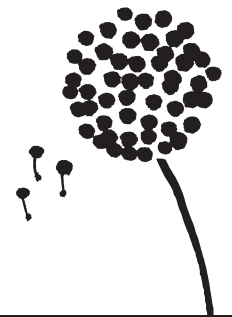


Footsteps

No.56 SEPTEMBER 2003

LEARNING FROM DISASTERS



TEARFUND

Responding to disasters

by Marcus Oxley

What do we mean by a *disaster*? A disaster is any kind of crisis that happens when people are unable to cope with the impact of an event that causes severe damage or destruction. The term *hazard* is used to describe such an event. Hazards can be either natural or man-made and include earthquakes, floods, epidemics, wars or economic collapse. The term *vulnerable* is used to describe people who are likely to suffer serious loss, damage, injury or death as a result of any kind of hazard.

Vulnerable people, who are often poor, will find it hard to respond to, and recover from, the impact of a hazard. For example, economic pressures may force people to live in dangerous locations, such as flood plains or low-lying coastal

areas. They are then vulnerable to flooding or storms. People who have more financial resources can choose not to live in such dangerous places and may be able to strengthen their homes against the impact of flooding.

The poorest people in society are generally most at risk from the impact of disasters. However, people with disabilities, the elderly and the very young are also vulnerable in difficult situations.

A hazard only becomes a disaster when it is experienced by vulnerable people.

Every community, no matter how poor, possesses both strengths and weaknesses which can affect its ability to respond to a disaster. If weaknesses within a community are seen as vulnerabilities, then strengths can be considered as the capacity of the community to cope with, and recover from, hazards.

Increasing impact of disasters

Since the 1960s there has been a rapid rise in the number of deaths and injuries from disasters. During the 1990s around 80,000 people were killed by natural disasters each year, and 200 million people suffered serious problems as a result of disasters each year. There were

IN THIS ISSUE

- Flood-related disasters in South Asia
- Landslide in Myagdi
- Letters
- Risk mapping
- Project Pani: Responding to drought
- Bible study: Learning from the beginning
- Promoting public health among displaced people
- Hope from despair: A case study from IPASC
- Resources
- Tree surveys



Photo: Jim Leung, Tearfund

Footsteps

ISSN 0962 2861

Footsteps is a quarterly paper, linking health and development workers worldwide. Tearfund, publisher of *Footsteps*, hopes that it will provide the stimulus of new ideas and enthusiasm. It is a way of encouraging Christians of all nations as they work together towards creating wholeness in our communities.

Footsteps is free of charge to individuals working to promote health and development. It is available in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. Donations are welcomed.

Readers are invited to contribute views, articles, letters and photos.

Editor: Isabel Carter
PO Box 200, Bridgnorth, Shropshire,
WV16 4WQ, UK

Tel: +44 1746 768750
Fax: +44 1746 764594
E-mail: footsteps@tearfund.org
Website: www.tilz.info

Sub Editor: Rachel Blackman

Language Editor: Sheila Melot

Administrators: Judy Mondon, Sarah Carter

Editorial Committee: Ann Ashworth, Simon Batchelor, Mike Carter, Paul Dean, Richard Franceys, Martin Jennings, Ted Lankester, Simon Larkin, Sandra Michie, Nigel Poole, Alan Robinson, José Smith, Ian Wallace

Illustrator: Rod Mill

Design: Wingfinger Graphics, Leeds

Translation: S Boyd, L Bustamante, Dr J Cruz, S Dale-Pimentil, N Gemmell, L Gray, R Head, M Machado, O Martin, N Mauriange, J Perry, L Weiss

Mailing List: Write, giving brief details of your work and stating preferred language, to: Footsteps Mailing List, PO Box 200, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV16 4WQ, UK.
E-mail: judy.mondon@tearfund.org

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

Articles and illustrations from *Footsteps* may be adapted for use in training materials encouraging health and development provided the materials are distributed free of charge and that credit is given to *Footsteps*, Tearfund. Permission should be obtained before reprinting *Footsteps* material.

Opinions and views expressed in the letters and 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.

Tearfund is an evangelical Christian relief and development agency working through local partners to bring help and hope to communities in need around the world. Tearfund, 100 Church Road, Teddington, Middlesex, TW11 8QE, UK.
Tel: +44 20 8977 9144

Published by Tearfund. A company limited by guarantee. Regd in England No 994339. Regd Charity No 265464.

more natural disasters in the year 2000 than in any of the previous ten years.

Even more people are affected by conflict. During the 1990s over 31 million people each year were affected by conflicts, with around 230,000 people killed each year.

The increasing impact of natural disasters may be partly due to an increase in droughts, floods and storms as a result of long-term climate change. However, the main reason is because of increased poverty. Each disaster is likely to leave poor people in a worse situation than before, and even more vulnerable to a future disaster. In addition, the impact of war has brought sudden poverty to many millions of people.

Why do disasters happen?

Disasters are rarely isolated events. They show in painful and practical ways the consequences of mankind's broken relationship with God. When people are not accountable to God or to each other, this may lead to selfish attitudes, values and behaviour. The rich ignore the needs of those who are poorer. Richer, more powerful individuals and countries try to keep their privileged position through the special rules and structures they establish. The consequences are a world with a growing gap between rich and poor, increasing environmental damage and climatic change and rapidly growing slum areas in cities.

What is our response?

The increase in disasters threatens any social, political and economic progress made in recent decades. Reducing the threat of disasters on vulnerable communities is central to the very success of development itself.

When they occur, disasters can seem overwhelming, but remember that if a community builds up its capacity to cope with disasters, it will suffer much less. If we can tackle the causes of vulnerability and hazard, we may be able to prevent future disasters. In the words of the UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan:

'We must shift from a culture of reaction towards a culture of prevention. Preventative action is not only more humane than curative measures, it is also more cost-effective.'

Reducing the impact of hazards

We cannot prevent hazards from occurring, whether natural or man-made. However, practical action can be taken beforehand to reduce the potential impact of hazards on a community so that they do not always lead to a disaster. This is known as *mitigation*. Some actions can be taken by community organisations or churches without outside help. Other action may need financial or other support from local authorities or outside organisations. Such action must be carefully targeted to



Disaster situations often overwhelm the capacity and resources of the community and local authorities.

Photo: Jim Loring, Tearfund

deal with the type of hazard likely in that area. Examples include:

- building flood protection dykes
- improving drainage
- building earthquake- or flood-resistant housing
- planting trees, particularly on steep slopes to reduce rainwater run-off and in coastal areas to reduce storm damage
- soil conservation measures
- peace-building and reconciliation
- improving food security
- land reforms.

Preparing for natural disasters

In countries where natural hazards occur regularly, people use their knowledge and resources to cope. Local people can build up their capacity to respond, should an unexpected hazard occur. In poor countries, local people, churches and community-based organisations are already active. At times of crisis they will play the main role in meeting the basic needs of the community. Building capacity to respond to possible hazards is one of the most effective ways of reducing the risk of disasters.

Some practical examples of such preparation include:

- early warning systems
- first-aid training
- evacuation plans for people and livestock to 'safe areas'
- building storm or flood shelters
- developing local leadership
- encouraging local networking.

Emergency response

If a disaster does happen, most people are saved and helped by local people, long before outside help arrives. There are many small disasters that never receive outside help. However, disaster situations often overwhelm the capacity and resources of the community and local authorities. They need outside emergency help.

Outside help will always have a long-term impact on a community. Well-intended, but badly designed relief projects can make people dependent on

EDITORIAL

The world is full of bad news. Sometimes it can seem as if there are more and more disasters around the world. Unfortunately that really is the case as Marcus Oxley points out in our opening article. Disasters can damage communities. However challenges can also bring out the best in people. Preparing to cope with a possible hazard means that a community will have to organise itself. This can bring many benefits in day-to-day life – even if an unexpected hazard never arrives. This issue focuses on how we can learn from the experience of others and gives ideas on how we can help organise our community to be prepared for the unexpected.

Many readers will experience their own mini disaster in three months time. This will be the last copy of *Footsteps* you receive unless you have returned your yellow form to us! New readers, who have taken out subscriptions since the beginning of 2002, will not be affected. All other readers must confirm they want to continue to receive copies. If you have lost the form, simply send us a letter, fax or email called 'New Mailing List', using the name and reference number from your *Footsteps* envelope. If you don't have this reference number, please send us the **name and address to which copies are now sent** and let us know of any changes.

Future issues will look at managing finances, using drama and role play for development, and recycling.

Isabel Carter



outside help and reduce their capacity to cope. Whenever possible, outside help should strengthen local capacities and livelihoods so that recovery will be sustainable and long term.

Advocacy work

Advocacy work seeks to tackle the underlying causes of disasters by influencing key decision-makers at all levels to develop policies that support the poor and reduce their vulnerability.

Such change is unlikely to happen unless local organisations help vulnerable people to organise themselves, make their needs clear and start demanding better services and support. The church can play a lead role in this empowering process since it is present in many local communities and has strong moral authority.

Changes at the community level need to be combined with changes in both national and international policies.

The positive impact of disasters

Disasters can be key events for learning, education and development. They remind us of how much we depend on God and that all things are connected.

God can use disturbing events in our world to change hearts, minds and lives.

At the time, disasters are awful for those involved. However, benefits can come to the wider community as a result of a disaster.

- Disasters can mobilise public opinion, influence decision-makers and raise substantial financial resources.
- Disasters can bring a sense of urgency and strengthen political commitment for change.
- Disasters provide a unique opportunity for the poor and powerless to speak up against injustice and prejudice.

Preventing disasters in the future will depend on our ability to build just and fair social, economic and political structures that are based on Christian values of love, honesty and compassion.

At Tearfund, our aim is for all our work in disaster management to show Christ's love in action. In doing this, we believe the work contributes towards reconciling relationships between people, with their environment, and with God.

Marcus Oxley is the Disaster Management Director at Tearfund.

Flood-related disasters in South Asia

The deltas of the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers in South Asia flood on a seasonal basis. The flooding keeps the soil fertile because the rivers deposit silt which forms fertile soil each year. Partly because of the flooding, it is one of the most densely populated areas of the world with millions of people in Nepal, Northern India and Bangladesh depending on the rivers and fertile soils for their livelihoods.

However, in recent years these floods have become very destructive. This is partly due to deforestation in the Himalayas and to the effects of global warming. 1998 was a particularly bad year – 4,500 people died due to flooding in Bangladesh alone. The impact of flooding is serious due to the high population density, lack of flood control or warning systems and because the low-lying land at highest risk is occupied by the poorest people.

The damage caused by severe flooding includes whole villages washed away, agricultural land made useless, crops destroyed and the loss of human life and

livestock. Survivors face water-borne diseases, malnutrition, homelessness and the loss of their income.

The Cyclone Preparedness Programme (CPP)

The CPP programme is responsible for sharing information about cyclones in Bangladesh. Bangladesh has the worst record of cyclones in the world, affecting some 11 million people in low-lying coastal areas. The CPP works in 11 districts in the coastal area, covering about 3,500 villages. Thanks to a large network of cyclone shelters built by the Red Crescent and the government, the CPP is able to evacuate large numbers of people. It aims to:

- issue cyclone warning signals to all people

- help people reach shelter
- provide first aid to people injured by a cyclone
- work with the government of Bangladesh on a disaster preparedness plan
- build up public awareness and community capacity.

Key features of the programme

- It is a huge, yet community-based project.
- It involves close co-operation between the government, the Red Crescent and the International Federation of the Red Cross who fund the CPP programme.
- It makes disaster preparedness part of the daily life of vulnerable people.

The project is based around the commitment of over 32,000 village-based volunteers, organised into teams of 12. Each team includes at least two female volunteers. Volunteers are selected by the villagers themselves, using clear criteria. These teams are crucial in passing on the cyclone warning signals to their communities. They are all equipped with basic warning equipment, including transistor radios to monitor weather bulletins, megaphones and hand-operated sirens to pass on warnings. Two members of each team are trained in first aid. All members have equipment such as ropes, whistles, lifebuoys, first aid kits, and protective clothing such as boots and life-jackets.

The volunteers receive no payment for their work but are helped with travel costs and daily allowances when attending training sessions. All volunteers receive training in cyclone preparedness, followed by refresher courses every five years. Training provides them with the necessary skills and also builds their commitment.

The volunteers organise regular 'practices' and demonstrations in their villages. People have produced dramas about storing of emergency rations, safe shelters and basic hygiene. Folk songs about cyclone-awareness have been written and sung to traditional music. Wall paintings, video shows, radio programmes, posters, leaflets, and booklets are some of the other imaginative ways used to pass on the message to schools, fishermen and the communities at risk.

Severe flooding can wash away buildings, people and livestock, destroy crops and leave agricultural land useless.



Photo: Jim Leung, Tearfund

A cyclone in 1991 killed 138,000 people in Bangladesh. The CPP was set up soon after this. When another similar cyclone hit Bangladesh in 1994 about 750,000 people were successfully evacuated and 127 people died. The difference was due to the success of the CPP. A review in 2000 stated that 'The programme has acquired, over the years, recognition and acclaim from the general public and

government authorities. Cyclone warning and the response to it has become part of people's daily lives.'

Case study adapted from NGO Initiatives in Risk Reduction, Paper No 4 by David Peppiatt. David Peppiatt is Manager of the ProVention Consortium Secretariat, PO Box 372, 1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland.

E-mail: david.peppiatt@ifrc.org



Photo: Jim Loring, Tearfund

Landslide in Myagdi

by Alastair Seaman

International Nepal Fellowship (INF) has run a community health and development programme in Myagdi District, Nepal for over ten years. For the last six years the programme has encouraged marginalised people to meet together to plan ways of improving their lives. There are now about 40 such groups carrying out action plans to meet their own objectives. The programme offers these groups technical assistance in the areas of health, horticulture, literacy and drinking water system design and installation.

In 2001 there was a terrible landslide in Arman village which lies outside INF's working area but within Myagdi district. Sixteen people were killed and many houses destroyed. Public facilities, such as the primary school and water supply, were also damaged. Nearly 100 households were directly affected.

Shortly afterwards, INF was asked for help. Responding to disaster was not part of our plan – we had no budget for this kind of work and the disaster took place outside our working area. However this time, we decided to raise money and help.

Why get involved?

There were two main reasons we decided to help. Nepal has been suffering from a Maoist 'People's War' that has claimed over 8,000 lives during the last seven years. During this time, many development programmes have been forced by Maoists to scale down or stop their activities, particularly programmes like ours, that use an 'empowerment' approach. However,

when faced with a disaster and great need, Maoists are more willing for development agencies to be involved. So the first reason for responding positively was that we were presented with a rare 'window of opportunity' to work with local people to make a difference.

Another reason for getting involved was that this was an opportunity to bring both sides in the conflict closer together as they worked jointly on an issue that was important for both of them. In a small way, helping the community to respond to disaster helped to build relationships between people on both sides of the conflict. It also helped to maintain INF's good reputation in the district. This increased our acceptability to both sides in the conflict and improved our ability to continue with other parts of our programme.

How to get involved?

Programme staff wanted to respond in a way that benefited the whole community rather than just part of it. We wanted our input to

improve the capacity of the community to work together. We began by meeting with the disaster committee set up by local people to find out what the most important needs were. We decided together that the best way of meeting our objectives would be to help rebuild the primary school. As well as repairing the building, we were able to replace damaged furniture, repair the drinking water supply and install new toilets. INF provided construction and engineering advice as well as materials that were not available locally, such as cement and water pipes. The work was carried out using local labour that was partly voluntary and partly paid by INF. Paying local tradesmen and labourers encouraged the community's economy and helped some members to develop new and valuable skills.

Future planning

Following the experience in Arman, the programme decided to include responding to local disaster as a regular part of its activities. This means that we now make provision for this kind of work in our plans and budgets.

Alastair and Fiona Seaman are seconded to INF, Nepal by Tearfund. Their address is INF, PO Box 5, Pokhara, Nepal.

*E-mail: aseaman@inf.org.np
Website: www.inf.org.np*





Ideas for action

We collect all the *Footsteps* issues for our Library and use them in our ministry. We use many ideas from *Footsteps* in our training, seminars and workshops. As a result of our training:

- Illegal and unnecessary tree felling is very much reduced in this area.
- Jungle burning for hunting has almost ceased.
- Many trees have been planted in almost every village.
- Environmental awareness has been taught.
- Community health programmes are improved.

Two organisations have recently been formed: the People's Welfare Foundation and the Tribal Women's Farmers Association. These organisations will encourage self-help programmes for community development and food production. All these ideas come to our hearts through your *Footsteps*. Thank you so much.

*Revd Bikau Pame
North Cachar Hills Outreach
PO Haflong – 788819
NC Hills, Assam
India*

Cooking with sawdust

At the Christian Centre for the Protection of Flora and Fauna (CCPFF) we have a dream: 'to learn how to fish better in order to feed, clothe and house ourselves more successfully.' *Pas à Pas* is very helpful in providing us with many ideas.

We have encouraged the use of the sawdust stove (see *Footsteps* 46, p8). We see this as bringing several benefits:

- Women have more time to look after their children instead of cutting wood.
- Deforestation is reduced.
- Women have more time for education or to earn a supplementary income.
- Women's health may also improve, as they are inhaling less smoke.

We have also used the ideas from *Footsteps* for collecting rain water. This helps women and young girls, as it makes their workload lighter. Before, they needed to walk back and forth at least once a day to collect drinking water.

*Sokolua Lubanzadio
CCPFF, BP 14394, Kinshasa 1
Democratic Republic of Congo*

Snail management

Snail farming in Nigeria can now be a successful business. Many farmers are engaged in snail farming and sell snails for meat. However, there is still room for improvements in snail farming.

One of the problems with snail farming is that the snails hibernate (cease from any activity during cold or very hot, dry weather). Can readers suggest any possible way of preventing hibernation without causing any problems to the snails?

If any organisations or individuals with experience in producing and managing

snails can help with this or any other practical advice, we would be grateful.

*Okoronmkwo Emmanuel
Chockinsneric Animal Farm
No 1 Eshimeshi New Layout
Owerri West LGA, Imo State
Nigeria*

EDITOR:

Try watering the pens in the evening during hot, dry weather and avoid overcrowding.



Trees – the providers

Trees are a wonderful gift from God:

They give us fresh air (oxygen) to breathe.
They bring rain by causing clouds to form above their canopy of leaves.
They prevent floods from occurring by helping the soil to absorb heavy rainfall.
They provide coolness through the shade of their leaves.

Trees stabilise the soil, protecting the many forms of life in it.
They prevent soil erosion through their roots which hold the soil together.
They fertilise the soil with their dead leaves which contain the minerals all creatures need for their growth.
They surround us with beauty through their variety in shape, height, colour and flowers.

Trees provide the fuel we use for cooking, such as firewood and charcoal.
They provide us with fossilised fuels, such as coal.
They provide building material for houses, doors and windows and for furniture.
Artists use their wood to carve statues and various works of art.
They provide the raw material needed to make paper for the books, newspapers and magazines we read.
They provide seeds and fruits to eat.



Photo: Isabel Carter, Tearfund

Trees provide wood for the coffin in which human beings make their last journey.
Trees connect heaven and earth. With their feet deeply rooted in the earth and their arms stretched to their Creator, they continually glorify God and give him thanks.

God provides for us continuously through the presence of trees.

ECO Office
PO Box AD 148, Cape Coast
Ghana

E-mail: ecoffice@dds.nl

Smoking fish and meat

Can any readers help with a simple design for some kind of smoker or smoking cage to preserve fresh fish and meat?

Uwe Preuss
PO Box 6126, Dar es Salaam
Tanzania

E-mail: uwe@preussweb.de

Halt!

I don't want to be a soldier.
Listen, soldier:
I don't want to be your partner
Because I'm only a child.

I'm only a child who needs to be protected and looked after.
I'm only a lost child who is looking for a refuge.

I've lost my parents and all our belongings disappeared – not just in the fire, but stolen by others.
I'm only a child in a difficult situation and I need peace.

I need peace instead of fear, rest instead of marching.
I need peace for you too:
Peace for you, soldier – you who want to force me to enrol in the war in spite of my age.
I need peace for everyone.

Tell me soldier, what would my future be like if I followed you?
Tell me honestly: those who followed you, what are they doing and what have they become?
I want to know if you love the future...
In any case, I definitely do not want to be a soldier.

I don't want to be a soldier.
I want you to help me find a reception centre,
Where I can learn to read and write,
Where I can learn a job for the future.
I want you to hand me a toy instead of a weapon.
I want to be a dove of peace.
I want to be a messenger to everyone:
I don't want to be a soldier.

Amouzouvi E Blèwoussi
Président, Association Brimax
BP 13 182 Lomé
Togo



Photo: Ray Wright, Tearfund

Arsenic removal

Scientists from the Bangladesh Agriculture University in Mymensingh are reported to have identified a number of local plants – including ferns, duckweed and water hyacinth – that can remove arsenic from water. The use of aquatic plants in water tanks, for example, could provide a potential simple and low-cost solution to removing the poisonous chemical, arsenic, which is present in many tube-wells in Bangladesh and causes skin problems and sores on hands and feet.

Work elsewhere has recommended using a nutritious diet and a simple three-pot water filter, containing sand and charcoal, to lessen the impact of arsenic.

Contact: *Dr M Jahiruddin, Soil Science Department, BAU, Bangladesh*
E-mail: soilbau@mymensingh.net

Writing for healing

The Medical Foundation helps survivors of torture and violence through a healing process. In recent years the value of helping people to write down their stories as part of the healing process has been recognised. Here is an extract from the writing of an Iranian woman, Nasrin, who spent eight years in jail as a political prisoner.

The Prison Door

When I was in prison, I always thought other people would open the prison door, one day. And at last it was opened, though not by other people's actions, and I came out of it.

As I crossed through that door to come out of the prison I thought that I was putting prison behind me. Now I see that, although I am happy to have crossed through the door, the prison is still following me like a shadow.

For years after coming out through that door I didn't want to think about prison, but it was always slipping into my nightmares. Then I decided to write about it. Writing about it lessened my nightmares but the prison still occupied my mind. Now, every day, I think about prison as I write about it. It follows me like my own shadow.

Perhaps, until the day arrives in which there are no more prisoners, I cannot really feel that I have crossed through that door. Opening that door means finding life there. There are lives behind that door, the prison door. There are people waiting for us to open that door.

That door. It looks so scary when you cross through it to enter the prison and it looks so very ordinary when you come out of it.

Nasrin comments: 'Writing transformed me from a terrorised person to a writer... I make myself free by writing.'

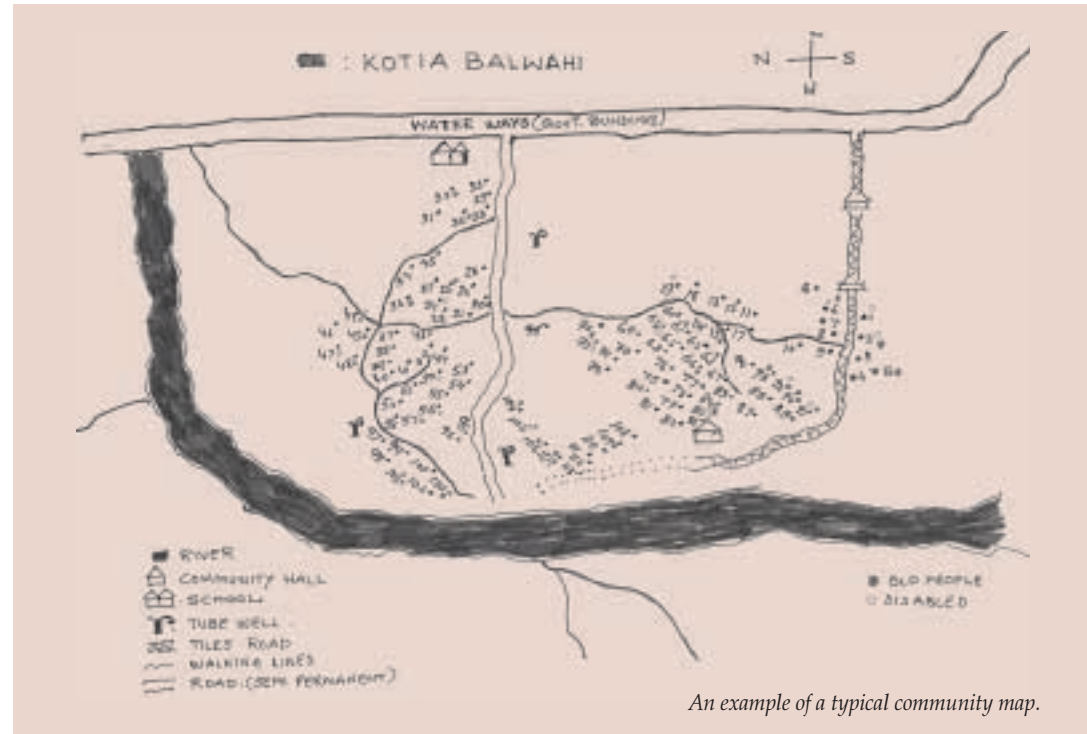
Sonja Linden supports people through the emotional process of writing their stories. She also writes plays, stories and poetry herself and is joint author of *The Healing Fields: Working with Nature to Re-build Shattered Lives*. E-mail: sonjalinden@blueyonder.co.uk

Risk mapping

Local people already know more than any outsider about their community and the people living there. Many people assume they know everything about their local area, but there is always more to examine and learn. Producing a detailed map of the community can help people to identify areas, buildings or people that would be at high risk should there be any kind of disaster.

A risk map will help people to identify the risks they face, help them to find solutions or take steps to reduce the risk:

- It will help identify major hazards (such as rivers that might flood or areas at risk of landslides).
- It will provide authorities and local organisations with information for decision making and planning.
- It can record the effects of any previous disasters.
- It can identify community shelters for use in case of disaster.



An example of a typical community map.

STAGE ONE Preparations

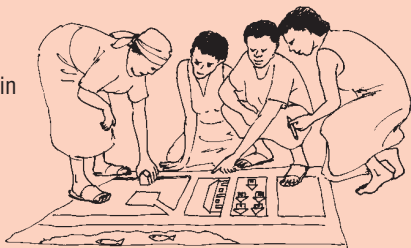
Organise a meeting and invite community members, local authorities and organisations to attend. Explain the purpose of the meeting and the value of producing a risk map. Take time to explain the meaning of the terms *risk* and *hazard* (see box opposite), so that all participants can understand and share in the process.

Producing a community map

Ask people to draw a large map of their local area, using large sheets of paper and pens. The map can also be drawn on clear ground with sticks, leaves and stones; or chalk on the wall of a building – but make sure these are copied safely onto paper to keep. The map should show:

- the natural and physical resources in the area (hills, forests, roads and rivers, for example)
- organisations and the homes of key people such as healthworkers and leaders.

More information may be gained if people first work in small groups of different age and gender to draw separate maps. The different results can be very revealing. For example, the young people's map may show very different information from that of older women. Allow each group to explain their map fully and encourage questions and discussions.



Use the information from each map to make a final detailed map on a large sheet of paper, ensuring all helpful information is included.

STAGE TWO Consider the risks

Once the initial map is finished, people can begin to consider the different risks and hazards that might face the area. Certain questions can be asked:

- If a heavy tropical storm or hurricane hit our community...
- If an earthquake hit our community...
- If a fire hit our community...
- If a landslide hit our community...
- If serious fighting through ethnic tensions or civil uprising hit our community...
- Which areas would be most at risk?
- Which structures or buildings would be most at risk?
- Which people would be most at risk?
- What impact would there be on our livelihoods?
- What impact would there be on water supplies?
- What impact would there be on communications (roads, bridges, telephones)?



People may find it useful to divide into groups and do a more detailed survey of the area in order to answer these questions fully. Further details may then need to be added to the map.

Levels of risk

Each of these questions is likely to involve considerable discussion. Discuss all that may be relevant for your area. After agreement is reached, shade in buildings, homes or areas, using colours to indicate the level of risk. For example, you could use red for high risk areas, yellow for medium risk areas and green for relatively risk-free areas.

STAGE THREE Response

Community tour

When the map is completed, it may be very useful for community leaders, local authority and organisation representatives to visit the areas noted as high or medium risk to see what, if any, changes could be made to lower their risk to different types of disaster.

- How can water supplies be protected?
- How can vulnerable people be supported?
- How could areas at risk of landslides be strengthened?
- How could buildings be strengthened?



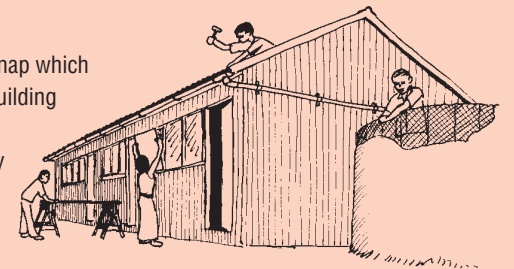
Plan of action

Leaders and local authorities should be invited to meet with community representatives to discuss the collected information. A community response plan should be worked out, allocating different responsibilities, such as communications, managing water supplies or evacuating vulnerable people. This should be updated each year.

- How can the information on the maps be kept safe for future reference?
- Who should look after the maps and make them available if needed?

Community shelter

Look at the areas shaded in green on the map which are relatively free of risk. Identify a large building such as a church, hall or school, which could be improved for use as a community shelter, should disaster strike. Consider ways of improving or strengthening this building according to the likely risk. Does the roof or water supply need improving? Could emergency supplies such as candles, matches, torches, chlorine tablets, plastic sheeting, cooking pots, firewood and medical supplies be stored in the building? Could copies of community records be kept here?



Adapted from information from EIRD Guidelines and PILLARS guides on Preparing for disaster and Mobilising the community.

Websites: www.eird.org
www.tilz.info/pillars

risk	the possibility of danger, loss or injury from an event or situation
hazard	an event or situation which could lead to danger, loss or injury
vulnerable	lacking protection or defence and so likely to be physically or emotionally wounded or hurt

Project Pani

RESPONDING TO DROUGHT

by Roshan Mendis

Sri Lanka is an island with rich and varied vegetation. In the past, most major disasters have been linked to excessive rainfall. In 1999, however, the monsoon failed. People in the south of the island waited hopefully for the next monsoon. But then the next two monsoons also failed to arrive. This meant there had been no rain for 21 months. Wells and rivers became dry.



LEADS provided water storage tanks and drinking water for over 11,000 families in nearly 90 villages.

Paddy rice, which is the main crop and depends heavily on water, was the worst affected. Coconut was another crop that provided an important source of income in the region. Vast areas of trees dried up, losing all their leaves and fruit, leaving only the bare treetops. Many were only fit to be cut for timber, leaving their owners without any income until replanted trees could bear fruit. Farmers were left with huge debts after losing three rice harvests and all their coconuts. Many left their villages to look for work in the cities in order to support their families. Some even resorted to suicide.

The government ignored the crisis, but after two years it finally declared the

drought an emergency, though still lacked resources to meet people's needs. 1.5 million people were affected by the drought, which was the worst in living memory.

Practical help

LEADS (Lanka Evangelical Alliance Development Service), is a Christian relief and development agency based in Colombo. LEADS runs a wide variety of programmes, including community development, housing, drug rehabilitation, peace building and disaster relief work.

Upon hearing about the plight of the villagers in the south, they informed the

Learning points

- Immediate response to urgent need
- Short-term response with long-term benefits – water tanks could be used for future rainwater storage
- Full local involvement – through water committees
- Reached out to other faiths – all communities were helped, irrespective of their faith
- Paved the way for future development work

Christian community in and around Colombo and began raising funds for the LEADS Drought Relief Project. Many private organisations, churches and individuals responded, making generous donations. This enabled LEADS to provide storage tanks and water supply to badly affected villages. Within two days, they had supplied 20 villages with water storage facilities and water. The Buddhist monk of each locality was invited to accompany them in the distribution of the tanks.

LEADS decided to provide water storage facilities rather than bottled water or food rations, so that in the long term the tanks could be used to store rainwater. Their immediate response was to provide water storage tanks of 2,000 and 1,000 litre capacity and drinking water for over 11,000 families in nearly 90 villages.

Next they asked villages to form water committees. These included members of at least 20 families from each village, in order to avoid conflicts in distribution. These committees then worked closely with the rural development officer and with the local authorities. LEADS insists that there has to be full involvement and agreement within the community for any work planned.

LEADS also worked to develop more long-term drought mitigation measures such as providing and improving access to open wells. The wells varied in their use – some were for drinking water and some for agricultural use. Of the 40 wells dug, each one produced fresh water, even in areas where other drilling had failed or had yielded only saline water.

Each well supplies at least 30 families with drinking water.

Physical and spiritual impact

The quick response of LEADS staff increased credibility and trust in the organisation. The relief supplied met an urgent need within the community. The churches were able to share the love of Christ in a practical way, at a time when considerable opposition to Christians exists, particularly in the south of Sri Lanka.

Villagers realised that at their time of need it was the Christians who had responded. Many people were touched, both by the practical help given and the loving manner in which it was given. LEADS' response strengthened the

witness and credibility of the local churches as well and opened the doors for more development work in the area.

Advocacy work

LEADS have also worked to persuade some of the banks to be more understanding in dealing with people who are in debt due to the drought. As a result, farmers have found some relief in paying back their loans and in regaining their dignity. It has also given them hope that the end of the drought may bring a return to profit instead of remaining in debt.

The work still continues, with plans for a water-harvesting project for 500 farmers collecting rainwater run-off. This work should lessen the impact of any future drought. This is being planned in co-operation with the



Photo: LEADS

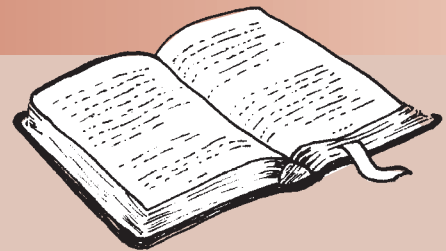
University of Moratuwa and the Department of Irrigation.

Roshan Mendis is the Director for Community Development, Relief and Church Relations of LEADS, Sri Lanka. The address is 25 Hospital Road, Dehiwela, Sri Lanka. E-mail: leads@stmail.lk

BIBLE STUDY

Learning from the beginning: Genesis

by Alan Robinson



Read Genesis 1:31, 2:15

Disasters and suffering were never part of God's original plan for us. He created all things and formed a partnership with us. However, this partnership was broken (Genesis 3) and we suffer the consequences.

• *How much are disasters part of these consequences?*

Read Romans 8:18-25

Today there is suffering – but it is temporary, and will one day give way to something eternally glorious.

• *How does God offer us a way back to the partnership?*

Knowing God, the prospect of disaster should not terrify us – we learn here that we are safe in his hands and that this world will one day be transformed into a new world. Until that glorious day, God requires that we act justly, love kindness and walk humbly with him (Micah 6:8).

The Bible touches on all aspects of life, and disasters are no exception. One of the best-known accounts is the story of Joseph in Genesis 41 where, through the consequences of famine, the descendants of Abraham settled in Egypt, where they developed into a nation. In this story, God used Joseph to work out his purpose and to be a blessing to others.

Read Genesis 41:16

Joseph started by humbling himself before God: 'I cannot do it – but God will.' Because of this attitude, it was possible for God to trust Joseph with a hugely important leadership position, without the fear that he would be corrupted.

• *How can we apply this in terms of leadership and responsibility in our own homes, communities, work, local and national government and in our own lives?*

Read Genesis 41:25

God speaks to the Pharaoh in a dream, and uses Joseph to explain to him what it means. God uses many ways to speak to us. He reveals his plans to us (Amos 3:7).

• *How can we be more open to listening to God before starting work on important new plans?*

Read Genesis 41:57

There was famine in the whole world, yet God had provided one country, Egypt, with the resources to cope. And today, God still provides some people and nations with resources to help others.

• *How can we use and share what we have in better ways to help others in greater need?*

Just like Joseph, the impact of our lives should be to make things better for our neighbours – to create rather than destroy, to bless people and not to curse them. Our presence should be good for the local community and economy, so that we will be better prepared for and better able to cope with hazards.

• *What more can you do in spiritual and physical terms to help in your local community?*

Alan Robinson works at Tearfund in the Latin America and Caribbean team. He was working in Honduras at the time of Hurricane Mitch and helped communities to cope through that disaster.

Promoting public health among displaced people

by Mwakamubaya Nasekwa

Tearfund has several partners based in Nyankunde, Democratic Republic of Congo. Staff were forced to leave Nyankunde when tensions between the Hema and Lendu communities led to a massacre of around 1,000 people at Nyankunde.

'Leaving Nyankunde was like a bad dream,' says Mwaka. 'It was very difficult to look on, powerless, as the looters destroyed the houses and carried everything away. The future looked grim – we did not know where we were going, how we would live, what our children's fate would be... so many questions which needed answering. We had invested a large part of our lives in this community, now destroyed in a single day. We were all traumatised and despairing.'

Survivors fled into the forests or to other centres nearby. Over 65,000 displaced people are now in the area, mostly in three centres, Oicha, Beni and Eringeti.

Many of the displaced staff are health promoters. With the support of Tearfund UK, the PPSSP (Programme for the Promotion of Primary Health Care in Rural Areas) programme started and

quickly became popular. Its aim was to promote public health, a need few consider during an emergency. PPSSP wanted to reduce sickness and death due to diarrhoea and infectious diseases among both displaced people and the local population. In a situation where the most urgent needs were food, drinking water, accommodation, non-food items and medical care, what practical help could such a programme bring?

The programme quickly gained the trust of its target group because:

- Most staff are also displaced people – they really understand the problems.
- The health promoters have learned the value of listening to the community and staying among them.
- The displaced people actively participate in identifying their needs and in seeking possible solutions.

Case study of trauma

While fleeing from their home, a family becomes separated. A father travels alone with his daughter for two months. He sleeps with her and she becomes pregnant. Out of shame, the girl decides to have an abortion. The father is troubled and goes to a counsellor. The mother goes to another counsellor, saying: 'I can't stand living with my husband and daughter.'

If you were in this situation, consider how you might feel – first as the husband, then as the daughter and then as the mother. How could you help this family through this trauma?

The major health concerns encountered in the refugee camps include:

- poor general hygiene
- very poor use of latrines
- lack of rubbish dumps
- poor drainage of waste water
- flies and mosquitoes everywhere.

Strategies

The programme has three main strategies:

Health education Awareness-raising by the promoters has led to the creation of a health and hygiene committee run by the displaced people themselves. The committee's role is to plan activities to maintain the cleanliness of the camps and avoid the spread of diarrhoeal diseases.

Displaced people have been very satisfied with the programme, commenting, 'Without this programme, many of us would have died, especially the children.'

Distribution of practical items Items such as mosquito nets, soap, clothing and water containers are distributed to support the health messages given. These are given to the most vulnerable



Photo: Marcus Perkins, Tearfund

Rose Kirere, head health promoter, talking to displaced people from the northeast of the country who have re-settled near Beni.

people first, which includes families with young children, pregnant women, widows, orphans and people with disabilities.

Trauma counselling Counselling is one of the programme's major activities. It is our duty to take care of the whole person (body, soul and spirit). The displaced people here are victims of war and its consequences. In a word, the whole population is traumatised.

The women and girls are usually the most traumatised, because they have either been raped or made widows or orphans by the violence. We organised workshops for the training of trainers on trauma counselling. During the group work, some real cases have been discussed (see page 12).

These workshops have been an opportunity for reconciliation between the two ethnic groups in conflict. The

promoters show the compassion and love of Christ to the displaced people. Since they have been displaced and are suffering themselves, they find they can better serve those who are suffering.

Mwakamubaya Nasekwa is Programme Co-ordinator of the PPSSP. He can be contacted at PPSSP, Beni, PO Box 21285, Nairobi, Kenya.

E-mail: ppssp.zsr@uuplus.com

Hope from despair:

A C A S E S T U D Y F R O M I P A S C



Photo: IPASC

For several years there has been ethnic conflict in the northeast region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, particularly between the Lendu and Hema communities. During 2002 the region went through many hardships due to ethnic tensions. Many people lost their lives and fled the area, leaving all their belongings and homes.

IPASC (Institut Panafricain de Santé Communautaire) is a Tearfund partner based at Nyankunde, Ituri province. It provides health and development training.

IPASC has suffered from this war in many ways, notably in lives and goods lost. Our academic activities were interrupted and we had to leave our campus. Every team member has been affected in some way by the war. Some

have lost their families and friends. Our student leader was assassinated. One staff member, Mangi, lost his father, his house was burnt and 29 of his relatives were killed in his village. Others have lost virtually everything they had accumulated over many years – furniture, utensils, livestock, land, money, clothing, important personal documents such as school certificates and more. The terrible acts committed by others have caused depression,

humiliation and despair. One of the team members declared, 'I was so despondent that I felt everything was hopeless and thought about death.'

At first, many of the IPASC staff members took shelter in the bush around Nyankunde. Soldiers were controlling the whole area. In the bush there was no food, no drinking water, no medicines, no salt, no cooking oil, no market, no houses and no money. Colleagues in Bunia managed to send them some blankets, utensils, food and medicine when there was a way in.

As the situation deteriorated, the team members, together with many others,

continued on page 15

Many families in the area have been seriously affected by the war.

Learning points

One of the staff members, Ukila, remained with his family near Nyankunde after the main attack. He returned to the campus many times when no-one was looking and took any books he could find scattered around. He hid these in his borrowed home. We were amazed by Ukila's courage as he made many attempts to go back and rescue the remaining belongings of IPASC. After six weeks of regular visits, he had recovered over 1,000 of our library books, and some other valuable documents. Eventually, IPASC staff hired a vehicle to pick up the books from his house. Nyankunde now has land mines and no one can go near the village or the campus.

Books Newsletters Training materials

On Solid Ground:

Strengthening community in times of crisis

This is a series of six educational videos designed for everyone interested in improving relief and development practice. The videos are available in both English and Spanish as part of a learning pack, which includes a 64-page facilitator's guide and CD-ROM. The videos are recommended for use in small groups with an experienced facilitator.

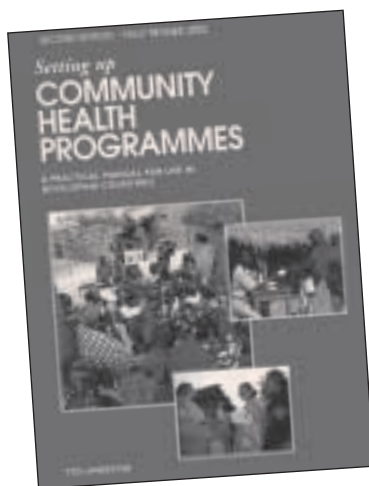
The topics covered are *Transformation and integral mission*, *Healing invisible wounds* (the need for counselling after crisis), *Response to creation* (environmental management and disaster mitigation), *Facilitating healthy communities* and two case studies of communities badly affected by Hurricane Mitch.

The complete series costs £20 (US \$30), including postage. The video packs are available from:

Latin America Team
Tearfund, 100 Church Road, Teddington
TW11 8QE
UK

E-mail: latam@tearfund.org

Please specify video format required (PAL or NTSC).



Setting up Community Health Programmes

by Ted Lankester

This is a new, revised second edition (2002) of this popular and practical resource. The book is written primarily for field health workers, but is also useful for health planners, managers and course organisers. It is a practical manual for use in developing countries, covering the full range of community health topics in simple English with many illustrations. The new edition contains 334 well-illustrated pages with much new and updated information, emphasising community ownership of health programmes. The book costs £11.50 (including airmail postage) and is available from:

TALC
PO Box 49
St Albans
Herts, AL1 5TX
UK

Fax: +44 (0) 1727 846852

E-mail: talc@talcuk.org

Where there is no Psychiatrist

by Dr Vikram Patel

This is a practical mental health manual for community health workers, nurses, social workers and doctors. It follows a similar approach to *Where there is no Doctor*. It aims to help health workers understand and deal with mental health problems. This well-illustrated manual with 266 pages describes over 30 common or important clinical problems associated with mental illness. The manual takes a problem-solving approach to diagnosis and management in different situations, such as refugee

camp, school health programmes or with AIDS sufferers. It contains quick reference flow-charts and a guide to the use of psychiatric medicines and simple psychological treatments.

The manual is available at £8 (US \$12) from:

Book Sales
The Royal College of Psychiatrists
17 Belgrave Square, London, SW1X 8PG
UK

Further information about the book and orders can be made on their website:

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/publications/gaskell/75_7.htm

E-mail: cdavis@rcpsych.ac.uk



Raising Healthy Honey Bees

This is another practical book produced by the Christian Veterinary Mission. It contains practical information and illustrations to help with all aspects of bee-keeping and honey production. It is available for US \$10.

The Christian Veterinary Mission have four other booklets in this series, which are available in English and Spanish on *Keeping Healthy Goats, Pigs, Rabbits and Poultry*. The poultry book is also available in French.

The book, *Where there is no Animal Doctor*, is now available in English, Russian and Chinese. This contains over 400 pages packed with practical information and costs US \$15. For more details, contact:

Christian Veterinary Mission
PO Box 526
Ocilla, GA 31774
USA

E-mail: missionvet@aol.com

www.christianvetmission.org/html/books.htm

Resources for Development from GRAD

GRAD (Groupe de Réalisations et d'Animation pour le Développement) has produced a number of booklets and videos on aspects of development, particularly in Africa. These are aimed at trainers and animators. A series of videos illustrates the place of women in society.

These resources are all available in French, with some also in local languages. They are reasonably priced and are distributed within Africa to save postage costs. For a full list of resources available, contact:

GRAD
228 rue du Manet, 74130 Bonneville
France

E-mail: grad.fr@fnac.net
Website: www.globenet.org/grad

Building Blocks: Africa-wide briefing notes

This is a set of six locally adaptable resources for communities supporting orphans and vulnerable children. They are available free of charge in English, French and Portuguese. These briefing notes are designed to help communities and local organisations to support children orphaned and made vulnerable by HIV and AIDS.

The six booklets cover topics such as social support, health and nutrition, education, economic support and social inclusion. Each contains an introduction and outlines principles and strategies to consider when taking action. There are over 100 case studies from across Africa.

Copies are available on the Alliance website at:
www.aidsalliance.org/building_blocks.htm

If you want to order a printed copy but do not have access to the Web, please e-mail: publications@aidalliance.org to request an order form.

Caring for Severely Malnourished Children

by Ann Ashworth and Ann Burgess

This is a low-cost, illustrated manual for nurses and other paediatric health workers and their trainers and supervisors. It is written in a simple and easy-to-read style and takes account of the lack of

resources in many hospitals and health centres in the developing world. It places emphasis on support for mothers and other carers of malnourished and hospitalised children. It recognises that HIV/AIDS is a common cause of malnutrition

A CD-ROM containing the book contents, the training modules, a set of TALC slides and links to relevant websites is also available from TALC.

The book is available from Macmillan country offices and through local bookshops. Copies can also be ordered from TALC. The book costs £5.90 (including postage) and the book plus CD-ROM costs £6.35 (including postage) from TALC (address on page 14).

How to recognise and manage Leprosy reactions

by ILEP

This is the second in a series of booklets for health workers. It contains practical

advice on how to recognise and treat leprosy reactions such as swelling or nerve damage. It includes helpful photos, checklists, simple tests and advice on specialist treatment. It is available free of charge in English and French from:

ILEP
234 Blythe Road, London, W14 0HJ
UK

E-mail: books@ilep.org.uk



Hope from despair *continued from page 13*

were forced to leave the area for north Kivu, over 200km away. This was a long, difficult journey, walking through the forest. They needed all their perseverance and determination to keep going.

Some of our staff established a temporary base in Bunia town. A team of three was sent to Aru, in the far north-east corner of DRC, to see whether IPASC could be transferred there on a temporary basis. The local population and religious, political and administrative authorities gave an overwhelming welcome to IPASC. As well as the welcome, the community offered a piece of land for our activities!

During this troubled time the IPASC staff really appreciated a three-day retreat on stress and trauma management. It was the first time that many of us had met since leaving Nyankunde. Despite being of many different ethnic groups, including those fighting one another, the friendships and excellent relationships within the team have remained firm. Everyone has been carrying pain and bereavement from the massacres. Each

day started with a meditation led by a local priest or pastor from the three main churches. Some of the sessions were painful as we confronted the enormous sense of loss, but it was also helpful to deal with the hidden grief. We were 'at last being able to bury the dead'. This retreat was a process of healing. We learned that justice will reign among us only if we forgive each other.

The warmth of the welcome from the local authorities and churches in Aru has been a huge encouragement. On World AIDS Day, we asked the authorities if we could arrange some activities for the town. They were delighted, and joined in themselves. Staff and students marched through the town carrying HIV/AIDS awareness banners. We gave some educational talks and drama on the football pitch. The day was a huge success and helped us feel a sense of acceptance in Aru.

Written by Amunda Baba, Elias Alsidri Assia and Pat Nickson, who can be contacted at: IPASC, PO Box 21285, Nairobi, Kenya.
E-mail: ipasc@maf.org

Tree surveys

This activity can be used with children to help them learn about their surroundings. They will also learn about the use of surveys, ranking and charts to collect and display information. Farmer groups could find these techniques useful in surveying local trees or when selecting popular species to grow in tree nurseries. The activities could be adapted to study crops, foods, livestock or type of work.

Raising questions

Discuss the different trees that we find in our surroundings. Help children to think about why they like certain trees and encourage them to think about the different characteristics for their choices – such as height, fruit, good for climbing, firewood. Make a list of the trees that have been mentioned and let the children vote by show of hands to rank them in order of popularity. Help them make a chart of their top ten trees.

Data collection

Ask the children to observe the different trees around their homes or gardens and make a list of these trees in their notebooks. Then count up the numbers of each tree. If they don't know the name of a tree, they should collect some leaves and write out a description of the tree, its fruits and flowers for identification later.

Summary of data

Divide the children into small groups. Ask each group to give a summary of the information they have collected. The children can exchange information and ask each other the names of unknown trees. If there are trees that are hard to identify, consider asking older people with a good knowledge of their environment for help. Then summarise the information of the whole class.

Help the children to produce a chart with a simple bar graph showing the ten most common trees. Make the chart interesting by either drawing the leaf of each tree or by making leaf impressions using paint.

Remember to include some basic information such as the date of the survey, name of the community, number of children who took part and their class and school.

Top ten most popular trees

...chosen by the children of Class IV, Beliakhali school

	COMMON NAME	BENGALI NAME	LATIN NAME
1	mango	aam	Mangifera indica
2	guava	peyara	Psidium guajava
3	coconut	coconut	Cocos nucifera
4	jackfruit	kanthal	

Typical results from a school survey of trees.

After making this chart, discuss with the children why they think those ten trees are most common. Discuss the differences between the two charts. Suggest making another chart describing the uses of the different trees.

Benefits

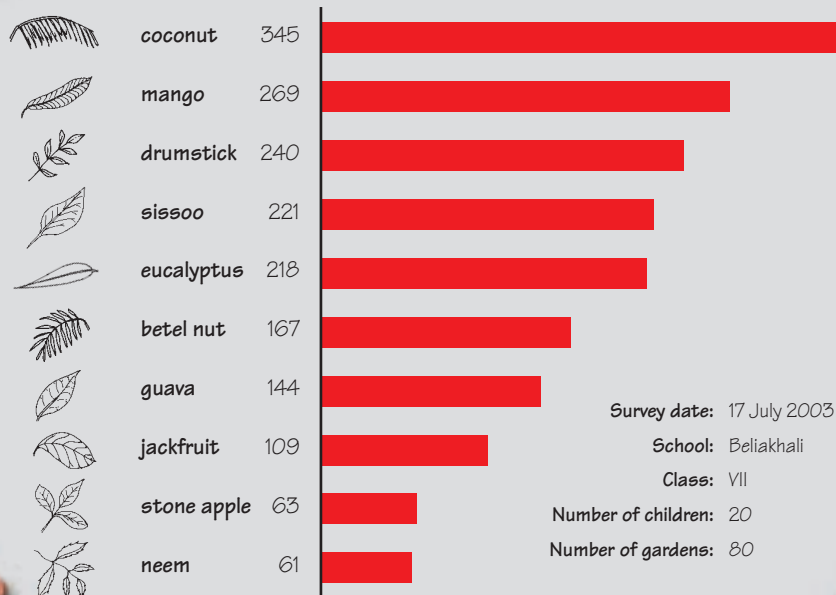
This exercise should stimulate interest in looking at trees and appreciating their benefits. Identifying trees that are popular with children but not commonly grown could provide a reason to build a tree nursery near the school, where children could learn the skills of raising seedling trees. This exercise could be repeated looking at roadside trees, trees that grow near a pond or river or near agricultural fields.

Trees can play an important role in protecting the environment from the dangers of soil erosion and flooding and in preventing mud slides. Observing and valuing trees is important for all of us.

Adapted from Creative Lesson Plan on Trees by ENRE (Ecology and Natural Resource Education) project, 58A Dharmatola Road, Bosepukur, Kasba, Kolkata 700042, West Bengal, India.

E-mail: enre_sc@vsnl.net

Top ten most common trees



Published by: Tearfund, 100 Church Road, Teddington, TW11 8QE, UK

Editor: Dr Isabel Carter, PO Box 200, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV16 4WQ, UK

Tearfund staff spend considerable time dealing with many thousands of funding requests that we are unable to support. This is taking them away from their work of bringing good news to the poor through current partnerships. **Please note** that all funding proposals will be rejected unless they are from current Tearfund partners.

TEARFUND

