

An overview of Tearfund partners involved in open-ended church mobilisation

Transforma Project, Peace and Hope, Peru

The Transforma Project has mobilised many churches in urban areas of Peru to take action in addressing poverty issues in their community.

[Click here](#) for a case study of their work.

Church, Community and Change, UK

Developed by Tearfund in 1998, Church, Community and Change is a facilitated training process that helps churches in the UK become more involved in meeting the needs of those living in poverty in their local communities.

There are four main elements to Church, Community and Change:

- Preparing the church congregation for community involvement.
- Listening to what people in the community are saying are the real needs
- Thinking through and deciding on an appropriate response to identified needs
- Planning and implementing the new initiative

These elements are addressed by a combination of church workshops led by an external facilitator and bible studies and learning activities led by a co-ordination team within the church.

Case study of Church, Community and Change

The leadership of an independent church in a rural Scottish village was aware that the church was not connecting with those who lived in a poorer part of the village. As the church began the Church, Community and Change process it also began a building project to turn part of the church building into a café.

With the help of a Tearfund-appointed external facilitator the church spent three to four months exploring its attitudes towards community involvement. Doing this helped the church to explain the purpose of the café and to gain greater commitment from its members. The pastor said: "Before the process we had members who said "Why are we doing this project?" Nobody now asks that question." The church then spent another six months listening to the views of people in the community. For the first time, the church was actually listening to what outsiders thought – a major change. As a result, they changed the opening times and style of the café to meet the needs of young mothers.

Church, Community and Change helped to increase the "ownership" of the café by church members, and affirmed the direction the church was taking. The church has a new vision for its community and has lots of ideas for new initiatives for the future as a result. In addition, the church has become recognised as a central part of the village community. For example, the local council is now basing an internet site in the café.

To obtain a comprehensive guide to Church, Community and Change, and all the training manuals and Bible study material, write to David Vincent, Tearfund UK.

Discovery, UK

The Discovery Process was developed by Tearfund in 2004 as a quicker and less "wordy" alternative to Church, Community and Change. The core purpose of Discovery is to enable churches in the UK's poorest communities (urban priority areas) to engage with their communities to bring transformation and hope. What is distinct to the Discovery approach is that it is designed to build on the skills of those with limited formal educational background or with learning disabilities. Much of the materials developed are visual. It also uses games and experiential activities to make learning and reflection meaningful, accessible and easy to accomplish. The focus of Discovery is on a core team within the church of 8-10 people. They go through the whole process as a group, even to the point of running an initiative. Only once their confidence and skills are built, does the process then seek to fully involve the whole church.

The programme is delivered through six stages:

1. Celebrating who we are and celebrating our community
2. Understanding our community and identifying needs
3. Exploring specific needs that could be responded to
4. Dreaming of possible things that could be done to make a difference
5. Planning what might be done
6. Preparing to do it

Each stage involves three main elements:

- 1) team building (so as to help the core team work well together, be less reliant on the church pastor, and become a self-sustaining resource group within the church)
- 2) spiritual reflection (so as to root the whole process in prayer and biblical insight)
- 3) basic community development activities (so as to enable a practical rapid response of small but significant initiatives).

It is understood that a combination of these elements are crucial in strengthening a small group to become a dynamic catalyst for change in both church and community.

Case study of Discovery

An Anglican church in a poor area of Liverpool undertook the Discovery programme and developed a children's after school club. The church nominated a small group of volunteers to meet once a month for 6 months to identify a need in the community that the church could meet. In the meetings, the group did three types of activities: activities that helped them to work as a team; activities to explore God's heart and passion for the vulnerable and needy; and activities using practical tools for identifying community needs and planning a project. The group undertook a survey of local schools to identify what would be most appropriate to the right age group. They undertook training in child protection and how to set up an after school club and also agreed roles and responsibilities. The highlight of the approach was their presentation of the project idea to the church, using puppets and a song. Nine months after the start of Discovery the after school club was launched with a strong body of support from the church and the community.

Although there have been challenges in building the confidence and skills of the core team, and in dealing with the practicalities of running a small project, the individual growth and development of the volunteers has been remarkable. The church minister reported that "in twenty years of ministry he had not seen such an empowered group of church members before!"

A comprehensive guide to Discovery, and all the training materials and interactive learning activities, can be downloaded free at <http://tilz.tearfund.org/Discovery/Discovery+contents/>

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