



# Faith in development: Transcript

## Season 3: Church and Community Transformation

### Summary keywords

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### Speakers

Pete Dawson, Bethany Sikes, Chalwe Nyirenda

### Episode 4: Advocating for change

#### Pete Dawson 00:09

Hello and welcome back to season three of the Faith in Development podcast, brought to you by Tearfund, a Christian relief and development agency working in over 50 countries around the world. This is a podcast of storytelling and conversation as we explore different areas of development through the lens of faith, drawing on the wealth of incredible people who will share their learning and experience. This season we're focusing on the church, and why Tearfund believes working with the church is critical to ending global poverty. I'm Pete Dawson and once again I'm joined by my co-host Bethany Sikes. And so Bethany, last episode, we heard about what it looks like in practice when churches start to meet the needs of their community after starting the church and community transformation process, or CCT for short. So could you just give us a short recap of what we touched on last episode?

#### Bethany Sikes 00:57

Definitely. It was such a good episode hearing from Peninah, so many great stories, of the church taking ownership of their community's journey out of poverty and starting so many different and amazing community projects. We learned through the Local Church, Lasting Transformation study that nine out of ten communities go on to improve or build facilities like water points, schools and health clinics after starting CCT. And I loved hearing about so many of the different ways that churches are acting, because they're responding to the specific needs of their communities.

### **Pete Dawson 01:32**

Yeah, it was incredible. I loved how much she rooted it in story, in individual stories. And it was so inspiring. But this episode, what is it we're diving into?

### **Bethany Sikes 01:41**

Well, like you said, we've heard so many great examples of how CCT mobilises church to act in their community. But what if CCT can inspire churches to go further? So that's what we're looking at in this episode, exploring how CCT helps churches to go beyond what they can do themselves, to advocate for greater change. Now, if you can cast your mind back to episode one of our series, we heard from Charlotte and she was telling us all about how CCT works, and she told us this great story from Rwanda of a community that had started CCT. And through that they had started a plantation of, I think it was bananas. For two reasons: one, for the crops themselves, and second, to protect themselves from landslides coming down off the hillside. And their project got recognised by the government and they started to receive some funding for their saplings. And I believe it was then rolled out to other communities as well. So that's an example of churches going beyond what they can do themselves and starting to engage with local and national government. So we're going to be exploring that side of CCT today.

### **Pete Dawson 02:43**

Fantastic. So let's dive straight in and in this episode, we're going to be joined online by our colleague Chalwe Nyirenda, who supports church and community transformation advocacy across the world. So a big welcome to Chalwe. Thank you so much for joining us today. You're calling from Zambia. Is that right?

### **Chalwe Nyirenda 03:07**

Yes, I am in southern Africa.

### **Pete Dawson 03:10**

Amazing. Could you just tell us a little bit about your role, maybe how long you've been with Tearfund and a little bit about what you do?

### **Chalwe Nyirenda 03:17**

Yeah. So my name, as I mentioned, I'm Chalwe Nyirenda and I'm based in Zambia, southern Africa, and I have the singular honour of leading Tearfund's work around integrating advocacy into church and community transformation work. And I've been in Tearfund for the last four years. I think. Yeah.

### **Pete Dawson 03:40**

Fantastic, fantastic. So for those people listening over the last few episodes, we've been hearing about how CCT encourages people to take ownership of their personal and community journey out of poverty. I get two questions, really. First of all, when we talk about advocacy, what is advocacy and how does CCT advocacy work?

### **Chalwe Nyirenda 04:06**

So in Tearfund, we define advocacy really as the influencing of the decisions, the policies and the actions that powerful decision-makers make. And this influencing is to the end that they are able to then address

underlying causes of poverty and bring about good development for the citizens. So when we talk about CCT advocacy, I hear in the previous podcasts you have talked about CCT. So in CCT advocacy, we're really just trying to integrate advocacy into that CCT process.

### **Pete Dawson 04:52**

Okay.

### **Chalwe Nyirenda 04:53**

We know that in CCT, one of the key things is for communities to take ownership of their own development. And so as part of taking that ownership, we believe that one of the resources that they can draw down on is the government. So in CCT advocacy, we then support the churches and the communities to understand how governments function, how the governments come up with their laws and policies, so that they can engage with them and be able to draw down on the government as a resource.

### **Pete Dawson 05:34**

Fantastic. And so for you, what are some of the advantages of CCT advocacy – how does it serve CCT? And what's happening in country?

### **Chalwe Nyirenda 05:47**

So some of the advantages of CCT advocacy, and one of the big ones is that particularly when it's used in the CCT process, the communities will have identified the issues that require intervention from the local government. They would have gone through a process where they set out what they can address on their own, and also be clear on what support they'll need from the government and even other development actors. So CCT advocacy then, is very helpful because it's sustainable. Once the communities have the skills, it's like they're taught how to fish instead of being given the fish and so they become their own agents of change. And whatever issue comes up and needs government intervention, they'll know how to get that support. But the other advantage is that it also seeks to address what I would refer to as systemic problems affecting the delivering of services by the government. So sometimes when we focus on what we call the fruit or the symptoms, but not understand what is causing this problem, and CCT advocacy interrogates that very well, because the communities use what I would refer to as social accountability tools.

### **Pete Dawson 07:16**

Okay.

### **Chalwe Nyirenda 07:17**

Can I give another advantage?

### **Pete Dawson 07:18**

Yeah. Of course.

### **Chalwe Nyirenda 07:19**

Yes. Another one is when they use those social accountability tools, they then have evidence. So it's not subjective information that they're taking to government institutions, but they have evidence of the claims they are making. And this evidence then gives them credibility when they do go to the government to

present their case. And in many instances, governments already have existing such accountability mechanisms. So communities are not having to start from scratch. But it's really just encouraging them to know what those mechanisms are and how they can take advantage of them to support their efforts at development.

### **Pete Dawson 08:05**

I see. A quick question for you. How easy is it for the church to actually voice that to the government? Is it, are the government quite open to hearing this in the church and having it presented? Is that ever a stumbling block or an issue?

### **Chalwe Nyirenda 08:20**

So in Zambia, as I think in many places around the world, it's really a mixed bag. And sometimes it depends on the issues that the church is bringing to the government. But also it also depends on the relationships that those church leaders have built over time with government. So for those that have built relationships it's easier for them, because they're already trusted. And again, for us, that's why we love working with churches, because they're usually a trusted institution by both the government and the community. So they are well placed to then bridge this gap, and support conversations between the community and the government.

### **Pete Dawson 09:12**

Fantastic. So I guess my next question is what does CCT advocacy look like in practice? How is it outworked in the church through CCT?

### **Chalwe Nyirenda 09:25**

So I can try and answer that using an example. So in Zimbabwe, Tearfund has been working, implementing CCT and they decided to then integrate advocacy into what we'd refer to as their CCT side. And one of the tools that they used was what we call the community scorecard. And with that community scorecard, the community members, supported by the church, they were trained in how to use the scorecard. And they used this scorecard then to gather evidence on key issues that the community was struggling with. And one of the issues that came up, kept coming up with the conversations in the community was a lack of a waiting shelter and a maternity room at a local clinic. So some of these issues may sound very basic, but for some communities they're difference between life and death. For example, for a mother who's about to deliver a baby. And so for that community, it was a big issue. And they used the findings from their scorecard to then raise resources as a community. They put together, I think, if I remember correctly, they got building sand, building blocks, they identified the individuals who had the skills to build, but then they also recognised that there were aspects that they could not cover, and they needed to then engage the local authority to provide that support. So it was support around the medical equipment that was needed to run the maternity room, as well as a dedicated health staff to support that wing. So that's one example of, you know, CCT advocacy and what it looks like at the community level.

### **Bethany Sikes 11:20**

It's amazing to zoom out and look at the whole journey of a church, starting with the Bible studies and the fact that it all starts with the individual mindset change. Believing, you know, in their potential and starting to look at what resources they have all the way through to advocating to the local government for medical

equipment, you know, in that one church's example. It's amazing when you zoom out and think about all the steps that have had to take place. It must look like a massive change for the community.

### **Chalwe Nyirenda 11:57**

And it is, and I guess sometimes maybe that's the balance, so there are the issues that we can look at that are global. But then there are also issues that are so close to the day-to-day living of communities, such that for them, it makes a world of difference that they have a water point that is closer or that they have the waiting shelter, you know, or even, maybe having access to electricity in a community.

### **Bethany Sikes 12:31**

Yeah.

### **Pete Dawson 12:32**

Fantastic. Did you say you have another example of how this works in practice?

### **Chalwe Nyirenda 12:35**

Maybe switching continents. In Nepal the government actually had created a law which gave communities a way to participate meaningfully in development work that affected them. And, this was to be done through, you know, a participatory planning process, which is another source of accountability too. And the law guided that local governments needed to allocate funding for development work. And proposals were supposed to be gotten from what they call village development committees. However, in reality, that was not often the case. The process was usually taken up or left to a few influential leaders and politicians. And of course then this meant that the plans did not really reflect the community needs and views. And so to reverse this, one of our partners, the United Mission to Nepal, mobilised some village development committees to help increase their participation in community development. And they trained them in the participatory planning process and trained them in how to participate in the whole process that the government undertakes to come up with the plans and in how to access local funds. And really to cut the long story short, some of the results when the village development committees began to participate were seeing funds being released to pay for community projects, and some of the projects were like sewing training for single ladies, the provision of materials for early childhood centres, irrigation channel maintenance, toilet construction, you know, projects like that that had been important to the community but had not been attended to previously. So that's another example of work that has gone on around CCT advocacy with the support of a Tearfund partner.

### **Pete Dawson 14:46**

Fantastic.

### **Bethany Sikes 14:47**

Would you say that CCT advocacy is generally happening at the local church level, or is there examples of it happening at a national scale?

### **Chalwe Nyirenda 15:00**

So the CCT advocacy can and does take place at different levels from community level, as I've given examples, and it goes all the way to national, even regional and global level. So an example of a regional

level CCT advocacy is some work that Tearfund and a network of churches have been doing in Latin America and the Caribbean, where they've been running a regional campaign, speaking out on the plight of immigrants. The campaign, I believe, is called *As Born Amongst Us*. And so that's an example of an issue that, you know, is affecting communities, but there's a recognition that it goes all the way to the regional level and therefore the advocacy then has to take place at a regional level. And when we look at churches again, that's why we're so excited to work with them, because many denominations have changed churches and systems from the grassroots all the way to national, regional and even intercontinental level. So imagine what power and what great opportunity they have to be able to speak to those in power at all those levels.

### **Bethany Sikes 16:26**

I heard recently about an opportunity in Burundi with the government. I don't know if you could speak a little bit to that.

### **Chalwe Nyirenda 16:36**

Yeah. So that's a great example. Thank you for that one, Bethany. That just shows how, you know, sometimes the CCT work speaks for itself. So in some instances, like Burundi, the communities have been doing such a great job of mobilising their resources and attending to their development needs that the government in some of the provinces sat up and said 'What's going on here?' And when explanations have been given to them, there are provinces where the government has now been the ones to request for the training, even for their officials. So that's an amazing demonstration of how the work sometimes speaks for itself. And communities are not necessarily being the ones to go to the government, but the government is actually coming to them and thinking and seeking ways in which they can work together. So that was really exciting.

### **Pete Dawson 17:38**

Fantastic. And one of the things that we've drawn on, and given focus to over the last few episodes, is CCT is fully rooted in Scripture. It's the mandate of the church to seek the transformation, the restoration, of the world. And I guess the advocacy piece is so true. And obviously one of the go-to passages we often speak about with advocacy is in Proverbs – it talks about speaking up for those who cannot speak for themselves, and do you often find there are contexts where actually the church is giving voice where many people wouldn't? Do you find that the church is actually... do you find it's an opportunity for the church, in a way, to put the light on the stand, to give voice to some of the pressing issues in nations?

### **Chalwe Nyirenda 18:25**

Yes. They do have a great opportunity. And I think, like you've mentioned, for the church it's not a matter of choice, if I can put it like that. If we are going to be obedient to what the scripture says, then we can't stand by as church leaders and watch injustice going on. And in CCT advocacy, of course, in supporting the churches, we support them in how they can do the advocacy in a way that takes account of their context. And so some of the strategies that they may have to use, to reduce the risk to themselves and even to the communities that they serve. But they really do have great power as church leaders and great opportunity to speak out. And they do have that obligation as set out in the scriptures, I think.

### **Pete Dawson 19:22**

That's great. And I guess that, I think it was Peninah talked about waking a sleeping giant, I guess, advocacy is a great way of the church being able to do that.

Bethany, a quick question for you, so going back to the study, so do we have evidence to demonstrate the link between CCT and advocacy?

### **Bethany Sikes 19:40**

Yeah, we do have some really exciting evidence in that study. And so in the Local Church, Lasting Transformation study, we found that people in CCT communities are 46 per cent more likely to raise issues with decision makers. And that can look different in lots of different contexts. And they're also 35 per cent more likely to feel like they can influence decisions in their community when we compare them to people living in communities where CCT's not started. So this really speaks to that mindset change that people experience. That gives them the confidence and the self-belief to start speaking up. And when you look at how we define holistic wellbeing, using the Light Wheel framework, being able to participate and influence decisions, being made on matters that concern one community member, it is important for everyone's sense of wellbeing and sense of belonging.

Yeah, it's really exciting evidence there. But Chalwe, I'd love to hear from you. What is the sort of scale of this kind of advocacy work? Our study looked at four countries, but I know that you work to support advocacy in CCT across the world.

### **Chalwe Nyirenda 20:55**

So I'll make a separation. So in terms of Tearfund's advocacy efforts in general, I think we have quite a big reach – for the last three and a half years we're talking about 5.7 billion, if I can even say those numbers, of the impact and reach of the work that we've done.

### **Bethany Sikes 21:40**

Wow so 5.7 billion people have benefited from Tearfund's advocacy work. Chalwe, could you unpack that a little bit? How do we have confidence in that number? What sort of things does that cover?

### **Chalwe Nyirenda 21:33**

So this covers the full breadth of Tearfund's work around policy influencing, across many subjects. We've done quite a bit of work around climate change, but also various policies that our partners have supported to bring about or to amend. And as you know, once a policy is changed at the national level, its impact is nationwide. And so that's why we can lay claim such figures. For CCT advocacy, we've focused a bit more on studies that specifically look into the different impacts in the community. So it's been about when there's work going on in CCT advocacy we then try and do an evaluation of that project. But even in those specific studies, it's been great to see how the latest study that you've just been referring to is very much in agreement with the previous research that we've done, for example, the one we did in Zimbabwe. The project I referred to earlier, again, that was a demonstration of the effectiveness of CCT advocacy. And going back to the example of a maternity room, there'll be many more people who will use it beyond even those individuals who participated in CCT. So really it gives you a sense of just how wide the benefit is. We've also conducted another study – we love studies! – in Bolivia, and for that study, we had used a methodology called qualitative impact assessment protocol – 'QuIP' for short. And again, it showed the positive impact that CCT has in communities that, in communities where it has been done. And in that same study, we also noticed that the positive impact was even higher in a community where CCT advocacy was being done, a community called Tipa Tipa. And even for them following their training, they were able to successfully raise funds from the municipal government for a number of projects, particularly water projects, which they had. They had struggled with water issues for a long time. And of course, the setting up of the water project in

turn assisted in their agricultural productivity and also supported improvement in physical health of members of the community. Again, for me, that's impact that I cannot easily put numbers to, but you already see how it supports the community's development and wellbeing.

### **Bethany Sikes 24:36**

Mmm – and as we were talking about in the last episode, the Local Church Lasting Transformation study showed that nine out of ten CCT communities in the study reported a new or improved community asset after participating in CCT. So when you, like you said, that ripple effect of how many people benefit, from one church advocating and acting in their community. Yeah, it's amazing to think, and a hard one to put a number to.

### **Chalwe Nyirenda 25:07**

Yes. Yeah. I think just related to the study and the nine out of ten CCT facilitators talking about the improvement of community assets, I think I would just add that it's clear that though the church and community are leading that process, they derived full benefit even from those assets that they come up on their own. They still need to engage the government. You know, it may be to get permission to build because you can't just build anywhere. It may be to get guidance on the standards, for example, of a school or to understand the policies around certain projects that they would take up, but even to get resources from the government itself. And so we really do see the added benefit of advocacy to strengthen even the ideas and processes that communities want to take a lead on.

### **Pete Dawson 26:11**

So, Chalwe, advocating for community needs was particularly important during the Covid pandemic. Could you just tell us how churches responded to that?

### **Chalwe Nyirenda 26:20**

Yeah. So during the Covid pandemic, the church was very proactive in its responses. Again, we did another learning review, found that the local churches and denominations who had been involved in CCT spoke up for the needs of the most vulnerable during the pandemic. And they were – they had a head start in that because they already had existing relationships with decision-makers, so they were able to reach out to those contacts and be able to speak up for those that were most affected or most vulnerable during that time. And if I can give again an example, I talked about Latin America and the Caribbean. During Covid they really – church there spoke as a united voice. Going to the national and even regional governments and international agencies advocating for free vaccines, health, food programmes and legal status for the migrants because they were a group that was very vulnerable during that time. They have moved from their country, they're in transit. So they don't have access then to vaccines that citizens of their resident countries had. So the church stood up and spoke for the migrants. And just talked to the national and regional governments on their behalf.

### **Bethany Sikes 28:05**

That's a great example. Do you have any other examples from during the Covid 19 pandemic?

### **Chalwe Nyirenda 28:12**

Yes. So another example is how during our learning review, we also found that a lot of the partners, the



churches, modelled compliance in the time of Covid. So for example, in Tanzania, though the government did not officially declare Covid a pandemic, one of our partners still went ahead to provide guidelines to their local and national level churches on how to conduct services, the church services, and ensure that Covid protection measures were followed. In an effort, again, to curb the spread of the virus. But also another learning from the lending review was churches had an opportunity – and they quickly took it up – of adopting innovative digital platforms for their advocacy work, but also even for their preaching. And an example I can give is in Ethiopia, where one of our partners, the Evangelical Churches Fellowship of Ethiopia, worked closely with a national church network, saw an opportunity to influence the government to allow churches to use national television channels at prime time, sometimes, to reach out to Ethiopians in prayer, in church services, and also with Covid prevention messages. And this was really a historic collaboration, with the religious leaders and the government in Ethiopia, because previously such efforts had been prohibited. So this is another example I can give.

### **Pete Dawson 29:57**

That's just been so encouraging to hear. Thanks so much for joining us. There's so much to take from that. Is there anything else you want to add about what's happening currently with advocacy and the church?

### **Chalwe Nyirenda 30:11**

I think in Tearfund we continue trying to support the churches, by providing resources that they can use, really working as a support more than leading the advocacy work ourselves. But there's also exciting work in Africa, where influencers, church leaders are coming together through a continental forum to try and lead the charge of turning every church as a transformation centre in Africa. That is just exciting to think of how it would look like if it came to pass. Yeah.

### **Pete Dawson 30:56**

Chalwe, that is so incredibly inspiring and exciting to hear the fact that you want to, got a heart to see all those churches mobilised and equipped is phenomenal.

Do you know what? That that episode inspired me in so many ways, and the one thing that stood out to me is, I don't think we realise the collective power that the church has. We often think about the immediate actions that we can take, but actually we have so much influence and power when we use our voice. And it was just so encouraging to hear what Chalwe was saying, and the difference and the impact the church can make, actually, when it unites in one voice and using their voice, in the cause of justice and seeing transformation. Have you got any particular highlights?

### **Bethany Sikes 31:48**

Yeah. I think just knowing that we have evidence or being able to show that CCT helps people to speak out more, and speak to people in positions of power as well. It is really exciting. And we, you know, just that journey that churches go on. You know, CCT all starts with the individual having that mindset change. And, I don't know, just zooming out and thinking about an individual who's never really spoken up before, now being part of something where maybe the government is taking notice of what they're doing or advocating for change. So I think just thinking about that ripple effect, from an individual to a church, a community to goodness knows what... from there the potential is really exciting.

### **Pete Dawson 32:35**

So true. And so in the next episode, continuing that idea of rippling out, what is it we're going to be pushing into and looking at next episode?

### **Bethany Sikes 32:44**

Okay, I'm really excited about our next episode. I've been waiting for this one, and we're going to be, yeah, we're going to be digging into something slightly different. We're going to be looking at this concept of social value or social impact and trying to quantify what the social impact of CCT is. So we're actually going to be joined by Lizzie Trotter, who works for State of Life, who we partnered with in the Local Church, Lasting Transformation study, and State of Life are specialists in this type of social value measurement. So don't worry, I'm sure there's some terms in there that are unfamiliar. It's going to be really accessible, really interesting, deep dive into this kind of wellbeing measurement. And it will help us to put a really tangible figure to what the impact of CCT is.

### **Pete Dawson 33:29**

And that is certainly exciting, the fact that we can measure this and measure the impact. I'm looking forward to that. And lastly, Bethany, how can people find out a little bit more about anything mentioned in this or any of the previous episodes?

### **Bethany Sikes 33:40**

Yeah. So you can head over to Tearfund Learn which is our hub of thousands of free resources. And you can actually search for anything on there. So whether that's the QuIP study that Chalwe mentioned, which is the qualitative impact assessment protocol, very catchy name. Or you can – she also mentioned a really great story from a community in Bolivia called Tipa Tipa, there's a video case study from there. So just pop that into the search bar and you'll be able to find it. So that's at [learn.tearfund.org](https://learn.tearfund.org). And if you want to find out about the Local Church, Lasting Transformation study, you can add /CCT-impact to find out more.

### **Pete Dawson 34:18**

Thanks, Bethany. And thank you to everyone who's tuning in and journeying with us as we unpack the amazing work of CCT. We hope you can join us in the next episode.