
Advocacy case studies

WASTE MANAGEMENT IN BRAZIL

COUNTRY:	Brazil
THEMES:	Disaster management; environment and climate change; health; violence and threats
ADVOCACY APPROACHES:	Building relationships; church and community mobilisation; educating community members; mobilising people and campaigning; working in alliances and coalitions

Pastor José Marcos da Silva and his church in Recife, Brazil, were facing a crisis. ‘We asked ourselves: If we disappeared from here, would the neighbourhood miss us? We decided the answer was no.’ This revelation caused the church to reflect on their place in the community, and they decided they wanted to invest more proactively in its future. This led the church to set up a charity called Instituto Solidare.

‘We understood there is a machine that creates poverty,’ says Pastor José. ‘We need to help people see the challenges in our system and act against this to end poverty. This is needed because we don’t know our rights and what the government should do.’

Pastor José and his team sought training to tackle local issues, and were introduced to Tearfund’s church and community mobilisation (CCM) process. The CCM process brought together churches in the area from a wide range of traditions in an unprecedented way, and they formed a Conselho de Pastores e Lideres (Council of Pastors and Leaders). By uniting in this way, the churches were able to become a strong force in the community. As well as organising an annual march against violence in the local area, the group is working on a campaign called *Clean River, Healthy City*, addressing the causes of flooding which damages property and claims lives every winter. Pastor José’s church has become involved in the project through its charity, Instituto Solidare.

Pastor José explains: ‘The problem is that the council does not collect the rubbish here, and the community put it in the river, which blocks it up. We will educate the community on recycling and where to put the rubbish, and we will work to hold the government to its responsibilities. We are also going to schools to teach the kids and teachers about these things.’

Recognising the value of the ideas behind CCM, and inspired by teaching from the national School of Faith and Politics in Brasilia, the group set up their own local school to spread what they had learnt through CCM to others in the evangelical church across Brazil. The results of this initiative continue to have an impact, including through some of the school’s students creating a local group to monitor public policy.