

# Footsteps

## Community-led advocacy

- What is advocacy?
- Churches facilitating change
- The advocacy cycle
- Quiet influence
- How to build a movement
- Legal rights for self-help groups



## In this issue

### Features

- 03 What is advocacy?
- 06 Churches facilitating change
- 08 Community champions
- 10 Quiet influence
- 16 Legal rights for self-help groups
- 20 Clean river, healthy city
- 22 Young people speak out

### Regulars

- 05 Bible study: Passion for justice
- 21 Children's zone: No litter here!
- 23 Resources
- 24 Interview Persevere!

### Take and use

- 12 The advocacy cycle
- 14 The advocacy cycle in Nepal
- 18 How to build a movement

## About Footsteps

Featuring practical solutions to development challenges, *Footsteps* magazine inspires and equips people to work with their local communities to bring positive change.

*Footsteps* is published by Tearfund, a Christian relief and development agency working with local partners and churches to meet basic needs and address injustice and poverty. *Footsteps* is free of charge.

📷 Cover: These church members in Uganda are working with their community to advocate for change. Photo: Will Chamberlin/Tearfund

## A note from the editor

It can often feel like there is nothing we can do in the face of injustice and inequality. But when several people join together to call for change, powerful decision-makers can be influenced and difficult situations can be transformed.

This edition of *Footsteps* focuses on how community members and local organisations can use advocacy tools – such as lobbying, campaigning and movement building – to address issues that affect their lives.

Advocacy is something that everyone can get involved in, but it is not always easy. The edition discusses what advocacy might look like in more challenging contexts, and it encourages us to persevere, even when progress is slow and difficult.

■ 'Learn to do right; seek justice.  
Defend the oppressed.'

Isaiah 1:17



Jude Collins,  
Editor

**tearfund**

**Write to:** Footsteps Editor, Tearfund,  
100 Church Road, Teddington, TW11 8QE, UK

✉ [publications@tearfund.org](mailto:publications@tearfund.org)

✚ [learn.tearfund.org](http://learn.tearfund.org)



📍 Led by the local church, these community members in Mozambique are advocating for their land rights. Photo: Kylie Scott/Tearfund

# What is advocacy?

By Joanna Watson

**The first time I engaged in advocacy, many years ago, I felt nervous, and my mind was full of concerns: Why would such powerful people want to listen to me? What if I forgot, or stumbled over, my words? What sort of difference could I make in the face of such a huge issue?**

These kinds of concerns can be common when we first start learning to advocate, especially if it takes a long time to see any impact.

Anyone can be an advocate. It is not a professional activity, and there is no requirement to have special qualifications. But we have to persevere and practise, and allow our skills and confidence to develop.

## Standing up for justice

The word 'advocacy' has different meanings for people in different contexts, depending on their experiences, language and culture. In some contexts it is risky to talk about advocacy; in others it is beneficial. In some languages there is no equivalent word, so it may be necessary to find an alternative phrase.

Tearfund defines advocacy as: 'Influencing the decisions, public policies and practices of powerful decision-makers to address the underlying causes of poverty, bring justice, and support good development.'

Advocacy is firmly rooted in the Bible, and in God's heart for justice and compassion (eg Micah 6:8; Isaiah 1:17; Luke 11:42). ▶

## Approaches

There are three main advocacy approaches: for, with and by communities. Many initiatives will use all three approaches at different times.

- **For communities:** Advocacy done on behalf of communities affected by an unjust situation. This approach is important in places where affected communities are unable to speak out, perhaps because of fear or danger.
- **With communities:** Advocacy done collaboratively, where communities affected by an unjust situation advocate with others who are not directly affected.
- **By communities:** Advocacy done by communities directly affected by an unjust situation. This is often the most effective and sustainable type of advocacy. It gives integrity and legitimacy to the activities and challenges unjust power relations.

Local, community-led advocacy is not always easy, but it is deeply rewarding as people learn how to voice their needs, problems, hopes and solutions, and grow in the confidence and ability to influence decision-makers and bring change to their communities.

❏ After advocating for local government support, Hari's community in Nepal now have a micro-hydropower plant in their village and he has been able to expand his carpentry business. Photo: Kit Powney/Tearfund



## Methods

It is important to choose advocacy methods that are appropriate for the context. For example, in countries where citizens can freely express their views, public activities often work best. But in countries where it is difficult to challenge the government, advocacy needs to be done less publicly (see pages 10–11).

Some of the most popular methods include:

- **Lobbying:** Dialogue and conversation with decision-makers. Activities include:
  - writing letters
  - making phone calls
  - sharing research findings
  - enabling decision-makers to meet people affected by the issue.
- **Campaigning:** Encouraging people to participate in actions that put pressure on decision-makers to bring about change. Activities include:
  - public meetings
  - petitions
  - demonstrations
  - street marches and non-violent protests.When a lot of people get involved in a campaign, it is sometimes called a movement.
- **Media messages:** Using the media to spread advocacy messages can greatly increase the number of people who are aware of the situation. Activities include:
  - writing a newspaper article or a social media post
  - radio or television interviews
  - hosting or attending a press conference.

However you decide to do advocacy, remember to keep going, even if it feels difficult. Over the years I have learnt to be patient and to keep practising, and I encourage you to do the same. Because it is only when you find and use your voice that you will discover the advocate inside you!

---

*Joanna Watson is the author of Tearfund's Advocacy toolkit. She leads an international team who support Tearfund's advocacy partners around the world.*

## Bible study

# Passion for justice

By Philip Powell

**In theory, the laws and constitution of a country are meant to provide the basis of a just society. However, in practice, good laws on paper are not always implemented or enforced.**

This may be for all kinds of reasons. For example:

- people may be unaware of the laws
- law enforcement may be weak or corrupt
- people may not know how to stand up for their rights, or they may be afraid to do so.

### Read Amos 5:1–24

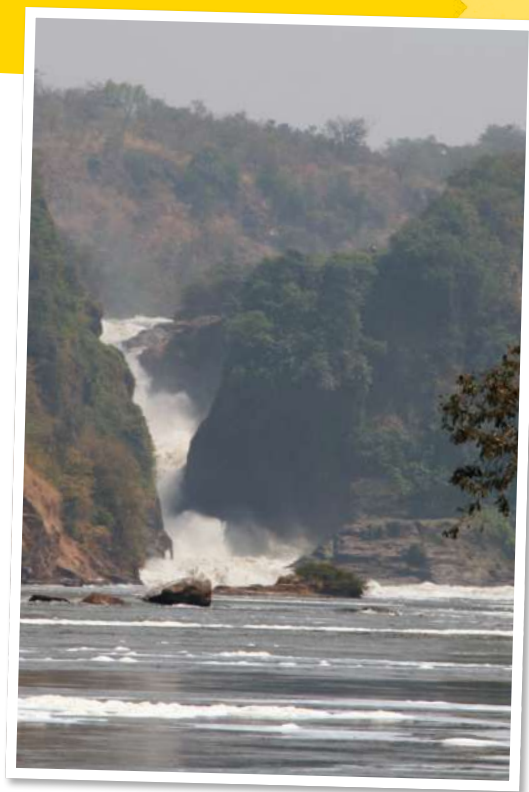
We read in the book of Amos about the injustice being experienced by many people at that time. The rights of people living in poverty were not respected (verse 11), bribery was common (verse 12) and those who stood up for justice and truth were despised (verse 10).

In verses 21 to 23 God condemns the religious festivals and gatherings, saying that they are ‘a stench’ to him. Why is that? What does verse 24 say about the type of worship that God finds pleasing? See also Isaiah 58:1–14 and Luke 11:37–46.



### Discussion questions

- What examples can you think of in your society where the law is good but not carried out? What are the consequences of this?
- What action could you take to help enforce good laws and stand up for people who are experiencing injustice?



📖 **Let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream! (Amos 5:24).** Photo: Tearfund

The Bible makes it clear that Christians should share God’s passion for justice. This does not simply mean trying to live good lives. We should also seek to change what is wrong in our society. This may be through prayer, practical caring or speaking out against injustice. Often it will be a combination of all of these.

God wants righteousness and justice to flow like the water in a fast-flowing river, and he wants to use his church to bring this about (Amos 5:24).

---

*Philip Powell is a Theology and Networking Manager with Tearfund, and Co-director of The Justice Conference.*

[thejusticeconference.co.uk](http://thejusticeconference.co.uk)

# Churches facilitating change

By Chalwe Nyirenda

**Across the world, Tearfund's local partners are using a participatory approach to poverty alleviation called church and community mobilisation (CCM).**

Starting with the Bible, the process inspires and equips churches to work with their local communities to bring positive change.

As the church brings all community members together to discuss challenges and opportunities, they often discover that there is a lot they can do to improve their situation.

**‘After a lot of negotiation the community was successful, and they now have a functioning water system.’**

For example, communities might decide to use more sustainable farming techniques to reduce environmental degradation. Or they might work together to address social issues such as gender-based violence. Sometimes communities will decide to use advocacy tools to help them achieve their goals.

## Tipa Tipa

The church in Tipa Tipa, a village in the Bolivian mountains, was greatly inspired by CCM and they decided that they needed to play a more active role in their community.

As a first step, they facilitated a series of meetings during which everyone in the village had the opportunity to talk about their problems, as well as potential solutions. As a result of these discussions

☑ The people of Tipa Tipa in Bolivia now have access to a constant supply of safe water and an effective sewerage system, thanks to their advocacy activities. Photo: Andrew Philip/Tearfund



## Social accountability tools

Communities can use various actions, tools and mechanisms to hold their local authorities to account. Popular tools include:

- **Budget tracking**

This involves monitoring government spending to help ensure that funds are spent well, and not lost to corruption. It enables communities to ask if public resources are being used as planned and are bringing the expected results.

- **Citizen journalism**

This tool can be particularly attractive to young people. It involves documenting and taking photographs of situations that need attention, for example sewerage leaks or damaged roads. These stories might be published in local newspapers, or they can be presented directly to government officials and service providers.

**CHIREZI: COMMUNITY SCORE CARDS**

**1. WATER**

1) How many days do you receive tapped water?  1-2 days  3-4 days  5-7 days  More

2) What is the source of your water supply?  Private hold tap  Community taps  Standpipes

3) Is your water clean?  Yes  No

**2. STANDS**

1) Are you satisfied with how the residential stands are serviced?  
Very satisfied  Satisfied  Neutral  Dissatisfied  Very dissatisfied

2) Are you a home owner or tenant?  Home owner  Tenant

3) Are you on the waiting list?  Yes  No

4) For how long have you been on the waiting list?  3-6 months  7-12 months  1-2 years  More than 2 years

**3. SEWER RETICULATION**

1) Are you satisfied with SEWER reticulation in your area?  
Very satisfied  Satisfied  Neutral  Dissatisfied  Very dissatisfied

2) Does the Council respond to SEWER burst on-time?  Yes  No

- **Scorecards**

These are simple forms used to gather household information about the quality of local services such as water, sanitation, schools, health clinics, roads and waste management. The information can then be used to advocate for service improvements.

the community decided to take action to improve their water supply.

Recognising that water is a government service issue, the community approached their local authorities with a plan. They asked them to provide a water tank and pipeline network to supply water to all the homes in Tipa Tipa, and promised to provide time and labour for free to help complete the project. After a lot of negotiation the community was successful, and they now have a functioning water system.

Building on this success, church and community leaders were later able to influence the local government annual plan leading to the construction of an effective sewerage system in Tipa Tipa.

### Holding governments to account

Governments have a responsibility to create a secure environment where their citizens can thrive. This includes providing access to services such as electricity, water and sanitation, waste management and healthcare facilities.

Governments put in place public policies, plans and budgets to help them deliver the various services.

And government officials implementing the plans have an obligation to act in the best interests of society. If they do not do this, they need to be held responsible. This is called social accountability.

To bring the type of change achieved in Tipa Tipa, people need to know how to hold their local authorities to account in a well informed, non-confrontational and constructive manner. They also need to show that they accept that they have important responsibilities. These include obeying the law, paying taxes and taking action themselves to address local problems.

Local churches can play a key role in this by listening to people's concerns and raising awareness about rights and responsibilities. They can then bring whole communities together to speak out against injustice and call for change.

---

*Based in Zambia, Chalwe Nyirenda is Tearfund's Social Accountability Advisor*

*For more information about church and community mobilisation, visit [learn.tearfund.org](http://learn.tearfund.org) and search for 'CCM'.*

# Community champions

By Munyaradzi Mataruse

**‘The water tap at my house was dry for five years,’ says Livson Mponda in the town of Gokwe, Zimbabwe.**

As a result, his family members had to walk two kilometres to fetch water from the river, and often his children would become unwell after drinking it. The only alternative was to buy water, which Livson could rarely afford to do.



Community champions being trained by the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe. Photos: The Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe

Several church volunteers, known as community champions and trained by the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe, began to gather information about the water situation in Livson’s area. They then presented this information to the local council during a community feedback meeting. The council took their concerns seriously and restored the water supply.

Livson says, ‘The day the drops of water dripped from the tap marked a significant change in my life. I am really amazed by how the church acted as such an important force of development in this community; in a few months we achieved what we had failed to do for years.’

## Gathering information

Community champions help their communities to understand their rights and responsibilities. They also monitor public spending and use other social accountability tools such as scorecards and citizen journalism to gather information about local problems and concerns (see page 7).

One champion, Henry Madakadze, says, ‘When we use scorecards, people provide us with detailed and accurate information about water, sanitation and waste-collection services. We then meet with the town council and show them the information we have gathered. Council officials are very supportive of the work we are doing and it encourages them to take action.’

Nyasha Chikwamure, another champion, has been trained in citizen journalism. She says, ‘We wrote a story on refuse collection. We did not have a proper dumping site – the refuse was just piled up. After the story the council addressed the issue and now we have a proper site.’

**‘Council officials are very supportive of the work we are doing and it encourages them to take action.’**





Community champions visit households to gather information about services such as water. Photo: Kieran Dodds/Tearfund

**‘This initiative has helped us to understand the problems that are facing the community.’**

Church leaders play an important role in the process. ‘After the training I was able to encourage my congregation to understand the constitution,’ says Pastor Tshabalala. ‘I taught them to be aware of their rights. I also advised them to be responsible towards their community, and to be responsible in paying their bills on time so that they get proper service delivery.’

### Working together

Local officials are often pleased to have the opportunity to work more closely with the people they represent. One local councillor says, ‘This initiative has helped us to understand the impact of the problems that are facing the community. We have realised that we do not need to disagree. By having a better appreciation of the problems, we can work together to solve them.’

Another councillor adds, ‘I invite pastors and community champions to join our budget consultation meetings. During these meetings they bring positive contributions. They have people at heart. They also monitor our progress and they engage us in service-delivery matters.’

‘Before, people did not care about budget consultations. Now, about three quarters of the people attending the meetings are community champions.’

---

*Munyaradzi Mataruse is a Senior Programmes Officer with the Evangelical Fellowship of Zimbabwe*

[efzimbabwe.org](http://efzimbabwe.org)

# Quiet influence

By Ben Osawe

**In some contexts it can be difficult, or even dangerous, for communities to get involved in public advocacy work.**

This includes countries where government processes are not transparent, or where there is political unrest, dominance of a single political party or lack of recognition of basic human rights such as freedom of speech.

In these contexts it is not possible to organise street protests, or even to collect signatures and write to officials asking for laws or public policies to be changed. Instead, different approaches need to be used to quietly influence change from within.

## Advocacy success in Nigeria

For nearly 50 years, economic growth in Nigeria has depended on crude oil exports. The political leaders have become so used to this that any attempts to advocate for a more environmentally sustainable model of economic growth are met with resistance.

In Nigeria in general, protests on social issues are prohibited and there is limited freedom of speech.

In response, Tearfund's local partners in Nigeria's Plateau State decided to carefully and sensitively advocate for change using three different approaches.

- 1 Relationship building.** Partner staff spent a lot of time building relationships with state officials. They invited them to attend local community meetings and took them to visit projects.
- 2 Drawing attention to past successes.** The partners reminded the officials how, over many years, they had successfully responded to key issues such as HIV, sexual and gender-based violence, and environmental degradation. This helped the officials realise that the partners have a high level of technical expertise, as well as a genuine desire to alleviate poverty and contribute to positive and sustainable change.

📌 Tearfund's partners in Nigeria are advocating for a sustainable model of economic growth.  
Photo: Ruth Towell/Tearfund



**3 Presenting alternatives.** The partners were able to show, based on careful research, that Plateau State's economy could be even stronger if an alternative, more sustainable path to economic growth was chosen, building on the vast natural resources of the state.

As a result of this relational, persistent and peaceful approach, the proposal presented by Tearfund's partners was adopted. It is currently leading to the development of eight, state-wide public policies covering water resources and energy, environment, tourism, agriculture, housing, urban development, youth development and transport.

---

*Ben Osawe is Tearfund's Advocacy Manager in Nigeria*



➤ **Leading by example: Tearfund partner staff protect a newly planted tree.** Photo: Tom Price/Tearfund



## Case study

# Cartoons and government budgets

One country in Asia used to spend very little of its national budget on education and healthcare, compared to the other countries in the region. It was also ranked one of the worst countries for budget accountability.

It was not a country where people could openly hold the government to account, so one of Tearfund's local partners decided to take a creative approach to influence change.

The partner invited cartoonists from around the country to sensitively illustrate issues associated with budget transparency and social accountability. They then shared the cartoons in exhibitions and publications.

As the cartoons gained the attention of the media and the public, partner staff were able to meet with the national Minister of Finance to promote the transparent use of resources. This opened the door to the partner hosting 60 government officials for training on social accountability.

Building on the learning from this training, a national social accountability project was developed. This included a public document containing information about government budgets and spending. Tearfund's partner developed cartoon guides to the budget to make sure everyone, from children to members of parliament, could understand and respond to it.

# The advocacy cycle

If advocacy is to be successful, it needs to be planned well. The basic procedure is the same for all types of advocacy and it can be helpful to picture this as a five-step cycle.

Sometimes the steps will be followed in order; other times they will run in parallel. It is important to remain flexible and be willing to adapt to changing circumstances.

## Step 1

### Know what you want to change

Think about the root causes of the unjust or difficult situation. Why do you and others want to try to change things? Is it possible to change the situation through advocacy? Do not try to change too many things at once – choose one main issue to focus on.

## Step 5

### Monitor and evaluate your progress

Throughout each stage, regularly monitor, review and evaluate your progress, making changes to your plans if necessary.

It may be helpful to make a list of things that have been successful, and the things that have not gone well. For example:

#### Successes

- clear responsibilities
- realistic objectives
- opportunities to talk to local government officials

#### Failures

- not enough supporters
- unsympathetic reporting in the media
- not enough information

If further action is needed, consider repeating the cycle and working out a new strategy.



Adapted from Tearfund's Advocacy toolkit. The toolkit can be downloaded free of charge from [learn.tearfund.org](http://learn.tearfund.org) (search for 'advocacy toolkit').

## Step 2

### Gather information

Find out as much as possible about the issue by gathering and analysing evidence about it. This may involve making visits, talking with people and carrying out research to find details of:

- the issue and the problems it is causing
- possible solutions that could be proposed
- decision-makers who could help change the situation, such as local government officials
- opportunities for influencing decision-makers such as public meetings, newsletters or conversations with personal contacts
- potential supporters and champions
- people who might be against the changes you are proposing
- risks and advantages of taking action, or of not taking action.

## Step 3

### Develop an action plan

This should include:

- the main problem
- the objectives of your advocacy work
- the methods and activities that you are planning to use
- your advocacy messages, making sure they are right for the audience
- who is involved, and what their responsibilities are
- the time schedule
- details of how you will measure the results.

## Step 4

### Take action

The best action to take will vary greatly, depending on the culture and the social and political context. It may include lobbying, campaigning and media messages. Showing a willingness to be part of the solution can also help.

# The advocacy cycle in Nepal

The beautiful, culturally important village of Taka sits in the mountains of western Nepal. Tourism is increasing in the area and there are a growing number of shops and hotels. The head office of the rural municipality is also located in the village.

However, despite all the benefits of living in a thriving community, the people of Taka were becoming increasingly concerned about the amount of solid waste being tipped into the river due to the lack of a proper waste management system.

In 2021, Chebang women's group was formed in Taka as part of environmental and advocacy work being facilitated by United Mission to Nepal (UMN). Here is the story of how the women's group used the advocacy cycle to help clean up their community.

## Step 1

### Know what you want to change

As UMN helped the Chebang women's group to become familiar with government responsibilities and policies, the group quickly identified the need to take action on the problem of solid waste.

## Step 5

### Monitor and evaluate your progress

Very soon after receiving the document, the local authorities paid for two official dump sites to be prepared. They also sent formal notices to the shop and hotel owners, specifying how they should collect and manage their waste.

The women made follow-up visits to local businesses and families, and people began to stop tipping waste into the river.

The women, and other residents of Taka, have discovered that by holding their local authorities to account, and acting responsibly themselves, they are able to influence change.



## Step 2

### Gather information

The women learnt more about the waste problem by talking to people and walking around the village. They discovered that the shops and restaurants were dumping a lot of their waste into the river because they did not know where else to put it.

As well as being unsightly, the unmanaged waste was becoming a breeding ground for disease-spreading insects and rodents. It was polluting the water sources and domestic animals were in danger of eating large quantities of plastic and other waste.

## Step 3

### Develop an action plan

The women decided that they wanted the local authorities to provide proper waste pits and stop the shops and restaurants from dumping their waste in the river.

They chose to write a short document explaining what they had discovered, and what they felt the solutions could be. They also decided they would clear up some of the waste themselves so the authorities would see that they were serious about helping to improve the situation.

## Step 4

### Take action

The women boldly presented their document to the local authorities, urging them to arrange proper waste management. They then cleared up some of the waste themselves.

*United Mission to Nepal works with communities to address the root causes of poverty in Nepal and bring fullness of life to all.*

[umn.org.np](http://umn.org.np)

## Interview

# Legal rights for self-help groups

**There are more than 20,000 self-help groups in Ethiopia, but until recently they were not legally recognised by the Ethiopian Government.**

In this interview Mesfin Abebe, Tearfund's Advocacy Coordinator in Ethiopia, reflects on why legal recognition of self-help groups is so important and how, after many years of advocacy, it has recently been achieved.

### What are self-help groups?

'Self-help groups have a very distinctive identity. They are for people who have the fewest economic resources in a community (eg women and people with disabilities) and little opportunity to contribute to local decision-making. They are self-governed in a way that is highly participatory, giving everyone

in the group the opportunity to learn leadership and financial skills.

'Each group is made up of 15 to 20 people from similar socio-economic backgrounds. They meet weekly to discuss issues, find solutions to common problems and build trusting and supportive relationships.

'Each week everyone saves a small amount of money. Members can then take out loans at low interest rates for household needs, or to invest in small businesses. Local facilitators show the groups how to effectively govern themselves, as well as providing small business training. As they grow in confidence, many groups begin to play an active role in their communities, including advocating for change.'

📍 Members of Shebidino self-help group in Ethiopia. Photo: Aaron Koch/Tearfund







📌 This Ethiopian baker has used small loans from her self-help group to expand her business. Photo: Will Boase/Tearfund

### Why is legal recognition important?

‘For many years the Ethiopian Government has recognised that self-help groups are helping thousands of people to lift themselves out of poverty. But without legal recognition there is a danger that the core principles of the groups will be eroded, such as the importance of giving priority to the most vulnerable. This is because without a legal categorisation of their own, it is assumed that self-help groups are the same as other groups or cooperatives, even though they have been established for a different purpose.

‘In addition, without legal recognition self-help groups do not have access to financial services or government support in the same way that other community groups do. One self-help group member said, “The value of securing legal recognition is priceless. Banks and other organisations used to look down on us when we approached them for services such as loans. But now we can hold our heads up high and the banks are treating us with respect.”’

### How did the groups manage to get legal recognition?

‘It started with many years of relationship building between self-help groups and local government representatives, facilitated by Tearfund’s local partner, Kale Heywet Church. More recently, research confirmed that legal recognition was needed to allow the groups to maintain their integrity and continue to serve the needs of the most disadvantaged in their communities.

‘Based on this research, we decided to initially focus on Oromia Region because it has a large population and is close to the capital city, Addis Ababa. What happens in Oromia usually has a large influence across the country as a whole.

‘Starting in the villages, self-help group members were encouraged to identify their own needs for legal recognition and then discuss these needs and aspirations with local community and government leaders. Supporting letters from these leaders then opened the way for similar discussions at sub-regional level and, eventually, regional level.

‘This was a lengthy process, but it was important for the self-help group members themselves to take the lead and define the change that they wanted to see.

‘Following these discussions a draft regulation was prepared. This was approved by the Regional General Attorney. The regulation was then presented to the Oromia Labour and Social Affairs Bureau and, from there, to the Regional Cabinet. Finally, the regulation was approved into local law.

‘Self-help groups in Oromia Region now have the legal right to ensure that groups adhere to the detailed criteria set out in their by-laws before they can call themselves ‘self-help groups’. These by-laws include details around shared leadership, inclusion, respect, participation and service, all of which are crucial if the groups are to continue to bring local and regional benefits.

‘I am delighted to report that the local authorities in other regions of Ethiopia have decided to follow the example of Oromia, so self-help groups will soon have legal recognition across the whole country. This will strengthen their ability to influence their local communities, engage with local authorities and advocate for change.’

# How to build a movement

A movement is a group of people with a common purpose who are campaigning for social, political or cultural change. Movements are often large, and they can be made up of individuals, or a mix of individuals and organisations.

Movements are different to organisations:

An **organisation** has a person in charge who is responsible for its work. Rules and procedures are centralised and often formal.

A **movement** is facilitated, rather than coordinated or controlled. There is a unifying, shared vision, shared leadership and an emphasis on collaboration. Movements focus on equipping and inspiring people, and connecting participants to each other.

## Key factors for success

There are many ways to build and grow a movement, depending on the goal and the context. Here are a few important principles to help you get started.

**Values:** Develop a set of core values (eg non-violence, mutual respect, integrity) and put them in writing. You can then regularly check that the movement is sticking to these values over time.

**Vision:** A clear vision of what could be achieved will help people to feel inspired, motivated and ready to help build a better future.

**Skills:** Different members of a movement will bring different skills, eg the ability to organise events, conduct research into an issue, plan, communicate well or understand the law. Mutual sharing of knowledge, experience and skills will increase confidence and provide everyone with the opportunity to learn and contribute.

**Relationships:** Relationship building helps members to feel part of something bigger than themselves. A lack of hierarchy, and the feeling that all members of the movement are leaders, are key to sustaining motivation and action.

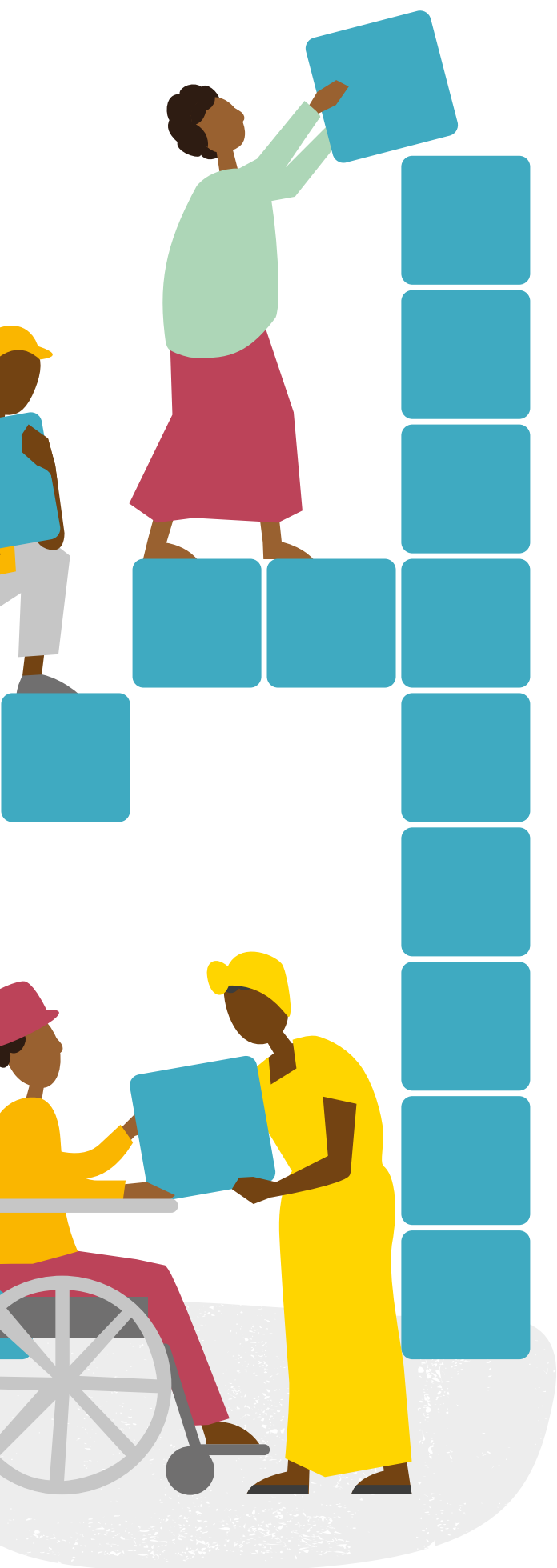
**Advocacy demands:** The advocacy demands of a movement need to be clear, specific and communicated well if they are to get the attention of decision-makers.

**Plans:** Small actions can help create momentum, and small, early successes provide motivation.

**Patience:** Bringing about the social, political or cultural changes you want to see may take a long time.



See Tearfund's movement building guide for more information. Visit [learn.tearfund.org](https://learn.tearfund.org) and search for 'movement building'.



## Potential challenges, and ways to avoid or overcome them

- 1** People within the movement want to use methods that you disagree with (such as rioting).

**Response:** If people are doing things that go against the movement's stated values, you may need to explain to them that they cannot do these things 'in the name of' the movement. If this does not change things, you will need to publicly state that your movement is against the behaviour.

- 2** The movement loses focus.

**Response:** For every activity that is planned it can be helpful to consider how it is contributing to the vision of the movement, and whether there is a different method or activity that could be more effective.

- 3** The government closes the 'space' within which movements can operate, eg by making public meetings or some advocacy activities illegal.

**Response:** This can be very challenging. It may be that your movement can continue, using other methods to communicate and advocate. However, in some cases, the political environment may change so much that movement building is no longer an appropriate option.

- 4** Members become disillusioned or lose interest.

**Response:** Communication with movement members is key. They need to be well informed and know that their contribution is vital. Having regular actions and activities to take part in will help add momentum and keep people interested.

- 5** You (and/or others) become exhausted.

**Response:** Take enough time to rest, including spending time with family members and friends. Delegate to others and ask for help. Building and sustaining a movement is not about one person doing everything. It is about working with others and sharing leadership, decision-making and workload.

# Clean river, healthy city

**The Tejipió River in Recife, Brazil, was filled with waste. This caused it to regularly burst its banks after heavy rains, spreading disease and causing extensive damage to homes and businesses.**

With the support of Tearfund's partner, Instituto Solidare, several local pastors worked together to develop an emergency response plan. When the river next flooded they effectively coordinated support to those most badly affected.

However, the pastors and other community members realised that just responding to the regular flooding was not enough. They needed to take action to try to stop the river from flooding in the first place.

Local churches, schools and community leaders started to talk about what they needed to do. At the same time, Instituto Solidare began meeting with academic institutions and local government officials.

Together, they researched the issue and worked out exactly what they wanted to campaign for: better waste management – including recycling – and the regular cleaning and protection of the river.

## A growing movement

Gradually, more and more churches, schools, community organisations, families and individuals

joined the movement, by this time known as *Rio limpo, cidade saudável* (Clean river, healthy city).

In a peaceful protest, 500 community members walked along the river to government buildings and they presented officials with a petition containing 13,000 signatures. Church and community members also cleaned up some parts of the river to draw public attention to the issue.

These actions increased the pressure on the local authorities to respond, and they eventually put in place a cleaning and dredging programme for the river to reduce the risk of flooding.

## Long-term struggle

A local forum continues to defend the social, economic and political rights of the river communities. Made up of church leaders, community members and others, the group organises awareness-raising activities and regularly meets with government representatives.

Simone Vieira, Tearfund's Advocacy Coordinator in Brazil, says, 'Many of the river communities suffer from discrimination, poor housing and limited access to services. This is a long-term struggle, but everyone involved is committed to standing up for their rights.'

Community members in Recife discuss the problem of waste in their river. Photo: Ruth Towell/Tearfund



## No litter here!

Do people in your local area sometimes drop plastic bags, bottles and other waste on the ground, instead of reusing it, recycling it or putting it in the bin?

As well as being untidy, plastic waste can harm animals and block drains and rivers, causing floods. It also takes a long time to break down and disappear – up to 450 years for a plastic bottle!

Here are some ways that you and your friends can make people more aware of the situation, and ask them to do something about it.

### ✓ Keep your area tidy

Make sure that you do not drop litter, and ask your friends not to drop it either. Explain to them that God has created a beautiful world for us to live in, and he has given us the job of taking care of it.

### ✓ Make a poster

Design and put up posters in your school and local area reminding people not to drop litter.

### ✓ Pick it up!

Ask a family member or teacher to help you organise a clean-up campaign with other children. Work together to collect as much plastic waste as you can. Can some of it be recycled?

Ask an adult to contact your local radio station or newspaper to tell them what you are doing, and why you are doing it. If your clean-up campaign is mentioned on the radio or in the newspaper, it might encourage other people to help solve the problem.

*Wash your hands carefully after picking up litter. Use gloves if you can.*



### Bible verse memory challenge!

Whatever your age, and wherever you live in the world, you can help make your local area a better place.

Can you learn this Bible verse?

‘Let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.’

Matthew 5:16 (New Living Translation)



## Case studies

# Young people speak out

### Junior Parliament

---

In 2015, the Jubilee Centre in Zambia established an initiative called Junior Parliament. This unique forum allows young people to develop their leadership skills, learn how to express their views and gain an understanding of the national parliamentary system.

One young man, Ray Daniel Zulu, says, 'I joined Junior Parliament because I have a passion to bring change in my community and nation. When wrong things

happen and they are not addressed, the people that suffer the most are young people.'

The participants are taught how to research different issues, which they then debate. The debates are held in public, and community members and government officials are invited to attend.

Topics that have been debated include plastic waste, education for vulnerable children and the role of the community in implementing government projects.

There have been several major achievements as a result of these debates: children have received government support to complete secondary school, and there is now a ban on single-use plastic bags in all supermarkets.

Ray says, 'I have learnt that a leader must take risks in order to grow. We believe that we can make a difference in our communities. We want to involve more young people so we can work together to take our nation forward.'



📷 A member of Junior Parliament expresses her point of view during a public debate.  
Photo: Jubilee Centre

### Marriage registration

---

Sangita Praja got married at the age of 16 in Nepal. But the couple did not register their marriage, so they did not get a marriage certificate.

A few years later Sangita's husband married someone else without her knowing, putting her in a very painful and difficult situation.

Sangita realised that she needed to get a marriage certificate so she could claim her right to government support.

The women's group in Sangita's community had received advocacy training from local organisation ETSC (Education, Training and Service for Community), and they offered to help Sangita present her case to the ward chairperson.

After various negotiations, during which Sangita gained the confidence to speak up for herself, she received her certificate.

# Resources

Unless otherwise stated, all these resources are available in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese and can be downloaded, free of charge, from [learn.tearfund.org](http://learn.tearfund.org) (access the website and then use the search function to find the resource you want).

## **Advocacy toolkit**

By Joanna Watson

A comprehensive set of resources on the theory and practice of advocacy. Contact us to request a printed copy.

## **CCM advocacy guide**

How to integrate local-level advocacy into church and community mobilisation processes

## **Footsteps**

- Participatory communication – *Footsteps 117*
- Home and hospitality – *Footsteps 116*
- Sustainable energy – *Footsteps 114*
- Local fundraising – *Footsteps 111*
- Youth – *Footsteps 109*
- Waste – *Footsteps 107*

Contact us to request printed copies.

**Would you like to receive *Footsteps* via WhatsApp? If so, please send an email to [publications@tearfund.org](mailto:publications@tearfund.org)**

## **Advocacy in the digital age**

A set of online resources exploring how to use the internet and mobile phones as part of the advocacy cycle

## **e-learning: Advocacy essentials**

A self-led, online course about how to start advocating on local community issues

## **Budget tracking for beginners: An introductory guide**

A short introduction to budget tracking and how to apply it at a local level. Available in English and Spanish

## **Movement building guide and Movement building assessment tool**

Two practical resources explaining how to build a movement, and how to assess its progress

## **Reveal toolkit: Influencing decision-makers**

This tool outlines the purpose of influencing people in positions of power and discusses activities such as mobilising people and working with the media

## **Podcast: How to build community**

Listen to all episodes of our podcast at [tearfund.org/podcast](http://tearfund.org/podcast) including a recent episode about social accountability featuring three of the authors from this edition of *Footsteps*.

## **Footsteps** ISSN 0962 28619

**Editor** Jude Collins

**Editorial Committee** Barbara Almond, Maria Andrade, J Mark Bowers, Mike Clifford, Dickon Crawford, Rei Crizaldo, Paul Dean, Ted Lankester, Matt Little, Liu Liu, Roland Lubett, Ambrose Murangira, Christopher Peter, Rebecca Weaver-Boyes, Joy Wright

**Translations editors** Alvin Góngora, Carolina Kuzaks-Cardenas, Helen Machin

**Design** Wingfinger Graphics, Leeds

**Change of address** Please give us the reference number from your address label when informing us of a change of address.

**Scripture quotations** taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version Anglicised (unless otherwise stated). Copyright © 1979, 1984, 2011 Biblica. Used by permission of Hodder & Stoughton Ltd, an Hachette UK company. All rights reserved.

**Copyright** © Tearfund 2022. All rights reserved. Permission is granted for the reproduction of text from *Footsteps* for training purposes provided that the materials are distributed free of charge and that credit is given to Tearfund. For all other uses,

please contact [publications@tearfund.org](mailto:publications@tearfund.org) for written permission.

**Opinions and views** expressed in the articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or Tearfund. Technical information supplied in *Footsteps* is checked as thoroughly as possible, but we cannot accept responsibility should any problems occur.

**e-footsteps** To receive *Footsteps* by email, please sign up through the Tearfund Learn website, [learn.tearfund.org](http://learn.tearfund.org)

# Interview

# Persevere!

For many years, Manzo Dembele has been supporting organisations and communities to advocate for change in Mali. Here he reflects on his experiences.

## What does advocacy mean to you?

‘Different organisations, groups and individuals approach advocacy in different ways. But the end goal is the same: to bring about positive change by influencing decision-makers, laws, public policies, norms and practices.’

‘Although I have worked with large networks and coalitions, it is particularly rewarding when communities gain the confidence to advocate for themselves.’

## What have you learnt?

‘I have learnt that advocacy needs to constantly adapt to changing environments and situations. This includes adapting to, and making the most of, changes in technology such as internet connectivity and smartphones.’

‘Though challenging, and with some risks, these new technologies represent opportunities to communicate, network and collaborate more quickly with larger numbers of people.’

‘I have also learnt not to prioritise my own agenda when working with others in advocacy. It is very important to listen to, and appreciate, different ideas and views.’

## What are you working on at the moment?

‘I am supporting a local organisation to advocate for a reduction in the amount of pollution caused by factories in the Ségou region of Mali. The organisation has formed a committee including women, youth, faith leaders and representatives from the local authority. Together, they are leading the way in calling for change in the area.’

‘I am also working with leaders from different faiths on a peacebuilding programme. While working with them and listening to their conversations, I have realised again that advocacy is often about compromise, and it can take a long time to reach agreement. But it is always worth persevering!’

*Manzo Dembele is a former Tearfund Advocacy Officer in Mali*



Manzo talks to local leaders in Mali about how they can encourage community-led advocacy. Photo: Tearfund

[learn.tearfund.org](https://www.tearfund.org)

Tearfund, 100 Church Road, Teddington, TW11 8QE, United Kingdom  
☎ +44 (0)20 3906 3906 ✉ [publications@tearfund.org](mailto:publications@tearfund.org)

Registered office: Tearfund, 100 Church Road, Teddington, TW11 8QE. Registered in England: 994339. A company limited by guarantee. Registered Charity No. 265464 (England & Wales) Registered Charity No. SC037624 (Scotland) J731 - (0822)



**tearfund**