

Africa Inland Church – Diocese of Shinyanga, Tanzania

An example of the impact of church and community mobilisation

In 2003, the Africa Inland Church of Tanzania trained 21 facilitators in the Shinyanga diocese in the PEP process, and these have helped to mobilise churches and communities in nine locations in the diocese. The outcomes of the programme, which was evaluated in September 2005, are significant.

The PEP process helped to transform church and community relationships, communities and individuals. It introduced a long-term view of development in some of the areas of operation. Women and youth were among those who benefited the most.

Capacities built

The PEP process built strong capacity for the church to mobilise and engage communities in holistic ministry. This capacity was in the form of 21 facilitators and church and community resource persons. The church leadership in the nine pilot churches and communities had both knowledge and skills for community mobilisation and had a strong biblical understanding of integral mission.

Improved church and community relations

Relationship between community and church

PEP appears to have greatly improved the relationship between the community and the church in a number of communities. Examples of new relationships include:

- In Mwamadilaha, the Village Government gave the church five acres of land to grow crops which could be sold to raise money to construct the local church building. Both Christians and non-Christians participated in this project. For example, non-Christians contributed through providing free use of their oxen to plough the land.
- In Mondo, the village government chairman referred to the good relationship with the church when he said 'we are here at the invitation of the church'.
- In Mlange, non-church members participated in church fundraising activities.
- In Didia, the Village Government gave land to the church protected it from being used for other purposes. Non-Christians participated in fundraising for the church while the evangelist participated in village functions.

Governance in the church

Traditionally, decisions in the church were made by the evangelist and the church elders and then communicated to the membership. With the setting up of development committees in the churches, this has begun to change. In Kolandoto for example, the church membership was consulted on a plan to sell their choir equipment. The matter was openly discussed with the congregation, which endorsed this sale. The church leadership was conscious that church members wanted to have a voice in the running of the church.

Equity

PEP appeared to have instilled new values and in general, there was greater sensitivity to matters of justice. Improvements had resulted in:

Men and women sharing workload

Men in Mwamadilaha and Mlange informed the evaluation team that men were increasingly taking on more of the traditional roles of women, such as drawing water and fetching firewood. Men were said to have started accompanying their pregnant wives to clinics. Men in both Mwamadilaha and Mlange felt that through PEP, they had 'liberated themselves' from the social restraints.

Women represented in village governments and development committees

In all the communities, women were in decision-making bodies, such as village government and development committees. They had a voice in the way business was conducted in their communities.

Family consultations on the use of family resources

There were reports that men were no longer spending family income without consulting their wives. In Mwamadilanha, one man who had greatly benefited from the PEP process informed the team that men and women were now involved in income-generating activities and that both would pool the benefits and often discuss how best to spend the money. When the evaluation team visited one family, the wife who had obtained Tsh 25,000 from her small plot of tomatoes, was planning to buy a good family bed, after consulting with her husband.

Reduced gender violence at household level

PEP was said to have reduced violence against women. A moving story of a man who was now a member of the Mlange Village Government, graphically illustrated this change.

Attitude change:

I used to be really hostile to my family, particularly my wife. Every couple of months, I would get arrested by the sungu sungu (village security team) on account of this violence. PEP has totally changed me. There is no more violence in my family and as you can see, I have been elected a member of the village government (this claim was confirmed by female members of the village government attending the meeting).

Member of Village Government - Mlange community

Reduced killing of elderly women

Shinyanga has the dubious reputation of killing elderly women on claims of witchcraft. In Mwamadilanha and Mlange, the practice was said to have decreased significantly and the church was said to have contributed greatly to decline of the vice. This is both a social and equity issue.

Supporting poor people and orphans

Formation of groups and improved solidarity appeared to have been a major outcome of the PEP process. In all areas, organised and effective groups were said to have resulted from the PEP process. Some of these groups were found to be engaged in charity work, targeting poor people. In Didia for example, a group of women in the local church had as part of their agenda, a commitment to support orphans.

Spiritual growth

Increased membership and contributions in local churches were used as proxy indicators for spiritual growth. Although the increase was gradual, the trend was positive.

Table 3: Change in church membership

Community	Before PEP	After PEP
Mwamadilanha	20	75
Mondo	30	70
Kolandoto	200	250 (most increase from children)
Didia	31	52

Table 4: Increase in contributions by members

Community	Before PEP (Tsh/month)	After PEP (Tsh/month)
Mwamadilanha	1800-2500	10,000
Mondo	2000	10,000
Didia	3200	14,000

Community level changes

PEP changes cultural practices

Culturally, livestock are an indicator of status in much of Shinyanga. The more livestock one has, the greater one's fame. PEP appears to have penetrated and altered the culture.

Changed attitudes with regard to livestock include:

- In Kolandoto where the PEP process was slow, a man who had some exposure to the process reported on this change - 'I have worked hard to increase my livestock. Now I have 19 sheep, 19 goats and three cows. My plan is to sell them in order to build myself a good house'.

- After the PEP process, a man in Mwamadilanha sold off his livestock and bought a milling machine as he found it more viable than keeping livestock. He also recognised other benefits. His children could now attend school rather than remaining behind to herd livestock.

Status of women

Traditionally, women would not participate in meetings attended by men and if they did, they would sit in a corner. They had no voice. This has changed since the process began. Women are members of village government and development committees and are quite vocal. Men openly commend them for their contribution.

Economic improvements

PEP resulted in group and individual projects, all aimed at improving community infrastructure such as schools and dispensaries, as well as household incomes. Some of these projects, and the resources contributed by the communities, are summarised below:

In Mwamadilanha, the community built 10 classrooms, started building a teacher's house and purchased 46 desks. The total contribution was Tsh 2.3 million.

In Mondo, two classrooms and a staff room were built.

In Mlange, a well, five classrooms, two teachers' houses and sanitary facilities for students and teachers were constructed, amounting to a total contribution of Tsh 2 million.

Source: Evaluation of Church and Community Mobilisation Programme for Africa Inland Church – Diocese of Shinyanga, Tanzania and Tearfund; Charity Kabutha & Fellowes Mwisela