

Church mobilisation among the urban poor: a case study of Transforma in Lima, Peru



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San Juan de Lurigancho is a poor district of the city of Lima in Peru. There are over 430 evangelical churches in the district. Peace and Hope, a Christian organisation, set up the Transforma Project to encourage those churches to respond to the needs in the area.

Aim

To encourage and enable evangelical churches to develop actions of transformation in their communities from an integral mission perspective.

Steps in the process

1. Relationship-building between Transforma staff and local pastors.
2. Surveys carried out to identify local church attitudes to integral mission.
3. Survey findings presented to local pastors.
4. Identification of five main issues that local churches were interested in addressing.
5. Training workshops for all pastors and church members. At the end of the training, participants took and applied the ideas with their own churches.
6. Intensive accompaniment and facilitation of selected churches in the poorest areas.

How the process worked

Transforma staff made efforts to build relationships with local church leaders. They invited key pastors to form an advisory group. They also invited pastors to lead their staff devotions and they compiled and circulated a monthly devotional guide written by the pastors. Once relationships had deepened, Transforma carried out a survey with the pastors to identify the understanding of integral mission within local churches and the extent to which they practised it.

The following findings were made:

- Local churches rarely focused on meeting needs of those outside the church
- Local churches only tended to provide one-off support to individuals rather than ongoing support
- When churches had tried to meet needs in the community, few had carried out a needs assessment beforehand.

When the findings were presented at a breakfast for local pastors, many of the pastors became interested in receiving Transforma training. Training was provided to the pastors on the five main issues that the local churches were interested in addressing. Some of the local churches then worked together. For example, Transforma worked with four churches to carry out a needs assessment in the local community. Providing educational support to children was seen by the community as an important need. The churches therefore decided to provide a four-week holiday education programme for children in the area.

Transforma staff visited the churches regularly, envisioning and providing tools and resources for the church pastors to envision their congregations about integral mission. Transforma helped the pastors to think through ideas and helped to start off initiatives.

There was a retreat for ten pastors to promote unity and help them to develop a joint vision for community transformation in San Juan de Lurigancho.

Impact

The process is ongoing, but there are already signs of impact:

- Churches have grown in confidence and want to do more in their communities.
- One hundred and twenty children attended the holiday education programme for children. The leaders of the community where the holiday club was run were so pleased with what the churches are doing that they offered land to one local church so that a church could be built in the centre of the community.

Lessons learned

The commitment of leaders to integral mission is essential. It has been harder to mobilise churches with leaders who have no experience of working with poor people.

Gender issues must be considered. Some of the training workshops were originally carried out on Saturday mornings. This was not an appropriate time for women to attend. Future training will be planned at times that are more accessible to women as well as men.

[Click here for a more detailed version of this case study in English.](#)

Source: *ROOTS 11: Partnering with the local church*, Tearfund 2007, pages 30-31