

Challenges for the church in engaging with advocacy

Church leaders can be politically compromised. Church leaders in some countries carry undue influence because they are politically compromised, and are too close to governing parties. This makes it difficult for the church to live out its prophetic role. At times, too much power can be vested in some church leaders, which can lead also to undue influence and corruption.

Churches can lack specialist knowledge. Church leaders are not development specialists and they can lack credibility with decision-makers, failing to grasp the complexities of the issues. It is difficult to get churches to engage in serious research. Churches are good at standing on issues of general principle, but will usually lack the skills to deal with policy details.

Churches can be vulnerable to state persecution. Churches in many countries are in a vulnerable position because of their minority status. In such contexts, churches will be very reluctant to get involved in advocacy issues that could further antagonise the state, and put their status at greater risk.

Source: The Role of the Local and National Church in Tearfund's International Work; Tulo Raistrick, 2005