

## A guide to mobilising whole denominations through organisational change processes

Commitment to working with local churches in integral mission may require a fundamental reorientation of the denomination's mission and vision, a new structure, and a strategic plan that recognises the role of the local church. If only a few members of staff have the vision for working with the local church in integral mission, an organisational change process can be a good way to envision other staff. Without such envisioning and change within the denomination, any efforts to work with local churches by a few committed staff are likely to be under-resourced, ineffective, unsustainable and cause division within the denomination.

An organisational change process can be particularly helpful for a denomination needing to reassess the way it does its development work in the community (see case study). Very often, such work is carried out by denominational development departments and does not involve local churches. Instead the denomination can empower local churches to carry out integral mission.

Organisational change processes vary according to the facilitator, the type of denomination and the denomination's current situation (often such a process will happen when the denomination is in crisis). However, after looking at a number of organisational change processes, we have identified some common elements:

- Review of the denomination.
- Reviewing and re-writing vision and mission.
- Reviewing the denomination's strategy and re-writing the strategic plan. A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis is one tool that can be used to do this review.
- Training provided for staff members at different levels of the denomination.
- Specific skills training for staff who will implement work with local churches. This training may include envisioning and facilitation skills, and how to envision and work with church pastors.

Organisational change processes in large denominations usually require at least two facilitators. Since the process takes a long time, it is unrealistic to think that just one facilitator will be able to take the denomination through the whole process. At certain points of the process different skills will be needed, from skills to address high-level structural and capacity issues to skills in community mobilisation at the grassroots. It therefore makes sense to have a facilitation team, the members of which can be brought in to facilitate the process at relevant points.

Facilitators should be independent and therefore neutral. This neutrality is important, since organisational change can be a sensitive and painful process for staff and uncover or cause conflict. A facilitator from outside the denomination's staff should be unbiased. Staff members are more likely to be open about their feelings and opinions with someone who is not involved in the workings of the denomination. Independent facilitators can also improve the quality of the review since they have a fresh view of the denomination and permission to challenge. They can ask appropriate questions related to the denomination as a whole. Someone who is already involved in working for the denomination may only be concerned with the issues related to their own work and would therefore not be an appropriate facilitator for such a process. On the other hand, outside facilitators may lack understanding of the denomination and have different values. Facilitators should therefore be selected carefully.

The commitment of senior leaders to the change process is critical. Without this, no amount of facilitation will help.

Based on *ROOTS 11: Partnering with the local church*, Tearfund 2007, pages 48-49