Footsteps 100 tearfund

Creating positive change

Kieran Dodds Tearfund

Tearfund partner PAG is mobilising the church to bring transformation in Uganda.

How do we change things for the better? At some point we have probably all asked ourselves that question. We want to see communities and individuals transformed and flourishing. But how can we help bring this about? What will it look like? And how can we assess whether or not we are making progress towards this goal?

Below are some of the things that can help us bring about real and positive change.

Understanding the need

We may think we have identified a need in the community we are living or working in. For example, we may notice that children are not attending school. We may think that more teachers or better school facilities would make a difference. But perhaps the lack of these things is not the main reason behind the problem. It may be that children are falling sick because of a lack of clean water, and so are absent from school. Or perhaps families have no money to send their children to school because their crops are failing.

By spending time talking with community members about their situation, we can understand what is really at the root of the problem. We can also find out what they see as their most urgent needs.

Community participation

Many development projects have failed because the community was not involved in them. To bring about positive change that will last, it is important to include the community at every stage of the process.

As well as identifying their needs, it is important for community members to think about their own capacities and resources to address the problems they face. They may contribute the labour or

resources needed, for example. Community members should also be involved in planning the project, and in monitoring and reviewing progress. It is vital to encourage their honest feedback throughout. We need to treat community members with dignity and be accountable to them for the work we do.

Planning well

Once we know what needs to be changed, it can be tempting to rush ahead and start work. However, we need to take time to think about how exactly to bring about the changes we want to see. Change is always messy and complicated, but good planning means we are likely to experience fewer problems.

There are many guides available to help with the details of designing a project (see Resources page for details of *ROOTS 5: Project cycle management*). We should

Footsteps

consider who will be affected by our project, and who could influence it – we may need to gain their participation or support. We also need to think about any risks that the project may involve and how we can minimise these.

Of course, a project will usually cost money – and so we need to work out a budget. Monitoring whether a project is on track financially is essential for its success and for being accountable with our funds.

Monitoring and evaluating our work

It is vital that we monitor and evaluate our projects and programmes. We need to make a monitoring and evaluation plan while we are still designing the project.

Monitoring is the ongoing process of gathering information throughout a project. It allows us to identify any problems early on, providing us with an opportunity to make any changes required. It also shows us how much progress we are making towards our goals. It answers the question, 'How well are we doing?'

Evaluation is carried out at the end of a project or programme, but sometimes also mid-way through. This is how we analyse the changes our work has created and how likely they are to last. Evaluation answers the question, 'What difference have we made?'

The project cycle

Thinking about the project cycle can help when planning our work.
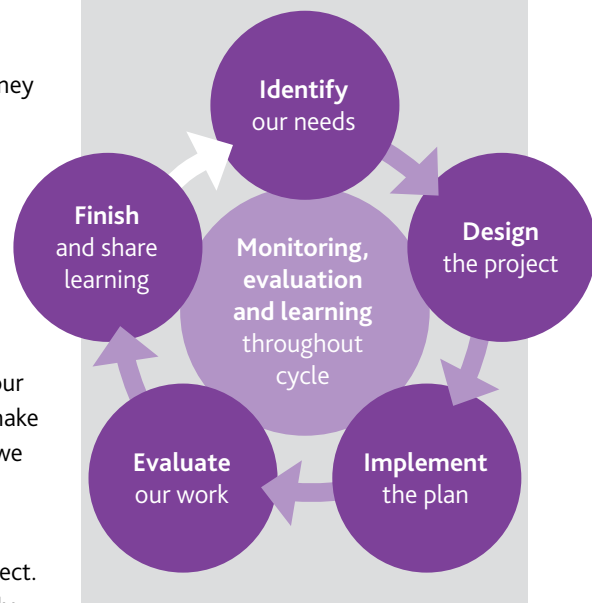
We are often working in challenging situations, and it is always hard to get things completely right first time. By reflecting on our actions, we can celebrate and build on what has worked well and learn from what has gone less well. This will allow us (and others) to learn from our experience.

Unintended impacts

Of course, our project may create some unexpected changes. Not all of these may be positive. For example, we may have held

Case study: Monitoring cash grants in Iraq

In summer 2014, large numbers of people fled into the Kurdistan Region of Iraq to escape conflict. As winter approached, these families faced many difficulties.

Tearfund staff assessed people's needs and found that their top concern was shelter, followed by lack of heating, fuel and warm clothing. It was possible and safe to buy these items locally. The team carried out a survey and discovered that people would find cash the most helpful kind of assistance. They therefore decided to give emergency cash grants to the displaced families. This would allow each family to meet their most urgent needs.

In the planning stages, Tearfund's team held group meetings with community leaders

and vulnerable groups, such as older people. They asked the elderly people whether they could travel to the locations where the cash would be given out. The elderly members of the group assured them this would be fine.

The team monitored the project carefully. When they gave out the grants, they carried out a survey to check how satisfied people were. Through this, they discovered that the elderly people had struggled to get to the chosen locations after all.

The team realised they would need to redesign the project before continuing. They decided that in the future they would visit elderly people in their homes to give them their cash grants. This worked much better.

Illustration from *Project/programme monitoring and evaluation (M&E) guide*, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

community meetings during the project where people have become angry. This may have stirred up old areas of conflict within the community. We should monitor and evaluate our project carefully for unintended impacts so that we can learn important lessons for the future. We can also celebrate and learn from unexpected positive impacts. For instance, coming together to advocate about an issue may help to bring unity to a community, whether or not there is a change in the problem itself.

Thinking about the whole person

It can be easy to consider a community from just one point of view – for example, looking only at their material needs. But each community and individual is so much more complex than this. At Tearfund, we see poverty as more than the lack of material necessities. We believe that real

and lasting change involves restoring our relationships with God, with each other and with the environment. We rely on God's guidance and power to transform the lives of individuals and communities.

At Tearfund, we are developing a tool to measure change across the following areas:

- participation and influence
- social connections
- personal relationships
- living faith
- emotional and mental health
- physical health
- stewardship of the environment
- material assets and resources
- capabilities.

We can measure these things before, during and after a project to see what changes our work is helping to bring about.

What is an indicator?

Indicators help us answer the question, 'How do we know when we have got there?' They provide evidence or signs that a change has taken place.

Quantitative indicators show us the scale of change. They can be measured or counted – for example, number of children in school or average income.

Qualitative indicators measure the quality and depth of change. They are concerned with things that cannot be seen and are hard to count, such as attitudes, feelings, perceptions and behaviours.

Thinking about indicators when planning a project can help us set targets for our work.

Finishing well

At the end of a project, it is important to celebrate its success. Celebration is a way of recognising all that people have contributed to the project. For example, if we have built a new grain bank in our community, we could hold an official opening ceremony and invite all who were involved. Holding a celebration can inspire people to take part in future development projects, leading to further positive change.

Based on information from ROOTS 5: Project cycle management. *See Resources page for information on how to order or download this guide.*

EDITORIAL

Zoe Burden

It is my great pleasure and privilege to welcome you to the 100th edition of *Footsteps*. What a milestone!

I first started working as *Footsteps* Editor in March 2015. During my initial training, one moment had a particular impact on me. My colleague Alice Keen (*Footsteps* Editor from 2011 to 2015) showed me the results of the survey she had carried out with *Footsteps* readers (see page 4). As I read about how *Footsteps* had helped bring change to readers' communities, I was deeply moved.

Tchamouza in Togo wrote of how, thanks to *Footsteps*, his community were now growing and benefiting from five hundred moringa trees. Obed in Zambia related how people in his community had dug pit latrines and were now enjoying better health. Enoch in Nigeria shared the amazing news that a community had dropped their plans to avenge a cattle raid after reading *Footsteps* 92 on conflict and peace. Rufus in Pakistan told us how, inspired by *Footsteps*, a local group started training people to make fuel-efficient stoves. Reading through such stories, I saw the impact that *Footsteps* was having – and I was so excited to become a part of it.

We all feel encouraged to know our work is creating positive change. This issue looks at how this happens, and how we can measure it.

As well as celebrating the work of *Footsteps*, we try to answer questions about change such as: Where are we starting from (page 7)? How can we get genuine feedback from the people we serve (pages 10–11)? How can we accurately capture data about our projects (page 6)? And how does advocacy make a difference (pages 12–13)?

I hope you will find this edition an inspiration for your own work, and that you will continue enjoying *Footsteps* for many years to come.

Zoe

PS We have recently welcomed Helen Gaw back to the editorial team. Our next edition, Footsteps 101*, will be published in January 2017, in an all-new format.*

The *Footsteps* survey

by Alice Keen

If you have been reading *Footsteps* for several years now, you will remember receiving our readership survey in the post. More than a thousand of you faithfully answered our questions and gave us valuable feedback.

Why we did the survey

Here at Tearfund, we want to produce the best magazine we can for you, our worldwide audience. Over the years, your lives have changed in many ways. You have many more ways of accessing information now than you did when we started in 1989. We wanted to update our understanding of what you want to read about, and to hear how *Footsteps* has helped you in your communities. We also wanted to have stories we could share with our donors and supporters, to encourage them and give them feedback on how their money is being spent.

How we designed the survey

We started by discussing what we wanted to know in our team. We needed some basic information from all readers to identify them, so we asked for your name, *Footsteps* number (which is on your envelope) and address. This meant we could update any addresses that had changed and analyse where our responses had come from.

Next, we thought about what kinds of things we needed to know in order to make good decisions about the future of the magazine. We added questions on language, access to the internet and your preferred topics.

Lastly, we included an open invitation to send us your stories of transformation, including photos and testimonies.

How we conducted the survey

As *Footsteps* readers live in 126 different countries, we could not meet you all face to face! Many of you do not have access to the internet, so we decided to post the questionnaires. We produced the survey in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish, with the help of translators. We gave readers a deadline for returning the survey to us. We sent two letters to remind people, advising them that if they did not reply, we would assume they did not want to continue receiving *Footsteps*.

How we analysed and communicated the results

It took many months to receive all your responses, but it was worth the wait. We read each survey and entered the

The Burmese translation of *Footsteps 85*, on the topic of trees.

Alice Keen Tearfund

answers into our database. For multiple-choice questions, the database showed us how many people chose each option. For open questions, we wrote up the answers on a word processor and coded the feedback by theme using hashtags, eg #water #youth #training. This meant we could find feedback on different themes by using the search function in the feedback document. Finally, we wrote a report, which we gave to leaders in our organisation and beyond.

What changed as a result of our survey

We have used what we have learnt from the survey to plan for the future. We are going to refresh the design of the magazine after the 100th edition. In the box on the left, you will see some of the insights we had from the survey and what we are doing as a result.

If you would like a copy of the Footsteps *survey, please email publications@tearfund.org, or write to us at the address on page 2.*

Some important insights from the survey

Although the internet is becoming more widely available, readers still value printed versions of publications.

- 86% of respondents wanted to keep receiving the printed version.
- 17% of respondents had no internet access at all.
- 34% only had access at an internet cafe.
- 15% only had access through a mobile phone.

We are going to continue printing and mailing Footsteps*, because those without internet access are still most in need of information.*

Translation into local and national languages is vital if *Footsteps* is going to reach the people who most need it.

Some readers are already translating articles or discussing the content in local languages with communities where they work. In total, 68 languages were suggested, including Hausa, Amharic, Bemba, Lingala, Filipino, Nepali, Wichi, Sinhala and Malagasy.

We are going to encourage readers to translate Footsteps *for their communities.*

Getting the most out of a survey

A survey is a great way to capture a large amount of data. Unfortunately, surveys are often not as effective as they could be because of poorly worded questions.

Activity

You could use this activity with a group. Cover the right-hand side of this activity box and discuss why the example survey questions are unhelpful. Then ask the group, 'How could the questions be improved?'

What is wrong with the example survey questions below?

> What is the fastest and cheapest way of getting to your nearest market?

This asks two questions at the same time (the fastest way of getting to market may be different from the cheapest way). Break it up into two separate questions.

> What is your age?
> ☐ 0–10   ☐ 20–30
> ☐ 10–20   ☐ 30+

There is overlap in these answers – for example, a 10-year-old could tick either the first or second box. Instead, try:
☐ 0–9   ☐ 20–29
☐ 10–19   ☐ 30+

> What is your favourite colour?
> ☐ Blue   ☐ Green
> ☐ Yellow   ☐ Purple

The choices do not cover all the options. Try:
☐ Blue   ☐ Green
☐ Yellow   ☐ Purple
☐ Other (please state)

> Which of the following programmes do you think has been most effective in your community?
> ☐ WASH   ☐ CCM
> ☐ EPOVAT

People may not understand abbreviations and jargon. Use clear language that people will understand, and explain abbreviations.

> How would you rate the service provided by your local medical clinic?
> ☐ Excellent   ☐ Good
> ☐ Very good   ☐ Fair

This question uses an unbalanced scale for the response boxes. The points on your scale should be equally spaced and cover all the response options, eg:
☐ Very good   ☐ Poor
☐ Good   ☐ Very poor
☐ Neutral

> What religion do you practise?
> ☐ Christian   ☐ Buddhist
> ☐ Muslim   ☐ Other (please state)

This is a sensitive question and people may not want to answer. For questions like this, give people the option not to answer, eg:
☐ Prefer not to answer

Nine top tips for designing surveys

1 Think about your target audience
- Consider which language to ask your questions in and whether you will need translation.
- Use simple language and avoid jargon.

2 Think about the order of your questions
- Make sure the questions flow in a logical order.
- Start with the simple and interesting questions.
- Place the sensitive questions last.

3 Do not ask too many questions
- If you are not going to use the answer to a question, do not ask it. Do not ask questions if they are only for interest.

4 Let respondents skip questions that do not apply to them
- For example: 'If you have not used the health centre, move to question 5.'

5 Avoid questions that are too demanding or take too long to answer
- Do not ask too many open questions that require written responses, as this may put people off.

6 Get someone to check through your questions
- It is harder to spot your own mistakes.

7 Test and then adjust your questionnaire
- Allow enough time for testing your questionnaire with a smaller group. This may reveal problems, eg confusing questions.

8 Allow time for training the people who will be carrying out the survey
- Make sure the people collecting the data fully understand the questions and how to record the answers.

9 Think about how you will collect and analyse the responses
- Will you collect data using pen and paper, or digital methods? (See page 6.)
- How will you store, analyse and use the information?

Keeping a good record

by David Couzens

'Now where did I put that?' Or perhaps more often – 'What on earth does that say?' These are my usual complaints after a trip to visit projects. I end up desperately searching for some important notes that I am certain I took while sitting under a tree in a village. Or, if I do find the notes, I spend hours trying to work out what the handwritten scrawl in my notebook actually says.

Thinking in advance about how to collect and store data can save us much frustration and many hours' work afterwards. This is something I have learnt from bitter experience!

Pen and paper

For many of us, taking notes with pen and paper is still the most common way of collecting information from the people we meet in our projects. However, I often find that it is hard to keep an accurate record of what is being said while staying fully attentive to the person I am talking to. The best way around this is to work with a partner. One person can focus on the conversation while the other takes notes.

If that is not possible, ask yourself what sort of notes you really need. If you just want to capture the main points or themes, then it may be better not even to try to write notes during the discussion. Instead, give yourself ten minutes afterwards to write down the key issues while your thoughts are still fresh.

Sound recordings

If accuracy is important, or if you need to capture actual quotations, then think about recording the interview. You can use a digital sound recorder or perhaps even your phone for this. Make sure you ask permission from the individual first. Explain how the recording will be used and what will happen to it afterwards – for example, will you delete it immediately afterwards or will it be kept on record somewhere? If it will stay on record, think about how you will protect the privacy of the person you spoke to.

Video

Another alternative to written records is video recordings. When carrying out an evaluation, I do a one-minute video interview with every team member at the end of each day. In the interview, I simply ask them about the main things that struck them during the day. I find that this provides a short, engaging snapshot summarising the key issues. The videos can also be used in presentations to summarise the evaluation after it has been completed. This is much easier to digest than a 40-page report!

If you want to show others the recordings, then a top tip is to invest in a microphone. It does not matter too much if your camera work is not brilliant, but clear sound is vital. You will not realise how much background noise there is until you play the video back. A simple, cheap, clip-on microphone will immediately increase the quality of any recording.

Smartphone apps

You can go even further these days and stop using pen and paper altogether. There are many smartphone apps for collecting data. These are particularly useful if your survey questions have set answers to choose between rather than lots of open questions. At Tearfund we often use a data collection app called KoBoToolbox (see Resources page for more details). It is free, reliable and very easy to use.

Conclusion

Whether you are more comfortable with pen and paper or are exploring digital recordings, here are my two key tips:

- **Think** about how you will collect, manage, analyse and protect data in advance.

- **Look** at your notes or recordings as quickly after the event as you possibly can – ideally on the same day. The longer you leave it, the harder it will be to understand your scribbled notes or remember what was said in an unclear bit of a video or sound recording.

David Couzens worked as a Programme Effectiveness Adviser for Tearfund from 2014 to 2016. He is currently a Country Programme Support Officer for Tearfund's peacebuilding work.
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Cally Spittle Tearfund

Are you more comfortable with pen and paper, or could you collect data digitally?

Dreaming big

by Richard Lister

Do you come alive when someone encourages you? Take a look at this delightful photo of Lo (right) as fellow participants applaud him. I love the look of joy on his face.

When we analyse our work, it is all too easy to focus on what is wrong. As a result, we end up concentrating only on the negatives. A refreshing alternative to this is the appreciative enquiry approach.

I recently used the principles of appreciative enquiry in two workshops in China. We focused on four stages:

■ **Devotions:** What does the Bible say about what we are working on?

■ **Delight:** What is going really well in the work already?

■ **Dream:** What would we love to see happening in the future?

■ **Design:** What steps can we take from where we are towards this dream?

The beauty of this approach is its positive focus. As the Bible tells us, we should encourage one another (Hebrews 10:25). This helps participants relax, prevents defensiveness and encourages people to dream big and take risks. Sticking notes of what we discovered on the walls helped everyone see the journey we were on.

There is much more detail to appreciative enquiry than this. But I have found over the years that just using the four key words above has often been enough. For instance, I have used them to structure an evaluation, a learning review, feedback in a project visit and even the simplest of conversations. I hope people leave with smiles on their faces and ready to chase their dreams.

Richard Lister is Global Church and Development Lead at Tearfund. Email: richard.lister@tearfund.org Blog: www.churcheschangingnations.blogspot.com

Richard Lister Tearfund

Help! I haven't done a baseline survey

by Jonathan Simpson

How can we measure whether something has changed? First, we need to know what the situation was like at the start. A good example of this is going on a diet: you weigh yourself before you start so that you can measure how much weight you eventually lose.

A baseline survey is a way of assessing a community's situation at the start of your project. It is carried out either just before or at the beginning of the project. Any future changes that your work helps bring about can then be measured against these levels.

But what if you have already started your project? You may not have realised that a baseline survey would be necessary to show the change the project is aiming to achieve. Or it may not have been possible to do a baseline survey before starting.

Why do a baseline survey?

■ to help plan, monitor and evaluate projects

■ to set realistic targets for your work

■ to convince policy-makers and donors of the need for the project

For example, if you are responding to an emergency there may not have been time to do a survey before starting to deliver aid.

In cases like these, there are a few ways that you can reconstruct information about the baseline:

■ You can use secondary data. This is information that has already been gathered by others – for example, hospital records, government data, studies by other organisations.

■ You could ask people to remember what they can about the situation at the start of the project. But people's memories may not be entirely accurate. Check the information against other sources if you can.

If you decide to gather baseline information yourself at the start of a project, you can do this using focus group discussions (see pages 8–9), interviews and surveys with a representative sample of the community. Using several sources of information helps ensure your findings are accurate.

If you carry out a survey:

■ Decide on how you will collect the information – pen and paper or digitally? (See page 6.)

■ Ask questions that are important to your project and which give answers that you will want to measure against in the future. For example, if you are carrying out a hygiene promotion project, you might want to measure how many people can name the five key times they should wash their hands. At the end of the project you can ask the same questions again and compare the results.

For more information on how to carry out a survey, see page 5.

Compiled with reference to the IFRC guide, Baseline basics *(see Resources, page 14).*

Jonathan Simpson is Tearfund's Monitoring and Evaluation Officer for Southern Africa.

How to run a focus group discussion

Focus groups are used to find out what a particular group of people think about an issue. A focus group discussion is held with a small group of people (usually about 10–20). It is led by a facilitator.

Why hold a focus group discussion?

Some uses of focus group discussions are:

- to help a community identify its needs at the start of a project
- to research a particular issue – for example, why girls in a particular area are dropping out of school
- to help monitor, review and evaluate our work, allowing us to hear how the community is experiencing it

Focus group discussions can be helpful in getting the views of children or people with low levels of literacy, who would find it hard to give written feedback.

Who should be involved?

Focus groups should usually be made up of people who share a key characteristic. For example, in your community you might run separate focus group discussions for:

- men
- women
- children (or separate groups for boys and girls)
- elderly people
- people with disabilities
- livelihoods groups, such as farmers.

You will probably need to run several different focus groups to get an overview of the different opinions across the whole community.

When and where should it be held?

Try to find a time that is suitable for all the group members. For example, try to avoid market days, festivals or weddings.

Find a location where people feel comfortable and where there is enough space. It should be reasonably quiet and private. It should also be a 'neutral' location where everyone feels able to express their view. All the participants should be able to get there easily.

Some examples of places to meet include:

- a location in the shade under some trees
- a school building during the school holidays
- a village hall.

How long should it last?

Focus group discussions should last for at least an hour, but ideally less than two hours – otherwise people start to lose interest.

Top tips for facilitators

- For men's or women's groups, it can be best if the facilitator is the same gender as the group. For a children's focus group, a young person could be the facilitator.
- Make sure you manage the time and keep the session on track.
- Use language that people will understand easily, and explain difficult concepts.
- Use the questions you have prepared, but make sure you are also flexible and respond to what the group is saying.
- If one participant tries to dominate the session, invite each person to speak in turn.
- Use open rather than closed questions. Closed questions have a simple yes-or-no answer, eg 'Has the new health centre improved your life?' Open questions draw out more information, eg 'What changes has the health centre caused in your community?'
- Encourage people to give specific examples to support their views.
- Avoid taking sides. Instead, ask questions such as, 'How much do others in the group agree?'
- Let participants know their contributions are valuable (both by what you say and your body language).

Step-by-step guide

Illustration: Petra Röhr-Rouendaal, *Where there is no artist* (second edition)

STEP 1 Prepare in advance

Consider the following points:
- What are the **key questions** you want to ask?
- How will you record the information from the discussion?
- What materials do you need? This might include pens, paper, and refreshments for the participants.
- What language will you conduct the discussion in? Will you need a local translator?

STEP 2 Welcome the group

Thank everyone for coming and introduce yourself and any assistants. Let people know the purpose of the focus group discussion. Invite members of the group to introduce themselves. You might want to use an ice-breaker activity or a game to help people feel comfortable with one another. As a group, agree any guidelines you will follow, eg one person speaking at a time.

STEP 3 Begin the discussion

You may like to ask the participants to split into groups of two or three to talk about the issue, before bringing them back together. You could ask them to put the things they are discussing in order of importance. You could then go on to ask deeper questions about the things they prioritise.

STEP 4 Capture the information

Throughout the discussion, make sure the key points are being recorded. If you have an assistant, they could write them on a flip chart, or participants could write their thoughts on pieces of card. Alternatively, you could make a video or sound recording (see page 6).

Give the group a break when they seem to be tiring.

STEP 5 End well

When you feel that it is the right time to end, thank the participants for their time. Summarise the main points you have covered. Explain to the group how the information will now be used, and any follow-up discussions or activities you will hold.

How to get genuine feedback

It is vital to get honest feedback from the people who are benefiting from our projects ('beneficiaries'). This helps us to know what is working well and what needs to be changed. It is unlikely that we will have got everything right first time!

However, sometimes it can be difficult to get genuine feedback. In this article, Tearfund staff and partners share some challenges they have faced working in different contexts around the world, and practical ways they have overcome them.

Pakistan by Ashraf Mall, Tearfund's Country Representative

CHALLENGES

■ It is challenging to get beneficiaries to give negative feedback. Sometimes they feel that they will make the staff of the organisation angry. It is rare that the community will speak against the staff or organisation in the presence of project staff.

PRACTICAL TIPS

Anonymous feedback methods

At the start of the project, we tell the beneficiaries they can give feedback or complain whenever they wish by phoning the number of the Quality Assurance Manager. They can do this anonymously. Using the phone does not require face-to-face discussion and may make people feel more comfortable.

We have also installed feedback boxes in the villages, where beneficiaries are able to note down their feedback, positive or negative.

Developing relationships and a sense of ownership

Monitoring staff have developed a good relationship with the communities so they can openly discuss the quality of the work done. If necessary, the monitoring staff will meet the community in the absence of other project staff.

The staff build a good relationship by involving the community in discussions throughout the project, developing their ownership of the project. They have regular meetings with the community, discussing progress, challenges etc. When a good relationship develops, then community members are much more open and will say if something is not working.

An example of a feedback box in Nepal.
Tom Price Tearfund

Often, organisations just concentrate on completing their projects, without any focus on ownership and sustainability. Positive change will take place when there is complete community ownership of the project.

'Positive change will take place when there is complete community ownership.'

Egypt by Tearfund's Country Representative

CHALLENGES

■ In Egypt, Tearfund's partners work with people from poor backgrounds who are mostly illiterate. If they see pens, paper or people writing, it makes them feel worried. This is because they have only seen these things when government officials have come to collect fines from them. When I first went to collect feedback from beneficiaries, they refused to give me any as soon as I began to write anything on my papers.
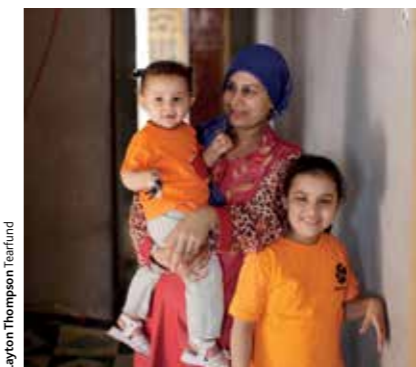

Layton Thompson Tearfund

Visiting beneficiaries in pairs can help us remember verbal feedback.

PRACTICAL TIPS

Focus group discussions

I started collecting feedback through a focus group discussion containing a sample of eight to ten beneficiaries. I led the discussion and one of my colleagues wrote down the responses. This encouraged people to speak freely and give constructive feedback. Their attention was focused on the facilitator more than the person who documented the session.

Working in pairs

We decided to go in pairs to collect feedback from beneficiaries. Both of us prepared our questions in advance and did not write anything down in front of them. We remembered the verbal feedback and reminded each other what they had said when we got back to our desks. In this way we were able to get detailed feedback without creating any worry for the beneficiary.

Nicaragua by Omar Herrera, Director of Tearfund partner PRODAD

CHALLENGES

■ Our beneficiaries used to feel afraid whenever we asked them for feedback. And there is always fear when we start working with new beneficiaries. They fear that if they give us negative feedback, we will abandon them or stop giving them help.

■ It is also difficult to get genuine feedback if people see you only as a technical expert. That creates a barrier. It was as if the beneficiaries believed that because we had technical expertise, we were superior to them and that we already knew everything. They feared that we would not take what they said seriously, or would not understand the problems of the community because we were outsiders.

PRACTICAL TIPS

Building trust

It is important to build trust. We tell people that if they do not give us honest feedback

Virginia Luttul Tearfund

We can show beneficiaries friendship as well as technical expertise.

and tell us what they think of us, then we will not be able to grow.

To build trust I think it is important to do the following:

■ Act on the feedback you receive. We give the beneficiaries the confidence that we will consider whatever they say and act on it accordingly. Their opinion is important and relevant, and has the power to change things.

'There are people who now see us as family.'

■ Show yourself to be a friend and not just a technical expert. We are Christians and we believe in relationships. We walk with the community and we take time to build relationships. There are people in the communities who now see us as family. That can be tricky to handle, and you have to be very wise, but it is worth the risk.

■ Create spaces for dialogue. In our culture we love talking. We express ourselves with our tone of voice and body language as well as with words. Forms and interviews can sometimes be intimidating for beneficiaries. Perhaps they cannot read or write, or they do not understand the methodology. Just talk to people – gather them in groups and have a chat with them. Be aware of gender as well: in our communities women would be more expressive with other women.

South Sudan by Josie Smith, Tearfund's Programme Officer

CHALLENGES

■ In rural South Sudan many of our beneficiaries are illiterate, so we rely on verbal forms of feedback. This is not always ideal for anything sensitive or confidential, which people may want to communicate more privately.

Layton Thompson Tearfund

We can set aside time in community meetings for hearing feedback.

■ Beneficiaries often have to walk a long way to access our main field base. This can limit how much feedback we are able to gather from them.

■ The third limitation is a cultural one. Some people's opinions (for example, women's) are not valued within their own communities. It can be difficult for these groups to speak out.

PRACTICAL TIPS

Feedback without writing

We have developed simple picture-based feedback forms that extension workers can easily use to gather monitoring data and beneficiary feedback. We also have a contact person and information table at the entrance of some of our feeding centres.

This helps beneficiaries to know where they can easily give feedback.

Using community meetings

We encourage beneficiaries to give us verbal feedback when we have any sort of training event or community meeting. We create a set time slot during the event where feedback is encouraged. This has been quite successful. I think this is partly because the project teams have made a lot of effort to create a safe space, taking into account cultural norms and practices.

Openly valuing feedback

The project teams also make a huge effort to communicate how much we value hearing our beneficiaries' voices. We make sure we respond appropriately and promptly when we receive suggestions or complaints.

Creating change through advocacy

Advocacy is never just about raising awareness. It is about trying to change the policies, practices and attitudes that cause poverty and injustice.

A lot of development work focuses on providing essential services, such as water, sanitation and health care. In many countries, these things are the responsibility of governments. When governments provide the services their citizens are entitled to, this is a key way of reducing poverty. Advocacy involves influencing powerful decision-makers to bring about change.

Here is a story that illustrates this point:

The upstream story

Imagine that you are standing by a river and someone in front of you has floated downstream and is drowning. What would you do?

- Most people would be motivated by compassion and would probably help to **rescue** that person from the river.

- But what if it happens again? What if someone else floats downstream and starts drowning in front of you? What if it keeps happening – again and again and again? How many times can you keep pulling people out of the water?
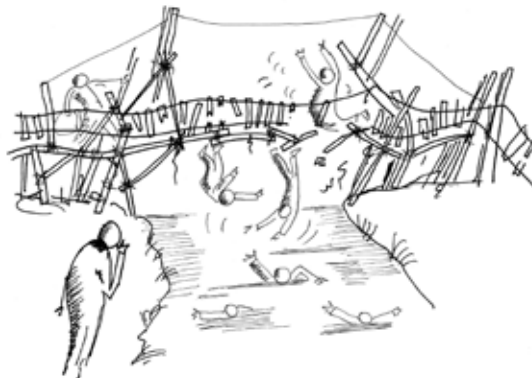
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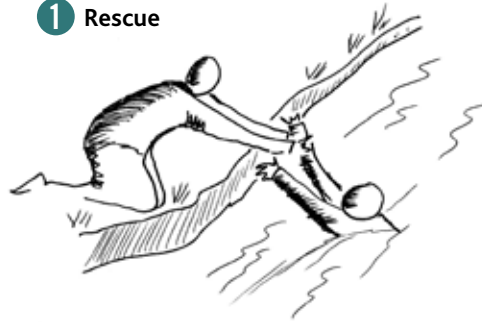
2 Coping

3 Going upstream

- You may call other people to come and help you. Together, you can keep pulling people out of the water. But how long do you keep doing this for?

- If you are able, you might start teaching people how to swim, so they can **cope** and get themselves out of the water.

- But someone needs to **go upstream** and find out why people are falling into the river. (Has a bridge broken and people cannot cross the river?)

Something needs to be done to prevent people falling into the river in the first place.

Unpacking the story

Each time someone falls into the river and starts to drown, it is as if a disaster is occurring. Rescuing these drowning people is similar to disaster relief work. We are responding to an immediate need in the face of a crisis.

Teaching people to swim is like our longer-term development work. This empowers them to cope with the situation they are facing.

Going further up the stream, to try to stop people from falling into the river in the first place, is where our advocacy work fits in. It is calling on those responsible for the bridge (such as the land owner or the local authority) to fix it, to try to stop people falling into the river.

Adapted from the second edition of Tearfund's Advocacy toolkit *(ROOTS 1 and 2) by Joanna Watson. Visit www.tearfund.org/advocacytoolkit to download the* Advocacy toolkit *free of charge. You can order a printed copy (cost: £20) by following the instructions in the Resources section on page 14.*

Measuring the impact of advocacy work

It can be hard to measure the impact of advocacy work. Advocacy can be a long process. It often involves changing people's views. It usually happens alongside other projects, so it is difficult to know how much change it has caused. And often the change advocacy brings about is only partial.

When monitoring and evaluating advocacy, we will need to plan our indicators carefully (see page 3). We need a mixture of quantitative and qualitative indicators.

Quantitative indicators deal with things that are easy to count and are presented as numbers or percentages.

Examples: how much media coverage an issue has had, how many people have been mobilised to campaign.

Qualitative indicators describe changes in attitudes, behaviours etc, and are more often expressed in words than numbers.

Examples: records of interactions with a decision-maker, quotations from people in a community affected by an issue.

Joining together to speak to powerful decision-makers can empower and unite people – so the process of advocacy can be valuable, whatever the result.

Engaging local government in Uganda

Mobile medical teams began visiting this building in Okulonyo after the community advocated to the local government.

Melissa Lawson Tearfund

Okulonyo is a small rural community in Uganda. Tearfund partner PAG began working with the church and community in 2008, helping them mobilise their resources to meet their needs.

The community identified the things they required, such as a water supply and health centre. They then worked together to do what they could – for example, constructing a building where mobile medical teams could visit.

However, PAG saw there was a limit to what the community could achieve with the resources they had. On their own, they could not provide access to water and a proper health centre. PAG knew the local government had the responsibility and funds to provide public services such as these to the community.

In 2013, PAG trained facilitators in advocacy. The facilitators then trained the community in how to engage with local government officials. As a result, the community wrote to the local government about their needs and the local officials agreed to meet with them. During the meeting, the officials promised to drill a water source for Okulonyo. After another visit from community members, the local government provided medicines and arranged mobile medical services for the village.

One official said, 'Before they approached us, I didn't really think much of these communities. But since they advocated and engaged with us, we can now see how we can work with them.'

Within three months, the local government had provided the community with a new water pump and promised to build them a proper health centre.

A community member said, 'We believe that we will get a health centre. The government officials have lived up to their previous commitments. But if we don't get a response from the government, we will keep demanding it.'

Tearfund's CCM advocacy guide provides advice on including advocacy in church and community mobilisation (CCM). To download a free copy visit www.tearfund.org/ccmadvocacy

Discussion question

- How could your church or community advocate to government officials to improve local services?

BIBLE STUDY: Knowing and sharing our impact

Read Luke 1:1-4

As Christians, we believe that Jesus's life on earth brought about the biggest change in history. Reading Luke's gospel helps us understand the transformation that Jesus brought to people's lives, and how our lives can be transformed too.

Investigating the truth

Stories about Jesus were first shared orally by people who had known him while he was on earth. These stories were then written down. Luke tells us at the start of his gospel that he carefully investigated all the accounts of Jesus' life to draw up an orderly report.

- *Why did Luke write his account?*

- *What skills would Luke have needed as he investigated these things carefully?*
- *How do we benefit today from the work Luke has done?*

By carefully examining what has happened in a particular situation, we can understand how change takes place. We can learn from other people's experience and see God's hand at work. This is true for us as we monitor and evaluate our work.

- *How can we honour God as we monitor our projects and gather feedback from the people we are serving?*

Sharing our story

With God's help, churches and Christian organisations are doing great, important work. Sharing what has worked well and the lessons we have learnt can help others to grow. And when people see that transformation is happening for other people and communities, this gives them hope for their own lives. As people see Christians truly caring for others, it shows God's love in action.

- *How does it honour God when we communicate the impact of our work?*
- *How can you best communicate the impact of your work?*

This Bible study was adapted from a talk by Jairo Arce. Jairo is the director of CIEETS, a Tearfund partner in Nicaragua.
Email: cieets@cieets.org.ni

RESOURCES

TILZ website www.tearfund.org/tilz Tearfund's international publications can be downloaded **free of charge** from our website. Search for any topic to help in your work.

Previous *Footsteps*

Visit www.tearfund.org/footsteps to download previous editions about creating positive change:

- *Footsteps 90:* Lifelong learning
- *Footsteps 76:* Accountability
- *Footsteps 64:* Planning for sustainability
- *Footsteps 50:* Increasing our impact
- *Footsteps 43:* Motivating change
- *Footsteps 17:* Evaluation
- *Footsteps 11:* Accounts and records

Did you know? You can now purchase a USB memory stick containing digital copies of *Footsteps* editions 1–96. Contact us for details, or place your order through our shop (right).

Umoja

Umoja means 'togetherness' in Swahili. The process helps church leaders and their congregations work together with the local community to bring about positive change for the whole community.
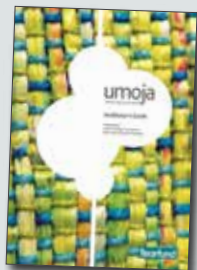
The *Facilitator's guide* contains Bible studies, activities, energisers, tools and advice. It includes a step-by-step guide to help a church and community become inspired and start working for transformation in their community.

The *Co-ordinator's guide* provides everything that an organisation or church needs to know to start and manage an Umoja programme across a number of local communities.

Available in English, French and Portuguese. Buy one guide for £14 or both guides together for only £20 (including postage and packaging). Visit www.tearfund.org/umojaguides to download a free copy.

KoBoToolbox
(see www.kobotoolbox.org)

KoBoToolbox is a free data collection tool that can be used on Android smartphones and tablets. Although it is simple, you can use it to create some very complex questionnaires.

To use KoBoToolbox, you create your questionnaire while connected to the internet from a computer. Then, before leaving to do your research, upload the form to either a smartphone or tablet (portable computer) using the linked KoBoCollect application. You can then move away from the internet and collect the data using the programme. At the end of the day, when you return and connect to the internet again, simply upload the data stored on your phone or tablet.

KoBoToolbox can also display the questions in different languages.

NEW! TILZ Shop

At Tearfund we have recently launched a new online shop where you can buy Tearfund publications and resources. Postage and packaging is free to anywhere in the world. Visit www.tearfund.org/publications to find the right resource for you. Alternatively,

email publications@tearfund.org or write to us by post. One copy may be available free of charge to organisations or individuals who are unable to pay.

ROOTS 5: Project cycle management

Project cycle management (PCM) is the process of planning and managing projects and programmes. This *ROOTS* book describes the project cycle. It explains the use of planning tools such as needs assessments, capacity assessments and stakeholder analysis. It shows clearly how to develop a logical framework.

Available in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish. Costs £12 (including postage and packaging). Visit www.tearfund.org/roots to download a free copy.

'Tearfund Learn' Facebook page

We have a new Facebook page for sharing practical ideas about development. Visit www.facebook.com/tearfundlearn and follow us!

Useful websites

www.tools4dev.org
Provides templates, reviews and step-by-step guides for development and aid workers. Includes sections on programme design, monitoring and evaluation, and participation. In English.

www.tearfund.org/impact
Links to Tearfund's resources on impact and evaluation. Includes Tearfund's own impact and effectiveness report, available in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.

www.ifrc.org/en/who-we-are/ performance-and-accountability/ monitoring-and-evaluation
The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has

put together some useful monitoring and evaluation resources. Although they are aimed at people working on IFRC projects, they contain helpful information for other users.

Resources include:

- *Project/programme monitoring and evaluation (M&E) guide* – Detailed guide to monitoring and evaluation. Available in English, French, Spanish, Russian and Albanian.
- *PMER (planning, monitoring, evaluation, reporting) pocket guide* – A shorter field guide. Available in English and Spanish.
- *Baseline basics* – A short guide on how to conduct baseline studies. Available in English only.

LETTERS
News ▪ Views ▪ Information

Over the years, *Footsteps* has covered topics from water to women's health, from pollution to poultry-keeping. We always love to hear from our readers, and recently we asked you which *Footsteps* article had been most helpful to you. Below are some of your replies (plus some from the *Footsteps* readership survey – see page 4).

Philip, Nigeria

The article which is most helpful to me from the previous editions is 'Effective writing', from the 71st edition of *Footsteps*. This is because I am a writer, author and preacher. I got useful tips from the whole edition which helped in the improvement of my writing ministry.

Théophile, Cameroon

For the preparation of the special anniversary issue number 100, I am writing on behalf of all of us at SODENKO to let you know that the article entitled 'The beginning of the end of AIDS' [in *Footsteps 98*] was the most useful to us. This article comforts us with great hope for the end of this illness, which has caused many deaths in our region and continues to do so.

Our sincere thanks for the work of *Footsteps* magazine. It has been helping and educating us for many years with its educational and constructive information.

Malcolm, Guyana

In the May 2013 issue, *Footsteps 91*, the article 'Saving a mother's life' has created interest here, in view of what is happening in Guyana. Maternal deaths occur often at our general hospital. This article is being used by me to put together a research paper on maternal deaths, to be delivered to the Guyana doctors' council.

Jacintha, Kenya

We have directly used *Footsteps 92* magazine's articles on the ABC of conflict analysis, the ABC triangle and its Bible study. Your resource suggestions at the back will also be followed up. Every part of your magazine is easy to read for all our staff. It is inspiring and interesting to read similar experiences in other parts of the world.

David and Heather, Uganda

Footsteps 87 on non-communicable diseases was very valuable – the health centre staff used it for teaching adults. 'So many health topics are geared towards women and children; this topic affects men as well,' said a man from a health centre.

The issue on safe motherhood [*Footsteps 91*] was excellent. We have used the materials for radio shows and also as part of the training we do on the first 1,000 days of a child's life. It was a very practical issue with some good biblical materials.

Isabel Carter, UK

Isabel was the editor of Footsteps *from 1989 to 2007.*

It sounded such a simple question. Which was your favourite *Footsteps* issue? It made me wonder how many issues I had actually edited. Looking back through the issues, I reckoned it was 67. And years later, each one still carries with it a load of memories.

So how to choose a favourite one?
The family planning ones were very challenging to put together but were incredibly popular. The editions on dental health, traditional medicines, TB and HIV were all fascinating.

But I think I will go for issue 58 on 'Theatre for development'. I was so inspired by the content when putting this issue together. It highlighted the power of theatre or roleplay in communicating any kind of information – whether helping children recover from the trauma of war or in discussing sensitive issues of sexual health. It shared the fun people have when working together to communicate in this way, and highlighted using music and song to underpin the message. A powerful and potentially life-changing issue!

This photo from Nepal sums up the power of theatre.

How I use *Footsteps*

Tarsis Hurmali, Director of the development organisation Yayasan Ayo Indonesia, has been receiving *Footsteps* for more than six years. We had the privilege of interviewing Tarsis about the way he uses *Footsteps*.

Please tell our readers about your organisation and the work you do.

We are a local NGO based in Ruteng, Flores, Indonesia. We focus on rural development issues, including organic farming and basic health care.

We are interested in how farmers can boost their income. As well as improving families' diets by introducing varied vegetables, we also encourage our farmers to meet the local demand for vegetables. We encourage them to join local savings groups, where they can get low-interest loans.

We also run projects to help people living with disabilities, especially children. Where our resources allow, we build access roads to remote villages, and provide drinking water supplies. Recently we have been looking into coffee production, as it shows huge potential for local development.

How do you use Footsteps *in your work?*

I am interested in whether the topics we are working on are also of interest to other farmers around the world. This is always confirmed positively by *Footsteps*. It is very encouraging to see how things are worked out in different parts of the world.

I learn a lot and get inspired by the main topics and smaller articles. As only a few of us are able to read English, sometimes I explain the content of one or two issues to friends during tea breaks. I remember the one about savings and loans schemes [*Footsteps 80:* Micro-enterprise]. I explained to our friends here that if it works well in other parts of the world, it must also work here. And now we successfully support Credit Union Ayo Mandiri as one of the sister organisations of our NGO.

We have also translated certain articles or adjusted them to our local situation. I remember one was about human trafficking, one was about HIV and another was about pregnancy.

I was educated as a teacher of religion. Many of our beneficiaries are Christians, and I speak with them like a priest would. Some of the biblical quotes in *Footsteps* have really helped. In several Credit Union meetings this year, I explained that savings and loans schemes actually follow biblical principles: people help one another. The audience seemed impressed with this.

How do you go about translating Footsteps?

We think that *Footsteps* comes in simple and easy English, and the content is also explained in a simple way. My secretary and I do the translation.

Are there any Footsteps *editions or articles that have been particularly helpful?*

We used the information about human trafficking quite widely. Most of the audiences who are living in remote areas said it was the first time they had heard this information. The knowledge was very important because many young people have left their homes and travelled to Malaysia to become migrant workers. Cases of 'missing persons' have also occurred several times.

You used Footsteps 98 *as part of a conference on HIV in December 2015. What sort of impact did this have?*

This issue of *Footsteps* arrived at my desk while we were preparing for a small celebration for World AIDS Day (1 December) at a remote parish in Mukun.

Tarsis (on the right) with his copy of *Footsteps 98*

I was particularly happy to read about the progress that is being made in combating HIV and AIDS. It is so good to know that, with the right treatment, people living with HIV can live a longer life. The message gives us great hope that the world will gradually overcome this condition.

I wanted to make sure that the stories shared during the celebration were not all about a hopeless end, as people were told in previous years. No, some of the stories are indeed hopeful!

We translated the article on 'HIV: myths and facts' into Indonesian, and distributed this leaflet to many people at the celebration. The conference improved people's knowledge about HIV. A lady living with HIV shared accurate information with hundreds of participants. Some of these were young students.

Do you have any other comments about Footsteps?

The way *Footsteps* explains something is very interesting for us. It is always simple but very clear. We would like to thank you for this amazing magazine, and God bless your great work.

With thanks to Tarsis Hurmali.

Email: ayo2indonesia@gmail.com
Website: www.ayo-indonesia.org

Ayo Indonesia contributed an article to Footsteps 85: *Trees. See www.tearfund.org/footsteps*

tearfund