

KEEPING COMMUNITIES CLEAN

The church's response to improving
sanitation and hygiene



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Tearfund is a Christian relief and development agency building a global network of local churches to help eradicate poverty.

Tearfund has more than 30 years' experience of working with churches and church-based partner organisations to improve community hygiene and safe sanitation.



Alliance Chrétienne pour la
Coopération Économique et
le Développement Social



Christian
Community Services
of Mount Kenya East



Ethiopian Full
Gospel Believers Church
Development Organisation

fale

A Brazilian advocacy network



Kigezi Diocese
Water and Sanitation
Programme

Keeping communities clean

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Glossary, acronyms and abbreviations

ACCEDES Alliance Chrétienne pour la Coopération Économique et le Développement Social (Christian Alliance for Economic Cooperation and Social Development): a partner of Tearfund

CBO Community-based organisation

CCSMKE Christian Community Services of Mount Kenya East: a partner of Tearfund

EFGBCDO Ethiopian Full Gospel Believers Church Development Organisation: a partner of Tearfund

FBO Faith-based organisation

Improved sanitation Facilities that ensure hygienic separation of human excreta from human contact

KDWSP Kigezi Diocese Water and Sanitation Programme: a partner of Tearfund

Local church The 'building block' of a national church structure; a congregation drawn from the nearby community meeting together regularly

MDG Millennium Development Goal

NGO Non-governmental organisation

PHAST Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation Transformation: a community-based participatory training programme that seeks to empower communities to gain awareness of their hygiene and sanitation situation and carry out their own plans to improve it

Sanitation marketing A market-oriented approach to adopting improved sanitation facilities and practices

Introduction

The statistics of the global sanitation crisis are shocking: currently 2.5 billion people lack access to improved sanitation. Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 7, target 10, includes the ambition to halve the proportion of people without access to improved sanitation by 2015. However, at current rates of progress, this won't be met until 2108 in sub-Saharan Africa – a century too late for many.

For millions of individuals, this means continued indignity, shame and fear of having to use unsafe and unhygienic sanitation facilities. Women risk daily harassment and assault, girl children will find attendance at school difficult, especially in their teenage years, and millions of working and school days will be lost to illnesses stemming directly from hazardous sanitation practices.

It is clear that a massive effort is needed to increase the international community's capacity to achieve the MDG target. To help address such great challenges, developing country governments and donors need to establish a widespread partnership of understanding and cooperation with the world's largest grassroots organisation: the church.

For more than 40 years, Tearfund has been building a global network of churches to engage in relief, development and advocacy work. Local churches in developing countries across the world are working with communities to tackle poverty issues at the community level, among them the sanitation crisis. The local church is found at the heart of a community, not only upholding beliefs, cultural values and social tradition but also as a force for positive change and development.

This report illustrates how the church is well-placed to deliver and sustain improved sanitation and hygiene. It draws on case studies that illustrate church-based responses to the need for improved sanitation and hygiene in five countries where Tearfund works: Brazil, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda.

Tearfund seeks to facilitate a greater understanding of the significant contribution made by the church to the adoption of improved sanitation and hygiene practices. Stories and examples from the following Tearfund partners are used to illustrate the role the church can play. These organisations do not form an exhaustive list of Tearfund's church partners implementing hygiene and sanitation projects, but offer a glimpse of the potential of the local church globally.

Case study partner organisations

ACCEDES (Alliance Chrétienne pour la Coopération Économique et le Développement Social – Christian Alliance for Economic Cooperation and Social Development), Burkina Faso

ACCEDES was founded in 1995 with the aim of supporting economic cooperation and social development in Burkina Faso. Based in the regional capital Bobo-Dioulasso, the second largest town in Burkina Faso, ACCEDES now operates in 14 different provinces, working on sanitation and hygiene, food security, education, microfinance, environmental protection and health. ACCEDES works in the wider community, in close relationship with the local church where it exists. From 2009 it aims to mobilise directly 50 local churches for community development.

Christian Community Services of Mount Kenya East (CCSMKE), Kenya

CCSMKE is part of the development arm of the Anglican Church of Kenya and has been working with poor and marginalised communities through relief and development work within northern Kenya since 1980. Through its Church and Community Mobilisation Programme, CCSMKE has achieved a significant rate of progress on sanitation and hygiene improvements in the first two years of the project, utilising the many different aspects of the local church as a social institution.

Ethiopian Full Gospel Believers Church Development Organisation (EFGBCDO), Ethiopia

EFGBCDO was founded in 1995 by the Ethiopian Full Gospel Believers Church, working on integrated development activities throughout the country. Since 2005, this work has included the provision of clean water and improved sanitation and hygiene. Specifically, there has been the successful introduction of sanitation and hygiene education coupled with bio-sand filters in an area of north-west Ethiopia.

Fale, Brazil

Fale (Portuguese for 'speak') is a national advocacy network founded in 2001 which seeks to mobilise churches and Christians to speak out and act on issues of poverty and injustice, both within Brazil and globally. Fale has particular concern for the socio-economic aspects of the lives of poor and vulnerable people, including issues of sanitation and hygiene, and the economic problem of widening inequality and deepening poverty. Fale generates regular information for action and prayer as part of coordinated public campaigns, using postcards, debates and public events in different cities to communicate the campaign message.

Kigezi Diocese Water and Sanitation Programme (KDWSP), Uganda

Operating in Kabale District, south-west Uganda, the Kigezi Diocese has been the largest organisation addressing water, sanitation and hygiene issues in the area since 1986. The KDWSP forms part of a wider integrated rural development programme of work for this Church of Uganda Diocese. KDWSP has served around 200,000 people with hygiene education, sanitation and basic water supplies. Each year it adds 20,000-25,000 to that number.¹ In recent years, it has been recognised by the Ugandan government for its work, and has become influential on Ugandan water policy.

1 Carter R and Rwamwanja R (2006) *Functional sustainability in community water and sanitation: A case study from south-west Uganda*. Tearfund, UK

Sanitation, hygiene and the role of the local church

In our report *The Sanitation Scandal*, Tearfund highlighted the critical lack of human and technical capacity among state and non-state actors to deliver sustainable sanitation improvements.² This is further hampered by the complexity of the process of changing hygiene behaviour. Drawing on field experience of Tearfund partners in Burkina Faso, Madagascar and the Democratic Republic of Congo, the report concluded that promoting innovative community-led and community-owned approaches which are culturally sensitive will be essential in delivering the rapid scale-up of sanitation coverage required. This need is highlighted by many other practitioners and authorities in the sector. Local churches have a great potential to facilitate community-led and community-owned approaches and can be useful partners to local government and other NGOs in this process.

A report by Tearfund, Cranfield University and Kigezi Diocese in Uganda, *Functional sustainability in community water and sanitation*, identified three interlinked characteristics that can contribute to the sustainability of water and sanitation interventions.³ Underpinning an organisation's entire endeavour is its ethos: the values, attitudes, integrity and commitment of the individuals and organisation involved. A sound ethos and a strong understanding of the context in which an organisation operates can lead to a set of processes conducive to sustainability. Processes themselves are not enough, since they must be combined with skills and expertise to build the right framework of activities. When these three ingredients come together in a vision shared by the donor, implementing agency and community, a lasting and sustainable impact can be achieved. The local church possesses a suitable ethos upon which to develop effective organisational processes and appropriate skills for activities promoting improved sanitation and hygiene practices.

The crucial role of churches and other faith-based organisations (FBOs) has been recognised in other development sectors. A recent report published by the World Health Organisation (WHO), in referring to the role of FBOs in response to HIV, recognises that FBOs 'have an impressive, though under-recognised, track record in HIV and AIDS treatment. They demonstrate a close integration in their communities at a grassroots level. They have infrastructure available and flexibility in using it so that they adapt to the new challenges.' Furthermore, it suggests that FBOs, if included in government planning and strategies, can act as important partners in addressing the gaps in government provision.⁴ Tearfund believes the same can be said of sanitation and hygiene.

While it is acknowledged that some donors are beginning to recognise the role of the church,⁵ as the Commission for Africa has noted, donors need to step up their engagement with FBOs and view them as 'equal partners'.⁶

2 Webster L (2007) *The Sanitation Scandal*. Tearfund, UK

3 Carter R and Rwamwanja R (2006) *Functional sustainability in community water and sanitation: A case study from south-west Uganda*. Tearfund, UK

4 Bandy G and Crouch A (2008) *Building from Common Foundations: The World Health Organisation and faith-based organisations in primary healthcare* p18. WHO

5 For example, the World Bank's *The World Faiths Development Dialogue*

6 Commission for Africa (2005) *Our Common Interest* p129

The process of delivering sustainable hygiene and sanitation

For many communities, the local church is more than just a meeting point: it is the very heart of a community. Thus, churches are in a prime position to mobilise communities and work with them to improve access to sanitation and affect behaviour change for better hygiene.

Tearfund has identified the following five roles that the local church or church-based organisations can play in their communities to help improve hygiene and sanitation practices. Depending on the church's capacity, and the context it is working in, it may be able to fulfil one or all of these roles.

Messenger – communicating messages about improved sanitation and hygiene

Demonstrator – offering individuals and communities the chance to see and experience a well-kept toilet or hand-washing facility

Implementer – helping individuals and communities to attain improved sanitation and hygiene facilities, through technical and financial support

Advocate – speaking out to those in authority with and on behalf of communities to express their needs and their desire to have improved sanitation

Guardian – helping communities and individuals maintain the gains achieved through improved hygiene and sanitation

FIGURE 1
The five different roles of the local church in its engagement in sanitation and hygiene.⁷



⁷ Based on Yardley S (2008) *The role of the church in increasing access to water and sanitation: an analysis of Tearfund's current and potential impact*. Tearfund internal research paper, UK.

Figure 1 illustrates how these five roles of the church all contribute to behaviour change at a community level, through working in partnership with other stakeholders. Each role is of equal value and importance, addressing a barrier to the adoption of improved sanitation and hygiene practices, and some will be more appropriate than others, depending on the local context and capacity. Tearfund is not suggesting that the church replaces the work of other stakeholders but, as a distinctive member of civil society, the church can play an important role in helping to improve access to sanitation and hygiene.

By their very nature, churches can most easily fulfil the role of messenger and – to varying degrees – demonstrator and implementer, depending on their knowledge and capacity. Some of Tearfund's partners have become effective advocates and governments at various levels have recognised the church's technical expertise and competence which have been used to influence and shape policy. The church's long-term commitment in a community makes it ideal to act as a guardian for sustainability of projects.

While a particular church, or church-based organisation, may focus on one or more of these roles, they are often interconnected. For example, being a messenger for improvements in domestic hygiene and sanitation is often coupled with demonstrating this. Similarly, being an advocate for policy change in sanitation may incorporate demonstrating evidence of successful programmatic intervention; whilst the church, as implementer of sanitation programmes, usually requires connection with all five roles.

Tearfund prefers to support demand-led sanitation approaches, and acknowledges the vital role of sanitation marketing in behavioural change towards increased uptake of household sanitation facilities. As the church is itself part of the beneficiary community, its members understand the aspirations and mindsets of end-users, as well as their needs. Tearfund encourages a sanitation marketing approach in which various user groups would receive training and capacity building in basic masonry, organisational and financial management, and other skills to enable a community to meet its own needs. Indeed, this is already being taken up by various larger implementing church-based partners, such as Kigezi Diocese Water and Sanitation Project in Uganda.

The sanitation marketing approach is therefore not incompatible with any of the five roles identified for the church, since each role is part of a combined, community-focused effort both to stimulate demand and maintain supply of sanitation improvements and facilities.

The different roles the church can play will now be explored in more detail with case studies.

ROLE 1 Messenger

Communicating messages about improved sanitation and hygiene

A key strength of the local church is its ability to draw alongside and care for poor people, and at the heart of its message is compassion for marginalised and vulnerable people.

In developing countries, particularly rural areas, the local church can provide support to a local population beyond the reach of government. For example, the church may be the only social institution (eg school, health clinic) in a community, and therefore presents a great opportunity to disseminate messages about improved hygiene and sanitation.

For the church, this is not merely an opportunity, but a responsibility that can be traced back thousands of years to its Hebrew roots.⁸ The message of improved sanitation is a biblical message that church leaders can be challenged with through specific verses of Scripture on cleanliness and holiness. Church leaders often find

ACCEDES, Burkina Faso

Mr Traore is a small-scale farmer with 15 people in his family. Each year, his main concern is to produce enough food not only to feed his family, but also to sell some to buy medicines and pay for medical fees. Living in his village of Satiri, his family often suffered from water-borne diseases leading to diarrhoea, vomiting and stomach aches. Nearly all his family's income was spent treating these. The main reason for this was that the Traore family, like most inhabitants of Satiri, relieved themselves in the bushes close to the village.

With help from ACCEDES, the local church became aware of the link between defecation practices and illnesses and initiated a project to raise awareness about water, sanitation and hygiene, including the construction of latrines.

After initially hearing hygiene teaching in a neutral setting, the Traore family were selected as beneficiaries due to their vulnerability and poverty. Twice a week for about a month, 'animators' living in a nearby village visited the Traore family to discuss and explain issues of hygiene, cleanliness and water-borne diseases. At the end of this time of education and awareness-raising, the family constructed a latrine with the help and guidance of project staff. This new facility in the household dramatically changed the lives and health of the Traore family.

'My family has never been so healthy,' Mr Traore said, 'and this I owe to the church.' The improved health is confirmed by the head nurse at the community health post who said that the rate of water-borne diseases had decreased by 50 per cent after the first year of the project in the village of Satiri.



Hand-washing became routinely practised as a result of the ACCEDES programme.

Photo: ACCEDES

8 Deuteronomy 23:12-14 – Direction is given on what to do about defecating as part of the laws given to Israel as they lived in a camp on the banks of the River Jordan.

this easy to connect with and recognise the authority of the Bible, and congregations can often readily grasp and apply such principles within their lives.

Getting the message out and getting it to sink in

In Burkina Faso, the messages of hygienic cleanliness and spiritual holiness were seen as so closely aligned that the church proved a natural messenger. The church was already proficient at communicating messages, and, though hygiene messages are somewhat different from religious messages, they are also about deep and personal issues which affect people's daily lives.

Since Burkina Faso is around 50 per cent Muslim and 30 per cent Christian, ACCEDDES worked with both groups of religious leaders to ensure that its message reached as many people as possible. The following five-step model was used to disseminate hygiene messages to a wide and diverse audience:

- 1 Approaching Christian and Muslim leaders separately, ACCEDDES helped them to identify linkages between their religious teachings and hygiene, and in the process they identified poor hygiene and sanitation as an issue among their congregations.
- 2 Discussions with religious leaders were then held about how hygiene messages could be introduced and talked about during church services and prayer times.
- 3 Subsequently, invitations were given to religious leaders to be part of Hygiene and Sanitation Committees, to oversee the long-term impact of the work.
- 4 Once the congregations were sensitised to basic hygiene messages, project staff spoke during meetings to share more detailed messages on hygiene and sanitation.
- 5 Following this, ACCEDDES worked with religious leaders and the local government to identify 1,000 particularly poor and vulnerable families spread across ten communities. These families were then visited twice a week by an ACCEDDES outreach worker, called an 'animator', giving families the opportunity to ask questions, clarify misunderstandings and adopt improved practices in sanitation and hygiene in a sustainable way. Animators live in a local community, with responsibility for three or more villages.

STRENGTHS OF THE CHURCH AS A 'MESSENGER'

- A grassroots organisation that can communicate positive values – it has experience in grappling with values, behavioural change and worldview issues.
- Organisational capacity – the local church provides an established structure of community meetings, through which to promote learning.
- Messages of compassion and a concern for others – the church's values are grounded in the love of God and love for all.

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Since the leadership and membership of the church are representative of their community, churches are well placed to understand the local cultural and social standpoints of their community. Thus, messages disseminated by the church are likely to be highly appropriate, better received than messages by an organisation external to the community, easily understood and followed through to behavioural change.
- The learning and benefits don't stop with members of a local church; they often lead to wider community transformation as messages are passed on among community members.
- The local church is itself a place of teaching, so its community members expect to hear and respond to messages that will affect their overall well-being.
- Sectarian differences may prove to be a challenge when churches and other faiths try to work together because of perceived differences and historical divisions. Despite this, faith-based organisations can find common ground through hygiene and sanitation teaching to tackle a root cause and effect of poverty.

ROLE 2 Demonstrator

Offering individuals and communities the chance to see and experience a well kept toilet or hand-washing facility

Complementing the role of messenger is the local church as a demonstrator – showing the congregation and community the effective use of improved sanitation approaches and good hygiene practices. Relationship-building is key to the role of demonstrator, through trusted, respected and accessible facilitators.

This role can be a very 'bottom-up' approach, demonstrating from within the community what good sanitation looks like. While attending church, or attending community meetings where the church building is used as a venue, community members have the opportunity to visit and use a good latrine, experience the dignity and relative comfort of it and even learn some of the necessary practices to clean and maintain it. Thus they can better grasp the value such a facility would have in their own homes. Establishing a volunteer rota to care for and clean the church latrine will further ensure communities develop good habits and take on responsibilities that are foundational for good hygiene practices. For smaller churches, this role may be more relevant if they lack the capacity for widespread implementation of hygiene or sanitation programmes.

Ethiopian Full Gospel Believers Community Development Organisation (EFGBCDO), Ethiopia

Over three years, 300 community-based replicators have been identified and trained in sanitation and hygiene alongside the use of bio-sand filters. These replicators promote improved practices at demonstration sites and by visiting markets, clinics, schools etc. They also demonstrate good practice in their homes, such as the use of latrines, hand-washing and safe disposal of household waste, encouraging their neighbours to adopt similar practices.

Hale Selassie is 48, with five children. Before getting involved with EFGBCDO, he lived in rented accommodation working as a small-scale farmer. Through his church, Hale was selected to be a replicator and has been able to demonstrate what he's learnt about good hygiene and sanitation with his congregation, impacting at least ten families in the church and another 30 in his village, to adopt improved behaviour change. Through the income generated by a small business to produce bio-sand filters, he now owns his own house, sends all his children to school and is able to provide better food and clothing for his family. In his own words, 'the incidence of water-borne diseases has gone down; children in the village used to fall ill quite often but not any more; medical costs have also gone down.'

Another example of the success of the EFGBCDO can be taken from the village of Korre where all 120 households have built their own latrines and each one bears a white flag declaring their household as disease-free. This village acts as an excellent demonstration and encouragement to neighbouring villages. Community workers living in the area demonstrate good practice on sanitation and hygiene in their homes, while delivering training on these subjects.

A household in the village of Korre demonstrates it has achieved improved sanitation and hygiene practices by displaying a white flag.



Photo: Rachel Whitworth / Tearfund

Showing what's possible

In north-west Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Full Gospel Believers Church Development Organisation (EFGBCDO) has achieved a significant increase in sanitation coverage in one district by equipping and mobilising community workers to promote and demonstrate good environmental sanitation and personal hygiene. Another key approach has included training community members as 'replicators' of good practice in sanitation, hygiene and use of clean water through *in situ* demonstration facilities.

STRENGTHS OF THE CHURCH AS A 'DEMONSTRATOR'

- Positive peer support and pressure – the local church can set an example of healthy and hygienic living to the community in which it is based.
- Relationships and relational approach – the community of the church is founded on and supported by a strong network of relationships within the church and the wider community.
- Pro-poor approach – compared with other social institutions, the local church (along with other FBOs) is often the one most accessible to and trusted by people who are poor.⁹

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- Churches, being at the heart of a community, are well placed to host and manage demonstration projects, such as hygienic latrine use and maintenance, and hand-washing.
- The local church is likely to promote an appropriate affordable technology, since it is itself an integral part of the (poor) community it is demonstrating to, and usually has limited funding.

9 The Commission for Africa states: 'In much of rural Africa, religious leaders have strong and long-term bonds of trust with communities.' Commission for Africa (2005) *Our Common Interest* p128

ROLE 3 **Implementer**

Helping individuals and communities to attain improved sanitation and hygiene facilities, through technical and financial support

Tearfund has found that churches can develop particularly strong and successful skills in either implementing an integrated water, sanitation and hygiene programme, or focusing on delivering in one area. Local churches are well placed to identify the most vulnerable members in a community and direct support to them, or act as a mediator for external agencies, channelling resources appropriately. Since the church often represents a broad cross-section of the community, it can also make a good assessment of the potential contribution of the community to any project. The local church can also be used to work as a delivery mechanism for a national church or church-based organisation.

Involving the local church in the implementation of hygiene and sanitation projects can result in the following four benefits:

Sustainability Many Tearfund partner programmes have been found to be more sustainable if they are strongly linked to the local church. In such programmes the community members involved are not

Christian Community Services of Mount Kenya East (CCSMKE), Kenya

Within the village of Parkishon in eastern Kenya, the church has played a crucial role in the implementation of the hygiene and sanitation work, as Programme Manager Timothy Kamutu explains: 'People meet together on a weekly basis at the church, and so after the service there is time and opportunity to discuss issues that affect the whole community. The church provides a good forum to discuss these things.' Using established church meetings to implement a training programme makes great savings on the time and effort required to organise the community and therefore speeds up the process of behaviour change. The church has also been used to provide facilitation of community action plans drawn up in Village Health Committees. These Committees are formed following initial hygiene and sanitation training exercises and are made up of 15 people representing elders, women, youth and men.

One female involved in the implementation of this work is Elizabeth Dahaleyo (pictured below), who has been raising the awareness of her community on good hygiene – both personal and in the home, proper human waste disposal and latrine maintenance. Demand for latrines has increased since the programme began and people have developed the skills needed to build their own. One example of this comes from Zainabu Leruk who has benefited from the training. Zainabu says: 'We now know how to treat our water to make it safer and by having a well maintained latrine, the spread of diseases will be reduced, especially those that are spread through poor human waste disposal.'



The community mobilisation involves latrine construction and maintenance.

Photo: CCSMKE

accountable to an external agency, but to the committee of the local church formed to supervise the hygiene and sanitation work. This committee is likely to outlive any presence of an external organisation.

Ownership Programmes discussed in this report typically start by envisioning local church leaders, who in turn mobilise their congregations. Such an approach ensures a high level of church and community ownership and ongoing support for hygiene and sanitation programmes.

Impact Tackling the huge problem that exists in meeting the hygiene and sanitation MDG requires large-scale mobilisation. The local church, as a grassroots organisation, is well placed to help increase the impact and reach of an intervention through its existing links to and in the community.

Value for money Church mobilisation can be a very cost-effective means of achieving a wide impact, for example by tapping into resources that are already present within the local church community – such as volunteerism, networks and community meetings.

Getting the work done

Christian Community Services of Mount Kenya East (CCSMKE) has been implementing hygiene and sanitation programmes using Participatory Hygiene and Sanitation for Transformation (PHAST) methods for two years, and worked with around 2,300 beneficiaries in 331 households. Four volunteers, drawn from church congregations in three rural communities, have been mobilising and organising communities around hygiene promotion and latrine construction activities. The programme has been very successful due to the involvement of the church, which has accelerated take-up by the community and also increased the capacity and reach of its programme.

STRENGTHS OF THE CHURCH AS AN 'IMPLEMENTER'

- Flexible, creative and responsive to local needs – the local church draws upon internal resources to respond to and act upon the needs of poor people.
- Meeting the gap – the local church can extend the reach of work carried out by government or other NGOs.
- Number of volunteers – the local church has a large pool of members typically with a strong motivation to help others.

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- There is significant volunteerism within churches, leading to increased replicability, cost-effectiveness, and overall ownership of programmes.
- The church is well-placed to identify the capacities existing within a community and the contribution a community can make to any project.
- It does not seek financial profit beyond the need for replicating the project effectively and covering all costs.
- Churches may need a high level of technical guidance on appropriate interventions which can be provided through partner agencies.

ROLE 4 Advocate

Speaking out to those in authority, with and on behalf of communities, to express their need and their desire to have improved hygiene and sanitation facilities

The church, both local and global, has the ability to exert significant power and influence on policy-makers on issues important to communities. Forming part of the community, the local church sees and experiences injustice at first hand and therefore, as a collective group, can be in a position to take local action. In this way, the local church can act as an advocate as it speaks for and with those without adequate hygiene and sanitation facilities.

During problem identification exercises conducted by Tearfund partners, poor people consistently identify water as being among the top five issues facing their community. Sanitation is less likely to be prioritised, largely due to lack of understanding of the links with improved health and also due to it often being regarded as a taboo subject. This latter reason often prevents it from being prioritised politically in national policies as well.

The reach of the church is significant, with the potential to connect the grassroots to a much wider network, typically extending to national-level decision-makers. Such a structure varies from formal ecclesiastical structures like the Anglican Church, to less formal ecumenical 'councils' which churches may be a member of, to informal networks that are organised to enable churches to collaborate or speak out on specific issues. Further impact can be sought with churches working in partnership with other FBOs, CBOs or NGOs.

Churches can also be adept at engaging directly with policy-makers both at local and regional level. Church leaders and congregations have proved to be effective in lobbying on local issues and the church has the capacity to utilise media coverage to ensure its messages have a wider influence.

Fale, Brazil

In December 2006, Fale began campaigning for environmental sanitation in Brazil. The campaign directly urged the president, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, to address four points aimed at ensuring environmental sustainability through public policies and investment in the sector:

- Constructing a water storage network for the entire population, guaranteeing access to drinking water and water storage systems for all Brazilians by the end of 2010
- Reducing the number of houses without access to a sanitary sewerage system by 40 per cent through government investment in sewerage systems (by the end of 2010)
- Passing a law to create a National Policy for Environmental Sanitation, which should be taken to the congress after extensive debate with society and with the approval of the City Councils
- Guaranteeing public investment in sanitation to the order of 0.45 per cent of GNP

In January 2008, Fale achieved the third objective: the Brazilian government approved Law No 11,445 which establishes national guidelines for public policy for environmental sanitation.

Fale calls for its supporters to 'speak for environmental sanitation in Brazil' by 'raising your voice against injustice'.



Photo: Fale

The church possesses a large workforce, albeit often thinly spread throughout a nation's population, and many of Tearfund's partners have capitalised on this by using the church network to compile reports both on what has been achieved through the church, as well as on the gaps in sanitation coverage yet to be filled. This information can be shared with local policy-makers and institutions responsible for hygiene and sanitation delivery, in order to better inform their planning. One of the critical gaps identified in *The Sanitation Scandal* is the lack of effective monitoring and evaluation capacity among government institutions.¹⁰ Here, the church can play a major role, both helping the government deliver its commitments and highlighting to policy-makers the concerns of poor communities.

Top-level church leaders, such as bishops, have a crucial role as respected, influential and recognisable individuals who can access the highest levels of government and attract media coverage – both vital for effective advocacy. Such figures have impact due to their moral and religious authority and they can benefit from the support of NGOs such as Tearfund or our in-country partners to inform their policy positions.

Speaking out and overcoming inaction

In Brazil, just under 43 million people lack access to improved sanitation.¹¹ Since 2006, Fale has been running a campaign seeking to increase the political priority given to this issue from national policy-makers. The campaign has drawn on the combined voices of a range of churches and church-based organisations. Fale's most recent campaign, launched in 2008, draws attention to the critical situation surrounding environmental sanitation in Brazil. The campaign highlights the consequences of poor sanitation on the poor and encourages people to take action in a variety of ways. The campaign card pictured on the previous page asks the President of Brazil for more effective public policies, including approval of the National Policy on Environmental Sanitation and increased public investment.

STRENGTHS OF THE CHURCH AS AN 'ADVOCATE'

- Local understanding – members and staff speak the local language and have first-hand experiences of local issues.
- Position of respect – the local church can capitalise on the respect it has earned and the influence it holds within the community.
- Links to the wider world – most churches are connected with a larger coordinating body that has national and even international levels.

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- The local church can be a tremendous activist on grassroots advocacy issues and can make a significant difference in the lives of individuals and communities. However, the provision of training or help in capacity building may be necessary for local churches to engage effectively in advocacy.
- With its credibility and authority, the church has a great potential to affect both local and national level policy processes by advocating on behalf of and with communities to policy-makers.
- Misconceptions of the church by policy-makers and a lack of understanding of political processes by local churches can hamper advocacy work. This can be addressed by both parties seeking to build stronger links with one another and involving the church, as part of civil society, in decision-making to inform policy.

¹⁰ Webster L (2007) *The Sanitation Scandal*. Tearfund, UK

¹¹ UNICEF and World Health Organisation Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply and Sanitation (2008) *Progress on Drinking-Water and Sanitation: Special Focus on Sanitation*. UNICEF, New York, and WHO, Geneva

ROLE 5 Guardian

Helping communities and individuals maintain the gains achieved through improved hygiene and sanitation

The strength of a good hygiene and sanitation programme is its sustainability. Sustainability depends on many issues, such as the choice of training approach or technology and the level of ownership by the community. However, the ability to follow up project work consistently has also proved to be a key component of successful sanitation and hygiene programmes.

When considering the role that the church can play in following up hygiene and sanitation work, a key strength is that the church will continue to be a part of the beneficiary community for much longer than any external organisation or agency. For years after the training or project work ceases, the church can retain and build its knowledge and capacity for further intervention.

Kigezi Diocese Water and Sanitation Project (KDWSP), Uganda

In 2006, KDWSP launched a follow-up programme in numerous communities where it had previously supported water, sanitation and hygiene education interventions in the past. Community self-monitoring, usually implemented through women's church volunteer groups, has always been a key characteristic of Kigezi Diocese's projects. The women's monitoring groups visit households and village health centres regularly, and use Knowledge, Action and Practice survey techniques to monitor the community's access to sanitation and to ensure health benefits.

One of the activities of the follow-up programme is an inter-house competition. These competitions are for the whole community, but announced through the church. In the period running up to the day of the competition when households will be judged, reminder messages are given through the church, rather like a checklist or revision class. Church members are encouraged to discuss the topics with their family and close neighbours when they return home and so the messages get out to the rest of the community who may not attend church. Since the standards that are being highlighted in the church have previously been agreed and accepted by the community, this is not seen as intrusive, but rather a constructive way of reminding people of their new responsibilities.

The judging is carried out by householders themselves, using an agreed checklist, covering such things as the cleanliness of latrines, whether soap is present, and if food is routinely covered. The winner is awarded a prize donated by the community as a whole. The impact is that, over time, the community is encouraged to continue using good hygiene practices and to maintain their sanitation facilities.

Well maintained latrines are encouraged through ongoing monitoring by KDWSP.



Photo: Frank Greaves / Tearfund

Tearfund partners have found that mobilising the local church to take part in regular follow-up activities is critical to sustaining the benefits of the programme. Local church structures often incorporate committees and, in many instances, a committee responsible for following up hygiene and sanitation projects is created.

Lasting success

Within south-west Uganda, the Kigezi Diocese Water and Sanitation Programme (KDWSP) has recognised and responded to the importance of functional sustainability. Some of the key factors in maintaining the sustainability of their work include full community participation, close working relationships with local government, commitment to community capacity building and ongoing support to those in managing and maintaining roles.¹²

STRENGTHS OF THE CHURCH AS A 'GUARDIAN'

- Strong network – the community of the church is founded on and supported by a strong network to help sustain the work.
- Local presence – the local church is a permanent fixture in the community and can therefore provide ongoing support.¹³
- Local knowledge – due to being based within the communities they serve, churches can maintain up-to-date knowledge and awareness of community needs and ensure the messages of sanitation and hygiene reflect any changes.

KEY LEARNING POINTS

- As a permanent presence in the community, the church is well placed to act as a guardian and ongoing promoter of good hygiene and sanitation practice.
- Events such as the household hygiene competitions of KDWSP can be institutionalised into the churches' calendars, and organised through the strong network of volunteers.

12 Carter R and Rwamwanja R (2006) *Functional sustainability in community water and sanitation: A case study from south-west Uganda*. Tearfund, UK p11

13 A recent WHO report States: 'The attraction of working through such religious institutions is that they are grounded in the communities they serve and have national and regional bureaucracies with which to develop long-term relationships with donors.' Bandy G and Crouch A (2008) *ibid* p26

Conclusion and recommendations

This report highlights the five roles which Tearfund has identified for the church to play in promoting good hygiene and sanitation. The strength of the church within these five roles can be summarised as:

Messenger The church is well placed to deliver hygiene and sanitation messages to its community. This is due to the regularity and accessibility of church meetings, the experience it has in conveying messages and the fact that its leaders are usually from the community in which the church is based.

Demonstrator As a social institution situated in the heart of a community, the church makes an ideal place to demonstrate good practices in hygiene and sanitation in a culturally appropriate way.

Implementer If used as an implementer, the church will seek cost-effective methods, drawing on its ethos of volunteerism and community contributions, to help create ownership and a willingness to deliver good hygiene and sanitation practices and facilities.

Advocate The church as an established organisational network can voice the views of poor people to both local and national governments to influence political change.

Guardian The permanent local presence of the church in a community places it in an excellent position to help achieve long-term behaviour change and support the sustained impacts of improved hygiene and sanitation facilities.

To mobilise the church effectively and to release its largely untapped potential, collaboration is needed between the church, governments and donors to maximise the impact of the roles outlined in this report. Donors and governments need to recognise and take steps to realise the potential of the church as a partner in delivering improved hygiene and sanitation. To aid this, both donors and governments should think of ways to engage specifically with churches in planning, policy development and implementation, to reflect their unique position and capacities. Churches and church-based organisations have a responsibility to learn more about local government decision-making processes and donor reporting requirements.

In addition, governments and donors need to become more 'faith literate'. This will enable them to appreciate the distinctive contribution churches can make in providing services, shaping attitudes, changing behaviour and influencing decision-makers. In turn, churches must do more to explain the role of the church to governments and donors. Churches should also seek to engage with their national and regional governments' sanitation and hygiene strategies and identify ways to partner with them creatively to help deliver the sanitation MDG target.

Key recommendations

- Governments and donors responding to sanitation and hygiene issues need to ensure that their staff become more literate about the work of faith-based groups in the local context.
- International donor agencies should identify and minimise policy blockages to working with the local church, and should promote working with grassroots faith-based organisations.
- National government ministries should foster collaborative relationships with national church leadership, and seek to engage the church on how it may help its development agenda, particularly on hygiene and sanitation.
- National governments and local authorities, which ultimately have responsibility for delivering sanitation and hygiene improvements to their population, should recognise the additional capacity the church can provide in the task of service delivery. This includes exploring ways of providing financial and technical support to the church to do this.
- Local authorities, NGOs and churches need to consult with each other and coordinate their activities to avoid duplication.

- NGOs and CBOs should view local churches as partners and explore ways to engage and build the capacity of local churches, as well as network with the local church in advocacy on hygiene and sanitation.
- Church and church-based organisations need to seek a greater understanding of government, NGOs and donors, to aid dialogue and help establish closer partnership.



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