up the tin from the soil and put more stones in the tin on this new level, with more good soil around.
- Repeat this process until the sack is full, with a column of stones in the centre and soil around the stones. This is to help the water to spread easily into the soil in the sack.
- Cut holes all around the sack about 10cm apart. Transplant seedlings from a nursery in these holes and on top of the sack, about four inches apart. We have tried kale, onions and tomatoes.
- Add about 20 litres of water every three or four days.



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Loiboku Jeremy

The garden in Wamba town, Samburu district, Kenya.

trench and heap was to lead run-off rain water away from their garden to prevent flooding.

- 5 They fenced the garden with thorny acacia twigs and went to collect some top soil from other, more fertile areas. This they mixed with cow manure and spread in the hollow beds.
- 6 Then Mr Stanley made a nursery bed and planted the kale, spinach and cabbages in it. The nearby Catholic Mission and local NGOs helped him to buy the seeds.

The group watered the nursery until the seedlings were ready for transplanting into their garden.

Benefits

The transplanted seedlings grew very well. Mr Stanley and his partners started harvesting the vegetables and supplied them to the other residents of the town at good prices. The residents learned about the garden and today they flock there at noon and in the evening to buy vegetables for their meals.

Mr Stanley and his partners have benefited from their efforts as they now have:

- a source of income
- a job to perform during the day
- fresh vegetables for their families and the community
- a venture which uses their knowledge, skills and energy.

The establishment of the garden has also attracted a number of organisations to their village who have promised to assist Mr Stanley and his group to obtain any help they require, such as buying pesticides and seeds. The local residents have also admired the garden and, together with the schools in the area, have visited it to learn more about the creation and management of the garden. This garden has proved that there can be fresh vegetables in semi-arid areas too.

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BIBLE STUDY Innovation

Innovation means 'doing new things', or 'doing old things in a new way'. In the Bible we see innovation both in God's creation and in his 'new creation'.

Read Genesis 1:1-5

According to the Bible, in the beginning 'the earth was formless and desolate'. God created light and the first day. In the rest of the chapter we see how God created order, variety and beauty. Draw up a list of the things and beings of creation – and give thanks!

God created people in his own image, as the high point of creation; beings with whom God could 'walk and talk' (Genesis 3:8-10). Yet people's relationship with God was broken by disobedience, and a new order was established. God's plans and purposes for mankind remained the same, but much of the Old Testament is the story of mankind's unfaithfulness, disobedience and occasional repentance. The Law given through Moses did not keep or make people holy, so God revealed a new way to win mankind.

Read **Jeremiah 31:31-33**, in which God promised a new way.

- What was wrong with the old agreement (or covenant, or testament) between God and mankind?
- When was the time of this new way, and who was the prophet speaking about? (see John 1:14-18)
- How was the new agreement different from the old agreement?

Christians believe that we have forgiveness for our sins through what God has done for us in Jesus Christ. In the gospels we see how Jesus' life and teaching offer us a new way and new life with God. What descriptions of our new life are there in the letters of the New Testament? (Consider: 2 Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 4:23-24, Colossians 3:8-10, 1 Peter 2:2)

God is a creator, an innovator. At the end of the Bible, in Revelation 21:5, it is written: '*The one who sits on the throne said, "And now I make all things new!"*' Praise God whose mercies are new every morning and who assures us of our place in the new creation.

We are all made in God's image, and many people display great creativity. We can acknowledge that change is part of life, and welcome new ideas from people within our communities. Often young people are full of new ideas. Older people should create opportunities to discuss these and help young people to develop responses to the challenges that will face them in later life. Not all new ideas are good ideas, so it is important to seek advice and to test new ideas, to reassure each other that the changes which come about are consistent with God's unchangeable purposes.

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Setting up a community knowledge centre

by Esther Kabasiita

A community knowledge centre is a place which has a wide collection of books, articles, videos, and technical documents that provide a range of developmental information for the community. It is a place where people can come to learn and to share information.

A community knowledge centre is being implemented on a pilot basis in Lukwanga parish, Wakiso district of Uganda, with the aim of meeting the basic information needs of the Lukwanga community. The Centre will also provide other services such as a meeting point for the community, training in information management, hosting literacy groups, exhibitions and other community activities.

This Centre will share knowledge, but also promote knowledge that already exists at the grassroots level. The Centre aims to reduce the knowledge gap that exists within communities, and strengthen the capacity of community members to document and share information.

Some of the challenges that we faced at the initial stage of setting up the Centre include:

Involving women

Cultural traditions restrict many women to looking after children at home, and they have little opportunity to obtain information. One of the roles for the women who are on the steering committee that manages the Centre is to explain to other women how they can benefit from the services offered and encourage them to participate.

Good communication

The capacity to repackage important information such as government plans, initiatives, projects and research findings, in a way that makes them accessible to the community may not be as easy as it sounds. The success of the Centre lies in its ability to ensure that the information it gives out can actually be used, especially by the local community. Special care must be taken when simplifying complicated



Esther Kabasiita

Many women have little opportunity to obtain information.

information to ensure that the message is not changed. Technical information should be checked by experts where possible.

Community ownership

To ensure that it will be sustainable in the long term, Lukwanga Community Knowledge Centre must eventually be owned by the community itself. It is being set up with a plan that will see the community gradually taking control of it. It is therefore important that the benefits of the Centre to the community are appreciated by all. Because of poverty, many community members do not value reading and knowledge, as getting food is a higher priority. By showing videos on relevant topics, such as post-harvest handling of maize, the Centre has gained their attention and involvement. People appreciate the opportunity to watch a film at no cost, and they also receive valuable

information. For the community to want to take responsibility for the Centre, members have to appreciate the value of sharing information and knowledge in community development.

Meeting the needs of users

It is very important to decide on the core service, which should be critical to the community and attract users, and then structure the other services around this. The challenge is that the priorities and the needs of the users vary and therefore it is hard to identify the most general need of the community. Conducting a community survey will help to identify their felt needs. Flexibility is important because people's information needs change with time.

Forming partnerships

Working together with local government and NGOs will facilitate networking, provide new sources of information and help to mobilise users. The challenge of developing these partnerships is that most organisations are not interested in joining until they see the Centre is already operational and is fully utilised by the community. Participating in events organised by the other organisations is an opportunity to lobby them. If the Centre has programmes which fit with their objectives, they will also be more willing to participate.

The Centre aims to reduce the knowledge gap that exists within communities

Conclusion

There are many challenges to setting up a community knowledge centre. However, it is a worthwhile initiative, and with careful planning and by involving the community, most challenges can be overcome or turned into opportunities.

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tilz website www.tearfund.org/tilz Tearfund's international publications can be downloaded **free of charge** from our website. Search for any topic to help in your work.



Keep the best, change the rest: Participatory tools for working with communities on gender and sexuality

This toolkit is aimed at organisations and community practitioners who are working with groups and communities on HIV, sexual and reproductive health, and rights issues. It contains participatory activities and tools which enable groups of men and women of different ages to explore how gender and sexuality affect their lives, and to identify the changes which they wish to make to improve their relationships and sexual health.

It is available to download as a pdf free of charge from the AIDS Alliance website:
www.aidsalliance.org/custom_asp/publications/view.asp?publication_id=257

CTA Practical Guide Series

The CTA Practical Guide Series provides simple, accurate and well-illustrated information for small-scale agriculture and rural development enterprises. These colourful, eight page, easy-to-use leaflets have been designed with the hands-on end user in mind. The leaflets cover topics such as animal production and health, crop production and protection, environmental protection and natural resources management, post-harvest technology, processing and fisheries.

To order the guides, contact the ACP-EU Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA).

CTA Publications Distribution Service
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The Netherlands
Email: cta@cta.int
Website: www.cta.int



Useful websites

There are many websites that can provide a source of useful information and new ideas for health and development workers. There is also the potential to network with other practitioners on-line, to share learning and discuss ideas.

Appropriate technology

www.practicalaction.org/practicalanswers

Practical Action's website provides useful information and introductory factsheets on a broad range of appropriate technologies. They can be downloaded free of charge.

www.i4at.org/library

A useful source of ideas and designs for various tools from the Institute for Appropriate Technology. Includes sections on solar devices, mechanical devices, animal husbandry, water systems, building, agriculture and agroforestry, as well as links to other resource sites.

Sustainable agriculture

www.gardenorganic.org.uk/international_programme/ip_publications.php
Provides free information and advice on organic agriculture for developing countries. Around 60 simple booklets and information sheets on a range of issues from composting and weed control to multipurpose trees are available to download.

www.leisa.info

Centre for Information on Low External Input and Sustainable Agriculture.

Health

www.who.org

For up-to-date and country-specific information and resources on many health topics.

www.chgn.org

Join the Community Health Global Network on-line free of charge, to access information on a range of community health topics.

General

www.crisscrossed.net/2007/09/19/an-overview-of-blogging-for-development

Exploring the potential of blogging for development.

www.irinnews.org

Providing humanitarian news and analysis.

www.eldis.org and www.developmentgateway.org

Websites sharing development policy, practice and research, tools and resources, and linking individuals and agencies involved in development work across the world.

Voting and literacy

by Ladislas Burume Bihagarhizi

Mumoshu is a rural settlement, 22km from the town of Bukavu, in the east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). During the last legislative and presidential elections in DRC, I was one of the independent witnesses in a polling station in Mumoshu, in the Kabare constituency.

It was noted, after the count, that several ballot papers were null and void. This happened in three different ways:

- several ballot papers were left blank
- some were marked in the wrong places
- many more were marked in several different places.

All this meant that a large number of ballot papers were not able to be counted. This attracted our attention, and inspired us to find out the reasons behind these problems. We believed the main cause was the high rate of illiteracy among the voters in Mumoshu.

We wanted to understand and to analyse the difficulties facing the voters, to find out if they were linked to education, and to find ways to improve the situation at the next ballot. To do this, we conducted a survey in Mumoshu. It focused on the period from 30 July 2006 to 18 March 2007 and on individuals who had participated in the legislative and presidential elections. We took a random sample of 180 people of varying ages between 18 and 60. We used interviews, questionnaires and direct observation.

Education levels

We found that the majority of the people questioned had a low level of formal education. This was more noticeable among the women than the men. Not one woman had reached higher education level. This can be explained by the fact that in the rural area of Kabare, women are traditionally the most marginalised people. They do not have much access to

information and have little opportunity to gain skills. Their participation in decision-making is minimal, both at home and in the community.

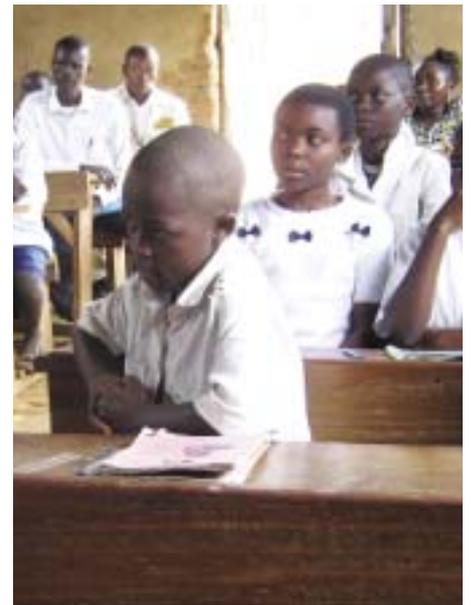
Method of filling in ballot papers

People filled in the ballot papers either by pen or by finger print. Our survey results showed that 27.7% of people admitted that they had deposited blank ballot papers in the box. When we were independent witnesses in the polling station at the time of the count, we had noticed that the majority of the void ballot papers were those which had finger prints in inappropriate places. The very fact of filling in the ballot paper by means of a finger print suggests that the voter cannot write and consequently also cannot read. There is reason to believe that it is this same category of voters who deposited papers with several marks or none at all in the ballot box.

From these facts we confirmed that there was a close connection between the number of void ballot papers and the number of non-literate voters.

Conclusion

From our survey it is clear that the voters of the Mumoshu settlement came up against two main problems during polling. Firstly, the vast majority could not read or write and therefore they had difficulty in filling in the ballot papers properly. Secondly, the voters had no experience of free, democratic and transparent elections, owing to the dictatorial regime which lasted more than 30 years in the country.



Laura Webster Tearfund

Improving literacy helps to ensure that people can participate effectively in the election process.

Recommendations

How can we overcome the problem of illiteracy in the Mumoshu settlement and mitigate its negative impact on the next elections? We have tried to bring a simple solution to this problem, by setting up four literacy centres in Mumoshu for women and teenage girls. Our survey showed that the majority of people who are non-literate in Mumoshu are women. However, there is a saying that 'to educate women is to educate the whole nation'. The objective of this project is to reduce the rate of illiteracy among the women and teenage girls of Mumoshu before the organisation of the next legislative and presidential elections in 2011.

Literacy is the keystone of development. If rural people have the opportunity to read, write and do sums, then they can take charge of their own development.

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