

A CATALYST FOR LASTING CHANGE AT THE GRASSROOTS



LEARNING AND ADAPTATION IN KENYA

Through learning and adaptation, an early church and community mobilisation (CCM) pilot has grown into a national phenomenon. Today it is mobilising churches across Kenya, inspiring Christians to change their outlook and fulfil their potential.

Kenya's economy has grown significantly in recent years, but more than 40 per cent of the population still live in poverty. Despite significant industrialisation, many people in rural areas are still subsistence farmers who are highly vulnerable to climate change and hazards such as drought and floods.

Anglican Development Services – Mount Kenya East (ADSMKE), the development wing of the local diocese, is a long-standing Tearfund partner. So Kenya was an obvious choice to be one of the first countries to trial our CCM approach. Initially, from 2002, ADSMKE worked with seven rural congregations of about 40 to 50 people. To catalyse these churches to become agents of change, we devised contextualised Bible studies, which

included stories about God providing people with skills and resources, and we trained ADSMKE staff to facilitate these studies with local congregations.

The effect was often dramatic: church members began to see themselves differently and to act differently. They farmed more land, started small businesses, and gained confidence to take on new roles in church and in the community. Church attendance also grew.

After two years, churches organised meetings with the wider community and began to plan and implement projects to benefit the community – from schools to dispensaries, irrigation systems to a dairy cooperative.



📷 Tearfund-supported Sparkling Jewels project.
Photo: Colin Cosier/Tearfund

'CHURCHES THAT HAVE DONE CCM ARE DIFFERENT FROM OTHER CHURCHES.'

The programmes evolved, with each new phase building on the learning of the previous one. In 2007, a further five churches became involved in CCM then, four years later, as church leaders were trained to facilitate CCM, another 58 churches joined in. As Julius Njogu, CCM lead at ADSMKE, says, 'Churches that have done CCM are different from other churches. Once they understand integral mission, the giving in the churches increases, the numbers increase, the buildings improve.'

In 2016, the Anglican Church of Kenya decided it would take on ownership of CCM itself and promote the approach across its network, without funding from Tearfund, making it a very sustainable model.

CCM programmes have not been without their struggles. Some community-led projects have hit problems for lack of technical expertise and experience: for example, setting up irrigation systems has required costly external input. Also, early CCM projects sometimes struggled

to include the poorest of the poor because participation was dependent on having money or assets to invest.

In later stages of CCM roll-out, though church members have been envisioned and empowered to improve their own livelihoods, they have had less success in mobilising their community to set up community-wide projects.

Our commitment to learning and adaptation means we are constantly reviewing and making changes to improve the CCM process. So, more recently, Tearfund and ADSMKE have adapted the approach to encourage churches to reach out to poorer, more marginalised members of society, by facilitating savings-and-loans schemes called Good Samaritan Groups, based on our successful self-help groups in Ethiopia. Through such adaptations, we hope we can help churches extend the huge benefits of CCM that they have experienced to the entire community.

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