

Research report

# Flourishing churches, flourishing communities

The Sangasangai process in Nepal



tearfund

# About QuIP

The QuIP (Qualitative Impact Assessment Protocol) is designed to help organisations to assess, learn from and demonstrate the social impact of their work. It places the voices of people and communities at the centre of reporting, and demonstrates a genuine commitment to learning about what works and what doesn't work. The QuIP reveals what the most important stakeholders in any programme feel is most significant.

The QuIP's starting point is the belief that, while important, quantitative change data is rarely a sufficient source of evidence of social impact; however, it can be difficult to access and apply good qualitative research methods within limited budgets. It can also be difficult to convince funders that qualitative research is rigorous and reliable enough. The QuIP has been developed to try

to address all these issues, creating an innovative and trusted approach that has already gained recognition from leading donors and non-governmental organisations.

The QuIP was developed and tested in the Centre for Development Studies (CDS) at the University of Bath, and is now curated and nurtured by Bath Social & Development Research Ltd (BSDR) – a non-profit research organisation founded by a small team of CDS researchers. BSDR specialises in QuIP training and studies, with a view to promoting better standards of mixed-method impact evaluation of projects with explicit social and development goals.

[bathsdr.org/about-the-quip](https://bathsdr.org/about-the-quip)  
[learn.tearfund.org/quip](https://learn.tearfund.org/quip)



## Acknowledgments

This report has been produced by Tearfund's Impact and Effectiveness team. The report was compiled and written by Charlotte Flowers. We would like to extend huge thanks to all those at Tearfund who have contributed to this report. Special thanks go to Rebekah Avard, Hannah Mishan and the whole team at BSDR, as well as Steve Powell at Causal Map Ltd for his expertise and guidance.

Additionally, we appreciate the efforts of Dr Dhruva Raj Ghimire and Nirmala Sunuwar, who conducted the interviews and focus groups across Nepal. The research was only possible due to the willing participation of DCS (Dhading Christian Society), ETSC Nepal (Education Training and Service for Community

Nepal), Micah Nepal and Sagol and their churches in allowing Tearfund to visit, and hold discussions and interviews.

Finally, we would like to thank all the individuals and communities who participated in this research, who gave their valuable time, shared crucial insights and were part of a mutual learning exercise. The research is intended to enable our partners and their communities to understand what is working and what is not working so that they can adapt, and continue to see long-lasting change in their communities.

Design: [www.wingfinger.co.uk](http://www.wingfinger.co.uk)



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# Introduction

Tearfund is a Christian NGO that has supported church and community transformation (CCT) in 41 countries for more than 15 years as a tool for overcoming poverty sustainably and holistically.

Tearfund recognises that poverty is the result of a social and structural legacy of broken relationships with God, damaged understanding of self, unjust relationships between people, and exploitative relationships with the environment. Tearfund's mission is to equip the church and others across society to bring hope and restoration to these relationships. The aim of CCT is to envision local churches to mobilise communities and individuals to achieve 'holistic transformation', in which these broken relationships are restored and whereby people flourish in all aspects of life: physically, emotionally and spiritually. There are a variety of specific contextualised CCT processes around the world, the majority of which are church and community mobilisation (CCM) initiatives that have been adapted from either Umoja<sup>1</sup> or the church and community mobilisation process (CCMP).

In 2016, Tearfund commissioned Bath Social & Development Research Ltd to undertake a Qualitative Impact Assessment Protocol (QuIP) study on the CCT process in Uganda.<sup>2</sup> Since then Tearfund has successfully completed studies in Sierra Leone and Bolivia.<sup>3</sup> In 2021, Tearfund conducted the final study of the series in Nepal. QuIP identifies significant drivers of change that contribute to wellbeing in a community. The methodology puts people's voices at the centre, and enables an independent view on the change that has taken place within the participating CCT communities.

Tearfund has supported and promoted CCT in Nepal since 2014, using an adapted version of the Umoja process named 'Sangasangai', meaning 'together' in Nepali. This involves Bible studies, activities and tools and a step-by-step process, encouraging individuals to work together towards a healthy family, healthy church and healthy community. Ultimately, churches work together with their community to assess their needs and resources, and envision, plan and work for a better future. Twenty-two church denominations and networks have been envisioned in Sangasangai, leading to more than 500 local churches running Sangasangai in Nepal.

This QuIP research study took place in Dhading, Kailali, Kavre and Makwanpur, Nepal. Communities in these locations were equipped to run Sangasangai by Tearfund partners DCS, Sagoal, Micah Network and ETSC respectively. Four communities were randomly selected for the study, and in-depth, semi-structured

interviews with 48 households and eight focus groups were conducted.

## Research findings

The research demonstrates clear evidence that Sangasangai is having a positive impact within all four of the sampled communities. Seventy-seven per cent of the participants in the study explicitly cited examples of Sangasangai as driving positive change. This was across the whole sample, but the most citations were notably in Dhading. Furthermore, the local church was the most reported positive driver of change, cited by 92 per cent of respondents, of whom 78 per cent were people of other faiths. Sangasangai has been effective in encouraging holistic ministry, particularly in encouraging churches and individuals to be more open in engaging with the community and community issues. This has led to greater church witness and an increase in interfaith tolerance and collaboration, as well as community projects to improve roads, water sources and sanitation. It has also led to more churches providing support for the most vulnerable, which has been appreciated by other faiths' community members. Furthermore, CCT – particularly with input from partner organisations – has led to people gaining skills and being encouraged to diversify their livelihoods, which has increased material assets.

In addition, many cited an increase in prayer, Bible study and also healing, because of the churches' initiatives including Sangasangai, and this was driving greater spiritual wellbeing and hope for the future. Individuals' involvement with a church or actively pursuing a Christian faith has led to reduced anti-social behaviour, improved community relationships, believers 'living out their faith' through community-mindedness, changed perceptions concerning inclusion, people working across social and faith boundaries, and improved feelings of self-worth and confidence.

While CCT has clearly been a positive driver of change for some households, a significant number of people we spoke to remain concerned about livelihoods and economic negative drivers of change. This was particularly due to the disruption of Covid-19, as lockdowns prevented people from working or returning home from overseas. In some cases, access to savings and loans groups was relieving some of the financial difficulty, as well as diversifying livelihoods with initiatives such as rearing livestock.

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1 For more information on the Umoja manuals, see: <https://learn.tearfund.org/en/resources/tools-and-guides/umoja>

2 For more information on the QuIP approach, see: <http://bathsdr.org/about-the-quip>

3 See all *Flourishing churches, flourishing communities* reports, available at: <http://tearfund.org/quip>



📍 Village members taking part in a community meeting in Nepal. Photo: Chris Hoskins/Tearfund

Four key points can be drawn from the research findings:

#### Finding 1

### CCT encourages Christians to reach out, improving interfaith relations

CCT in Nepal is providing incentives for individual Christians and the church as a whole to reach out to the wider community. The Bible studies have encouraged individuals to see others as made in the image of God, and to embrace the church's and Christians' role to be salt and light in the community rather than stay separated from it. This has led to an increase in communal work, as Christians have changed their attitudes on separating themselves from 'the world', and started to integrate more with their community.

As churches actively live out integral mission, they are building bridges between Christians and other faiths. Both Christians and other faiths reported that community relationships have vastly improved. Church activities to support the vulnerable and engage with the community have impressed the wider community, and this has led to greater tolerance and increased collaboration.

#### Finding 2

### Emphasis on family relationships broadens CCT outcomes

Relationships and collaboration in the household have improved, with CCT Bible studies increasing gender equality in decision-making. The Sangasangai approach to encourage 'healthy families' was evident in how people had begun to discuss things together more as families – and this was also observed by people of other faiths. This demonstrates the additional benefit of including a focus on family relationships in traditional CCT processes.

#### Finding 3

### Improvements in wellbeing rely on holistic change

Improvements in wellbeing rely on multidimensional factors, including good relationships, emotional resilience and spirituality. When people reflected on how their wellbeing had improved, they cited a variety of interlinking factors. Many mentioned the key role of faith in their lives, reporting that it provided drive for change and hope for the future, and brought people together



around a communal purpose. CCT encourages these – often neglected – aspects of people’s lives that prove vital for improving overall wellbeing.

**‘Sangasangai taught about how to have a healthy family, healthy church and healthy community. After this training, there was a change in the spiritual health of the family... The church then took steps to go beyond church-building and conduct activities... Now the community’s other faiths’ families are slowly becoming positive towards the church.’**

Mixed Christian focus group, Makwanpur

#### Finding 4

### Churches need to be equipped to address economic problems

Structural forces, such as economic, political or security issues, can disempower individuals. This study highlights the effects of Covid-19, and particularly the economic downturn it has caused. Many participants – particularly the most vulnerable – referred to difficulty in accessing livelihood opportunities. Although there is evidence that savings and loans groups, and also livelihood diversification, had helped some households remain resilient, this was not always linked to CCT. Further capacity building to address some of these challenges could support the Sangasangai process.



📷 A thriving church community in Dhading, Nepal, which took part in the CCT process with DCS. Photo: Tom Price/Tearfund

# Background to the research

## Church and community transformation (CCT)

Tearfund understands poverty theologically as ‘broken relationships with God, damaged understanding of self, unjust relationships between people, and exploitative relationships with the environment’.

Tearfund’s CCT work aims to encourage the restoration of these relationships by supporting the church to live out integral mission. A CCT process acts as a catalyst for self-discovery by using participatory Bible studies and activities to awaken church leaders and their congregations to the biblical mandate for integral mission. CCT processes then facilitate the church to work alongside the community to identify and address the community’s needs using their own local resources.

CCT processes are owned and led by the local church and community, and so the outcomes it produces are organic and context specific. This allows communities to develop in the ways they think are most important, leading to relevant, long-term change. However, the lack of traditional, clearly defined development objectives or beneficiary lists makes measuring the impact of CCT processes difficult.

Tearfund has collected a large amount of anecdotal evidence of the success of different CCT processes, which suggests that the local church can have a central role in establishing flourishing communities. To provide more robust evidence of the contribution of the local church to holistic change, Tearfund has commissioned research studies to build a better understanding of how CCT processes help to bring about positive change.<sup>4</sup> To add to this body of evidence, Tearfund commissioned the QuIP studies in Uganda in 2016, Sierra Leone in 2018 and Bolivia in 2019.

Tearfund understands integral mission as our participation in God’s mission to redeem and restore the world, seeking the kingdom and its justice in all spheres of life.

**Figure 1:** Diagram demonstrating the journey of Sangasangai, the CCT process used in Nepal



<sup>4</sup> Other CCT impact reports are available at: <https://learn.tearfund.org/en/how-we-work/what-we-do/church-and-community>



# Context

Nepal is a mountainous, land-locked country in the Himalayas in Asia, bordered by China and India, and is one of the poorest countries in Asia. While there has been a marked reduction in poverty since 2006, nearly 5 million people are multidimensionally poor.<sup>5</sup> Nepal is particularly vulnerable to climate change and disasters such as earthquakes, floods and landslides. The earthquakes in 2015 and the Covid-19 pandemic in the last two years have had a devastating effect on the Nepali economy, causing increased cost of living, unemployment and debt levels.<sup>6</sup>

Despite these problems, Nepal is ranked the happiest country in the South-East Asia region. According to the World Happiness Index, factors sustaining high levels of

happiness during the pandemic were mutual trust in each other and confidence in the government.<sup>7</sup>

Historically Nepal, like other South Asian countries, maintains a caste system which justifies the subjugation of lower castes, allowing upper-caste Nepalis to use their status to gain security and power. Although Nepal passed a law against caste-based discrimination and untouchability in 2011, Dalits face routine segregation and abuse.<sup>8</sup> Christians are a minority in Nepal and there is reported hostility towards them. Nepal's 2015 constitution banned religious conversion. Despite these restrictions, churches continue to grow and it is estimated that currently there are more than 6,000 congregations across Nepal.<sup>9</sup>



📷 Rural scenic view in Nepal. Photo: Lloyd Kinsley/Tearfund

5 Unicef (2021) The global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 'complements traditional monetary poverty measures by capturing the acute deprivations in health, education, and living standards that a person faces simultaneously'. For more information, see: <https://ophi.org.uk/multidimensional-poverty-index>

6 World Bank (2022). For more information, see: [www.worldbank.org/en/country/nepal/overview#1](http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nepal/overview#1)

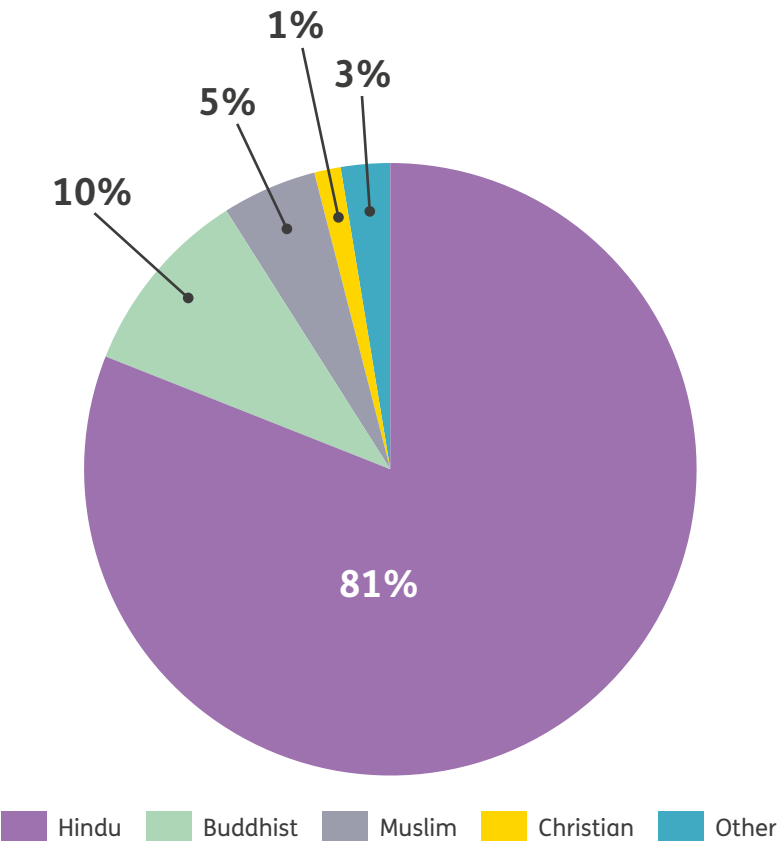
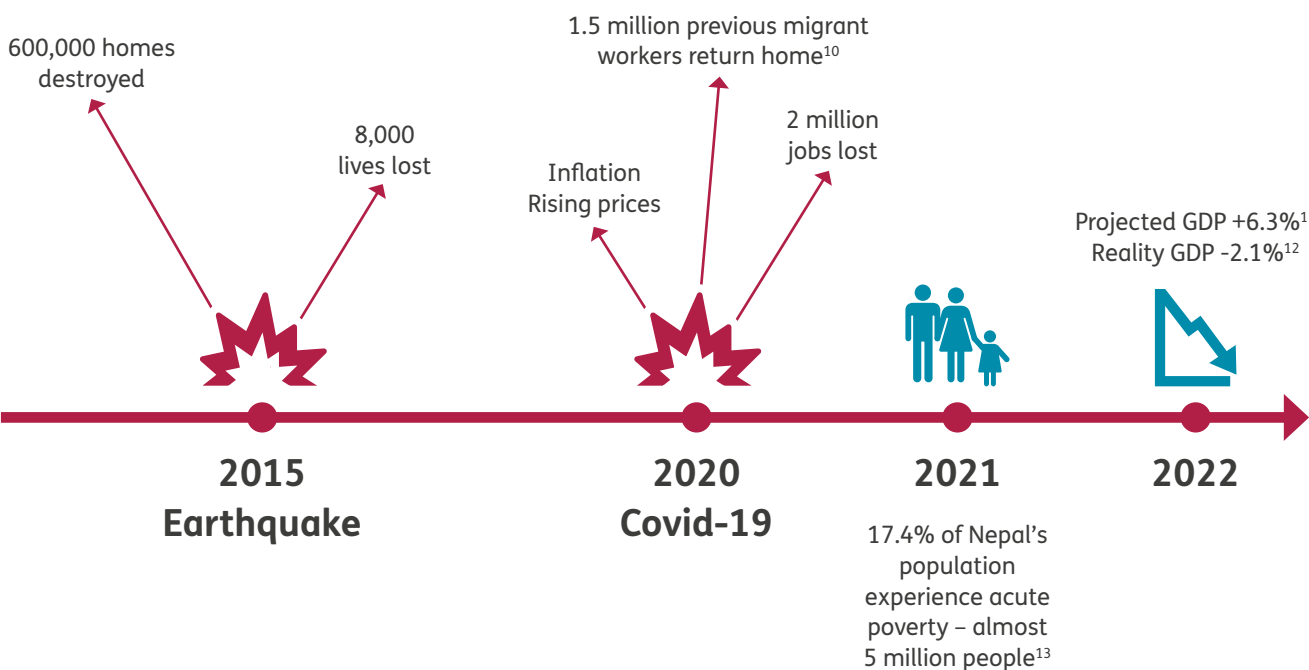
7 See 'Nepal – World Happiness Index': <https://countryeconomy.com/demography/world-happiness-index/nepal>

8 Pew Research Centre (2016)

9 Pew Research Centre (2010)



Figure 2: Nepal timeline, 2015–2022



‘Nepal is ranked happiest country in the South-East Asia region.’

10 World Bank (2022). For more information, see: [www.worldbank.org/en/country/nepal/overview#1](https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nepal/overview#1)  
11 Asian Development Bank (2020) *Macroeconomic Update: Nepal*. For more information, see: <https://www.adb.org/documents/macroeconomic-update-nepal-april-2020>  
12 Asian Development Bank (2022) *Macroeconomic Update: Nepal*. (April 2022) For more information, see: <https://www.adb.org/documents/macroeconomic-update-nepal-april-2022>  
13 Unicef (2021). For more information, see: <https://ophi.org.uk/multidimensional-poverty-index>

# Methodology

**‘The QuIP methodology puts people’s voices first while providing an independent and robust review of a programme’s impact.’**

QuIP is an evaluation methodology to measure qualitative impact in a robust, credible and unbiased manner. Developed by the University of Bath, QuIP uses ‘blindfolded’ interviews and focus groups to hear from local community members about what they believe has caused change in their lives, without revealing which programme is being assessed or the commissioning organisation. Tearfund has already conducted three QuIP studies – in Uganda (2016), Sierra Leone (2018) and Bolivia (2019) – to assess the impact of our CCT processes. The study in Nepal commenced at the end of 2021. A synthesis of all four studies was completed in 2022.<sup>14</sup> The aim is to use these studies to understand the potential of CCT – and the role of the local church in this – across four different contexts.

The QuIP uses semi-structured household interviews and focus group discussions. Both the interviewers and the respondents are kept ‘blindfolded’ as to the commissioning organisation and as to the specific intervention being evaluated. Respondents are asked about changes in key ‘domains’, generating a backwards chain of causal explanations for both the positive and negative changes in their lives. The transcripts collected are then analysed using qualitative, inductive coding to compare the factors described with the Theory of Change of the intervention in question. This methodology puts people’s voices first while providing an independent and robust review of a programme’s impact.

In this study, randomly selected individuals were asked about their perception of the positive and negative

changes in their lives and their beliefs about what caused these changes. Full ‘blindfolding’ was not achievable in Nepal because of the cultural climate and security risks. Therefore, the researchers knew that the commissioning organisation was Tearfund and that the research included analysis of the role of the church. However, they were not briefed on the CCT approach. Furthermore, they were trained to conduct the interviews: to collect information on broad changes in the lives and livelihoods of participants; to ensure the questions were open-ended and about all aspects of wellbeing; and to record any driver of change. The Christian people we spoke to were aware that the researchers were Christian; however, they were not made aware of the initiative being studied or who the commissioning organisations were. This methodology provides an independent reality check on the specific effect of the CCT process amid the complexity of positive and negative factors in people’s lives. The coding highlights where the CCT process is cited explicitly or implicitly as well as other explicit citations of other organisations or contextual factors, and also gives us an insight into the outcomes that respondents feel are most crucial in their lives.

The questions used in the interviews are based on the nine broad aspects of wellbeing set out in Tearfund’s Light Wheel framework (see Figure 3, page 9).<sup>15</sup>

The research was led by independent researcher Dr Dhruba Ghimire and conducted by Nirmala Sunuwa. The data was collected in Nepali and later transcribed and translated. This was then coded by Tearfund staff using the Causal Map software<sup>16</sup> and a full report was written.<sup>17</sup>

The QuIP sample is not statistically representative of the wider population; findings cannot be extrapolated across wider project target areas, nor is that the intention. The aim of a QuIP study is to conduct a ‘deep dive’ assessment with a purposefully selected group of people to understand to what extent they have experienced change in different domains, and what has driven that change.

<sup>14</sup> See the QuIP reports at <https://learn.tearfund.org/quip> and the synthesis at <https://learn.tearfund.org/cct-quip>

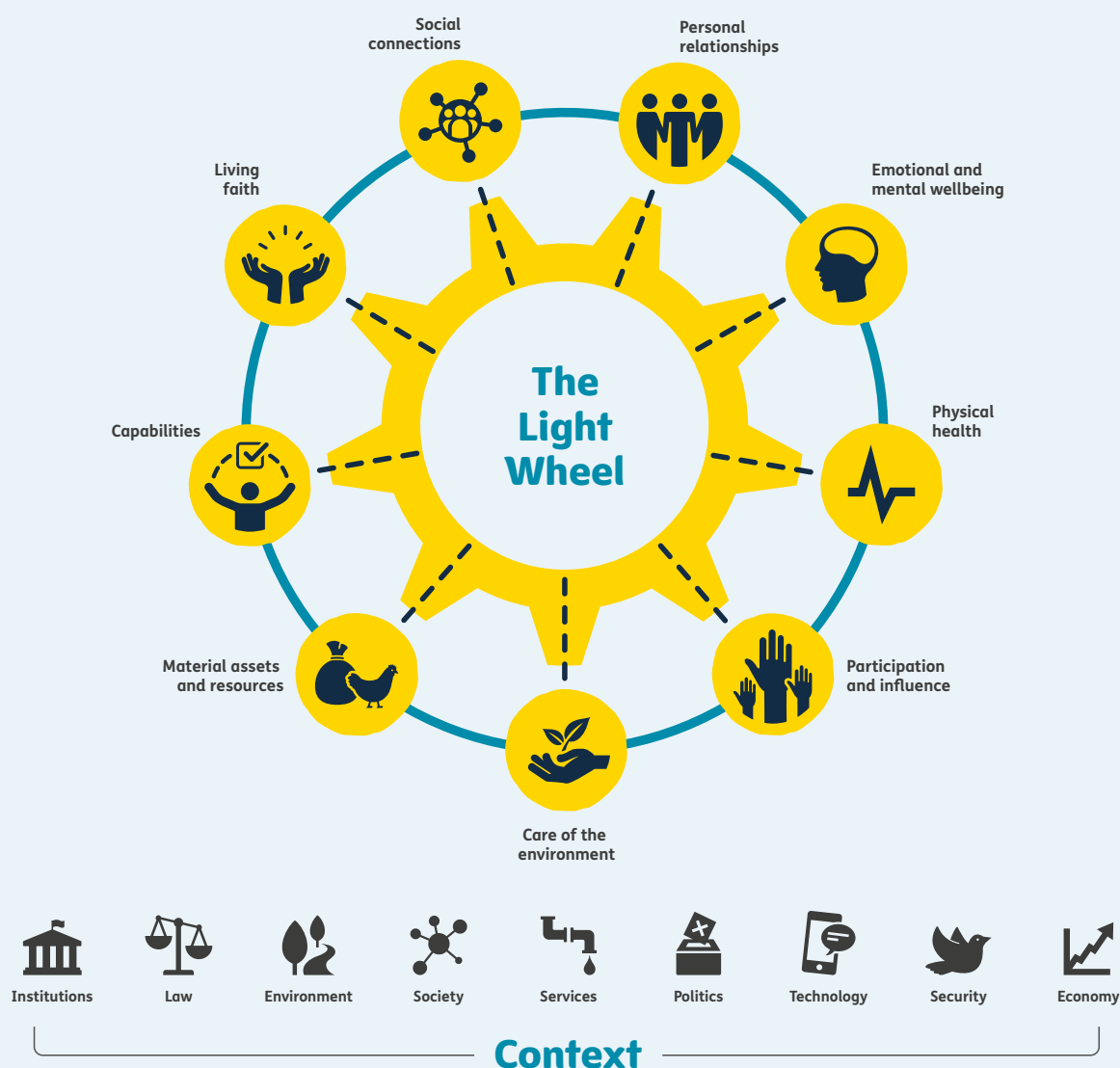
<sup>15</sup> For more information, see Tearfund’s Light Wheel toolkit, available at: <https://learn.tearfund.org/en/resources/tools-and-guides/the-light-wheel>

<sup>16</sup> Causal Map is a new research software that supports the analysis and visualisation of qualitative data to produce generalised causal connections. Causal Map has worked in partnership with BSDR to complement the QuIP analysis process. See more at: <https://causalmap.app/>

<sup>17</sup> For the full academic report, see: <https://tearfund.org/quip>



**Figure 3: The Light Wheel**



## ‘Unblindfolding’ workshop

Given the participatory ethos of CCT, it was important that the research design maximised opportunities for meaningful engagement and empowerment. Therefore, the initial coding findings were shared at an ‘unblindfolding’ virtual workshop. This workshop brought together the researchers, the Tearfund in Nepal team and representatives from each of the partner organisations who were involved in the research. The findings were discussed and verified, and recommendations were considered for CCT facilitation and implementation.

Tearfund is planning to visit participating communities to thank them, and also to produce materials to share with

them. The aim of the materials is to share the findings, celebrate the communities’ achievements and encourage them to use the research as an opportunity to reflect on their journey and discuss new ideas to improve their situation further.

Tearfund has also shared the research findings in regional meetings across Asia among those involved in CCT. The meetings were used: to inspire debate; to discuss the findings and determine what they mean for future adaptation of CCT; and to consider recommendations for facilitation and implementation. This learning report is produced from the QuIP analysis and informed by the subsequent discussion meetings.

# The four sampled communities

The research was carried out in four communities in Nepal:

- Dhading
- Kailali
- Kavre
- Makwanpur.

Each of these communities is a target area for CCT implemented by Tearfund partners DCS, Sagoal, Micah Network and ETSC respectively. Although the report

refers to CCT – the term that Tearfund uses for mobilising the church and community – CCT in Nepal is known as ‘Sangasangai’. The four participating communities can be located on the map below.

Forty-eight in-depth, semi-structured interviews and eight focus group discussions (FGDs) were conducted across the sites. These included participants of different genders, ages and faiths.<sup>18</sup> In each location one focus group was conducted with the local church members, and then a second focus group was conducted with members of the wider community not associated with the church.<sup>19</sup>

**Figure 4: Map of Nepal districts**



<sup>18</sup> To read the breakdown of interviews, see the full report at: <http://tearfund.org/quip>

<sup>19</sup> In Dhading it was not possible to gather enough people for the second focus group discussion (FGD) and therefore the researchers held a FGD with another church group.



# Research limitations

## Blindfolding

Due to religious sensitivities, it was not possible to use the full blindfolding methodology in this research. The researchers themselves were not briefed on the programme, but in order to meet with and gain the trust of Christian participants, the researchers needed to be introduced to church members by the partner organisation. However, the participants – as far as possible – were not aware of the initiative being studied. All interviews were focused on asking respondents about broad changes in their lives and they were not directly asked about CCT at any point.

Some respondents guessed the religious affiliation of the researchers or directly questioned it, and therefore may have realised that the research was interested in the church. However, the respondents did not know that the research was about CCT in particular.

## Reaching other faiths in the community

Generally, communities were open to interviews although there was some religious sensitivity, particularly in Kavre. Furthermore, in Dhading the church was unable

to support the gathering of another faith's focus group and so a focus group was held in another church nearby. Facilitators also struggled to bring people together for the FGD.

## Delving deeper

To maintain neutrality, the methodology does not use any leading questions. However, this means that participants may have not been asked specifically about the church or CCT, and therefore sometimes the answers may have been limited to broad descriptions rather than in-depth explanations.

## Timeframe and Covid-19

In this research, participants were asked about changes in the last five years. However, it is worth noting that Covid-19 emerged two years before this study, and therefore may skew results.



Alina prepares a local snack, 'panipuri', in her shop in Sauraha, Chitwan, where Micah Network has mobilised churches.  
Photo: Tom Price/Tearfund

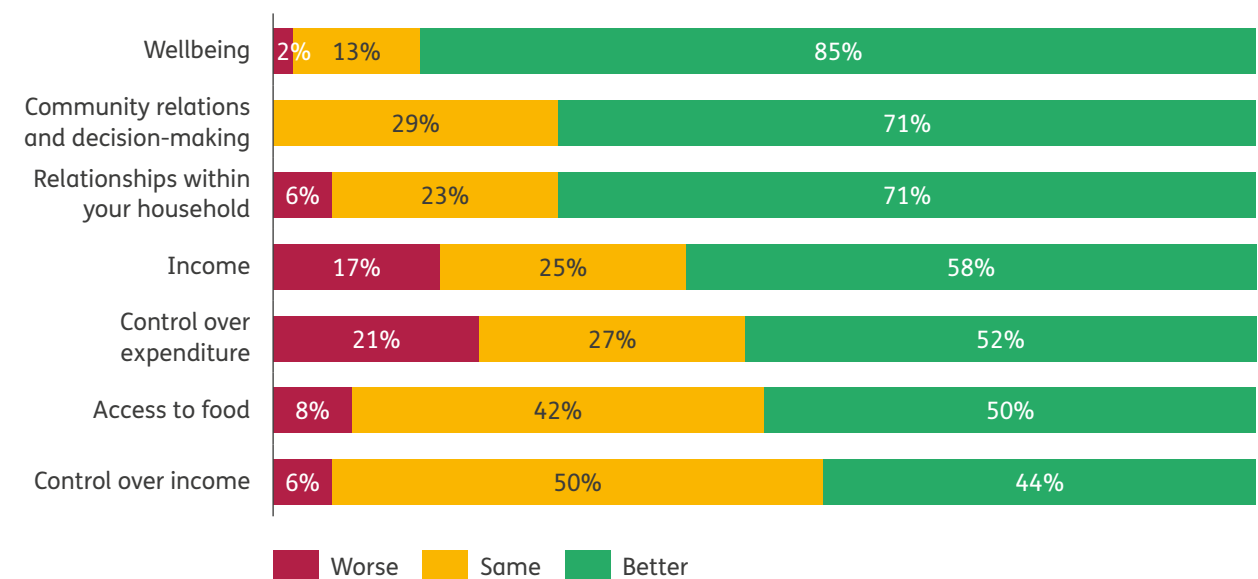
# Overall change

**‘Eighty-five per cent of interviewees said their overall wellbeing had improved over the last five years.’**

Participants interviewed were asked about seven areas: access to food; cash income; choice and control over income; purchasing power; household relationships;

community relationships; and overall wellbeing. The graph below highlights that the vast majority of people (85 per cent) said that their overall wellbeing had improved in the last five years despite the challenges associated with the aftermath of the earthquake and the Covid-19 pandemic. Relationships in the household and the community were also overwhelmingly positive, with only six per cent reporting that their personal relationships had worsened. However, economic outcomes such as access to food and income were less positive, with just over half stating that these had improved.

**Figure 5: Responses to closed questions**



**‘I have been able to gain confidence about my wellbeing because I am healthy and I am also learning new skills on tailoring that I have been practising for income too. I could not complete my studies before but I have been able to learn skills, educate my children and I really feel good about my life.’**

Female, 30, Dhading

**‘I am planning to do my own business after my training is complete. I am generally hopeful for the future for any unanticipated adversaries such as disasters. The hope has increased in the past five years. The reason for the increase in hope is through my experience in life and being educated from the church.’**

Male, 20, Kailali

**‘Physically my family is doing well. The spiritual health is good too because in my family we have family prayers and Bible study.’**

Female, 22, Kavre

**‘The spiritual health has improved among my family. The physical health of my daughter also improved with the medicine. After opening a shop, my entrepreneurship skills have improved to some extent. The improvement in my life has been because of faith in God.’**

Female, 31, Makwanpur



## Overall findings

### Positive change headlines

- 85% reported improvements in overall wellbeing
- 71% reported improvements in personal relationships
- 71% reported improvements in community relationships, and no respondent said this had worsened
- 75% mentioned collectively working together as a community
- 73% mentioned interfaith relationships improving
- 58% reported that income had increased during the period despite Covid-19

### Positive drivers of change

- The local church was the most commonly mentioned positive driver of change overall: 92% of respondents
- 77% of respondents cited Sangasangai initiatives as important positive drivers of change

### Negative change headlines

- 69% said that their material assets had reduced

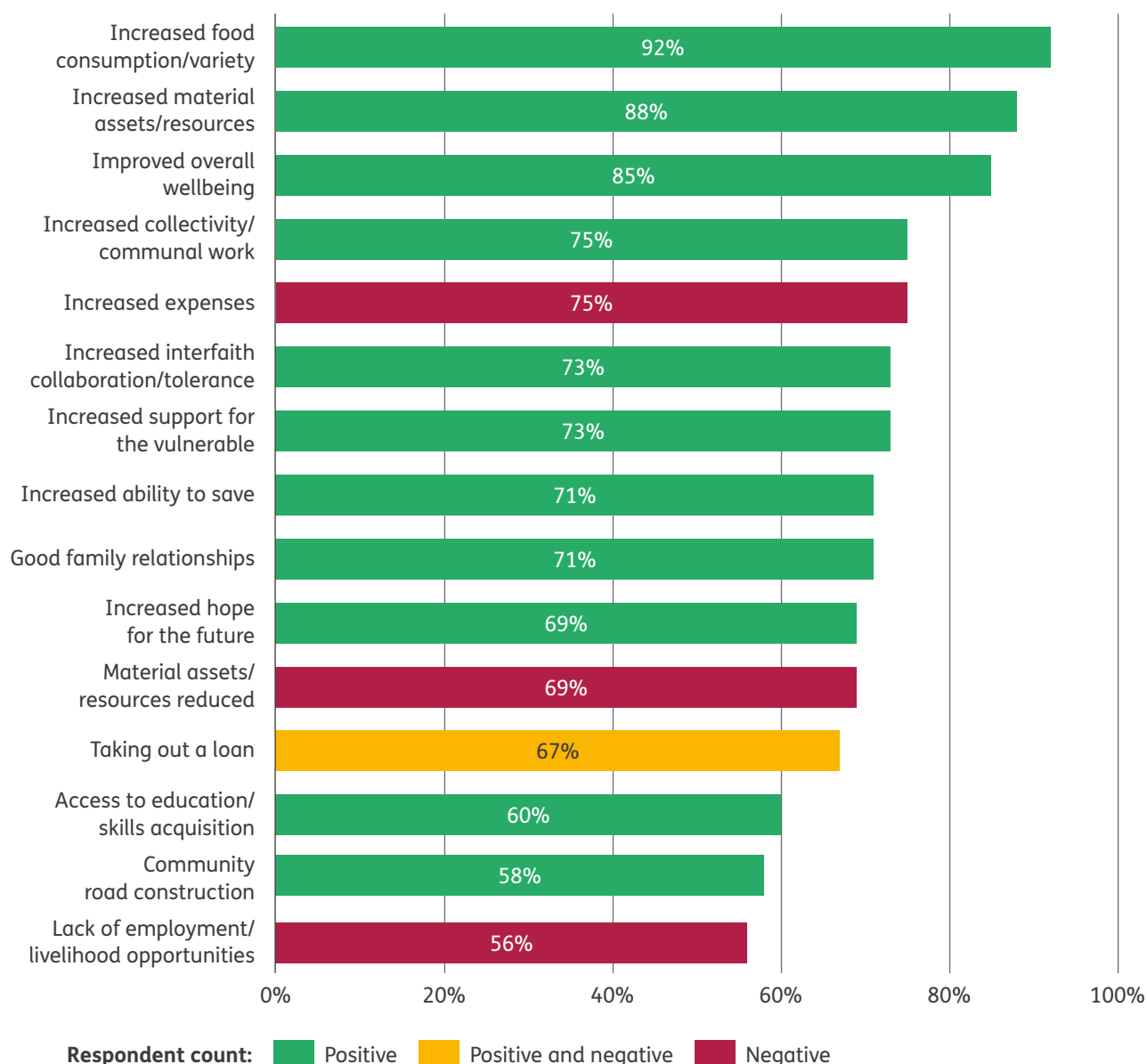
### Negative drivers of change

- 75% said that expenses had increased
- 56% said that they struggled with lack of livelihood opportunities
- 56% said they were negatively affected by Covid-19
- 58% said they were negatively affected by ill health or old age
- 44% said they were in debt



📷 Sushma was given a sewing machine by Sagoal. With this machine, Sushma and others are able to generate an income making bags, purses and scarves. Photo: Matthew Joseph/Tearfund

**Figure 6: Most commonly reported changes**



Over 85 per cent of participants and 93 per cent of the Christian people we spoke to reported that their overall wellbeing had improved in the past five years. The positive drivers of change were diverse, demonstrating the holistic nature of people's perception of wellbeing. They were predominantly related to gaining new skills, training, and prioritising children's education, which were cited as leading to livelihood resilience and increased self-worth

and confidence. A number also linked their overall wellbeing to spiritual wellbeing and particularly the Christian faith, both of which were linked to hope for the future. Over a third of participants linked their wellbeing to improvements in health and increased material assets, while 29 per cent said improved community relationships had increased wellbeing.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> 88% mentioned that their material assets had increased, whilst 69% also mentioned that their material assets had decreased. Participants referred to both positive and negative changes in their lives across the interview. Therefore some might reference their material assets reducing and also improving at different points across the five-year period.

# Positive causes of change

**Figure 7:** Most commonly cited positive drivers of change



The study found the most frequently cited positive drivers of change were the local church, the government, savings-group membership and collective communal work.

The table on page 16 shows the number of times the influencer was ranked first and the number of times people referenced them as an influence.

At the end of each interview, people were asked to rank the most positive influencers or actors of change.

<sup>21</sup> A Village loans and saving association is usually a self-managed group of 15-25 individual members from within a community who meet regularly to save their money, access small loans and obtain emergency insurance.



## Top influencers of change

	Ranked first	Score <sup>22</sup>	# of times ranked
Church	26	176	40
Government	9	131	39
Savings and loans groups	7	125	39
All NGOs	5	107	36
All Tearfund partners	4	67	22
Schools	3	47	17
Local group	1	44	13

## A guide to the most common ‘stories of change’ maps

In the following section of this report, ‘stories of change’ maps are used to display the changes that participants described. These maps were created by zooming into the connections that interviewees drew most frequently between CCT and specific positive outcomes. In each map, the most common routes are presented. The number next to the arrows indicates the number of people who referenced this linkage. The orange lines show the initial change described and the blue lines depict the subsequent effect or change.

It is important to note that these maps are illustrative of how people perceive that change happens, and there are many routes to positive change that are not included.



📍 ‘Pray for Nepal’ purses by Chhori’s Handicraft in Kathmandu, Nepal. Photo: Chris Hoskins/Tearfund

<sup>22</sup> Scoring was calculated by giving each ranked first a score of five, each ranked second a score of four, each ranked third a score of three and so on.

## The local church and Christian faith

The church was mentioned 40 times, and was ranked first more than any other organisation (26 times). Interestingly, the church was also the mostly commonly cited driver of change for other faiths. Tearfund partners were also ranked highly. Sagoal was named most out of any NGO. Of those who mentioned the church, 66 per cent explicitly mentioned Sangasangai or an activity associated with Sangasangai as part of the reason for ranking it. The church was linked with supporting the most vulnerable, providing education and teaching on family relations and also encouraging improved community relationships.

### Supporting the most vulnerable

Nearly all of the people we spoke to talked positively about the local church supporting the most vulnerable in the community. This included church members and people in the wider community. Many respondents particularly mentioned the church engaging in activities to provide food for those struggling during the Covid-19 pandemic. However, there were also references to the church supporting single mothers with livelihood training and livestock such as chickens, advocating for their rights, and providing school materials for orphans. People also mentioned Sagoal supporting victims of the earthquake to rebuild their houses. This support for the vulnerable was the main reason that many people of other faiths referenced the church as a positive driver of change in their community.

**‘I think that the church supports the people in need. Even the outside people have the perception that the church Father helps the poor people in the community. The church has supported with Horlicks, blankets in the hospital too.’**

Female, 35, Dhading

**‘I feel that the church supports other people in the community even if they are not Christian. I had received ration support during the lockdown and felt good to receive help.’**

Female, 37, Makwanpur

## Improved personal relationships

Seventy-one per cent of participants reported that personal relationships had improved. Interestingly, 86 per cent of the Christian people we spoke to reported improvements compared to just 50 per cent of other faiths’ responses. Relationships in the household had improved for a multitude of reasons, but particularly through church teaching and specific training on family relations.

The teaching from the church encouraged greater participation in decision-making particularly for women and children, leading to changes in cultural/gender norms such as men taking on household chores and consulting their families on financial issues. Additionally, many participants – particularly those from Kailali – mentioned how the church encouraged people to stop drinking alcohol, which had a positive effect on family relationships. These improvements were cited as leading to an increase in collective working, particularly in agriculture, and a corresponding increase in material assets. Twenty-two per cent of those who described their overall wellbeing as improving linked this to good family relationships. Figure 8 on page 18 demonstrates how participants described the reasons for improvements in their personal relationships.

**‘The family relationship has changed after my sister and I converted to Christ. We all family members make joint decisions; we family meet every night to discuss or decide on family issues. My parents discuss their concerns with us children. The family’s responsibilities are shared by parents and children. I as a male also do chores.’**

Male, 21, Kailali

**‘I still remember when I was a child, both my grandfather and father were alcoholic. After conversion to Christianity, these stopped and the fights and problems also stopped. I had seen these changes while I was growing up and now I feel very glad that our family is a good example which has been witnessed by other families in the community.’**

Male, 30, Kailali

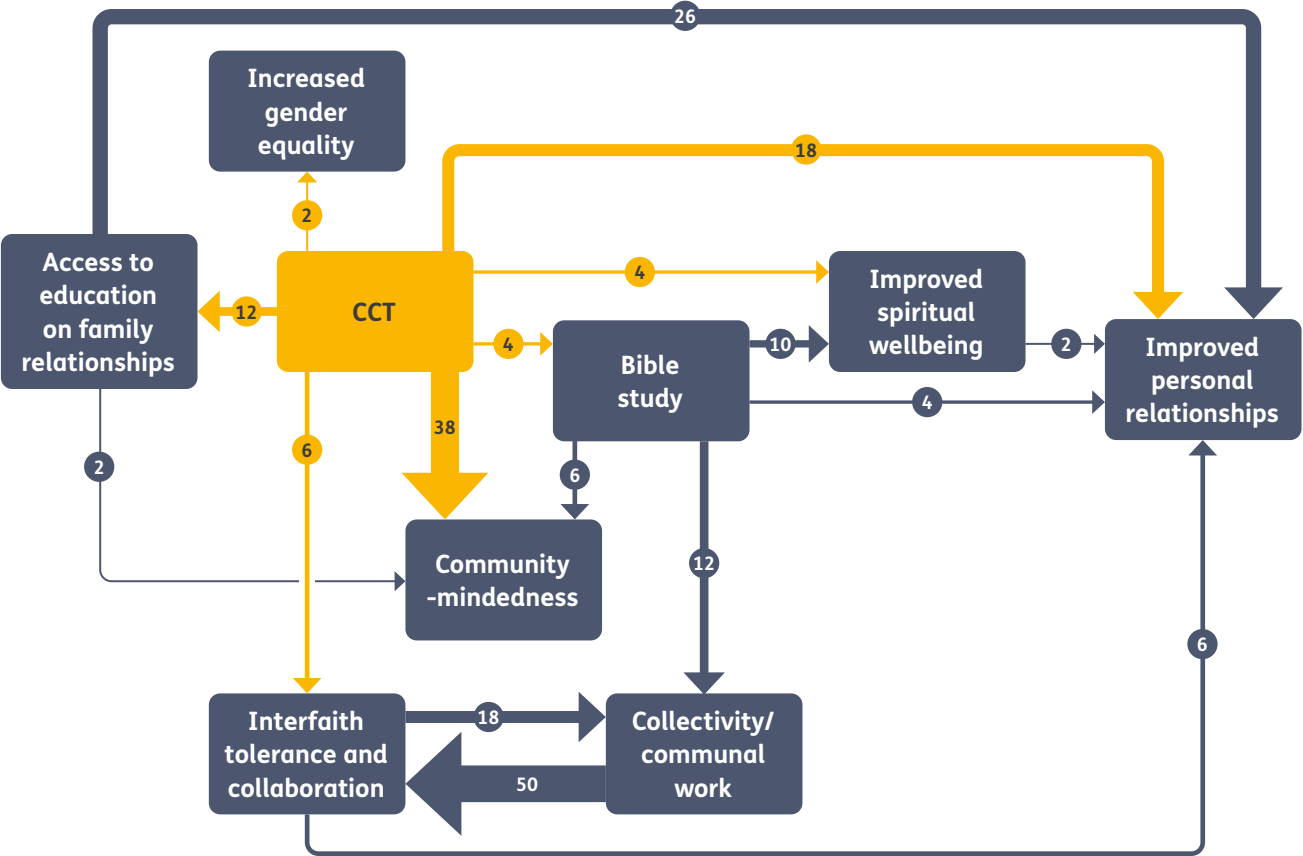
**‘My mother learnt from Sangasangai training: she shared in our family about how families can move together which caused the improvement in relationship. She also taught me that we have to share each other’s concern in the family and in evening family fellowship we share our feelings.’**

Female, 22, Kavre

**Figure 8: Improved personal relationships – story of change**

The map below demonstrates how CCT has led to personal relationships improving through education on family values and Bible studies.

The thickness of the arrow corresponds to the number of respondents who mentioned this connection. The orange lines indicate the initial change described by participants and the blue lines demonstrate the subsequent change described.

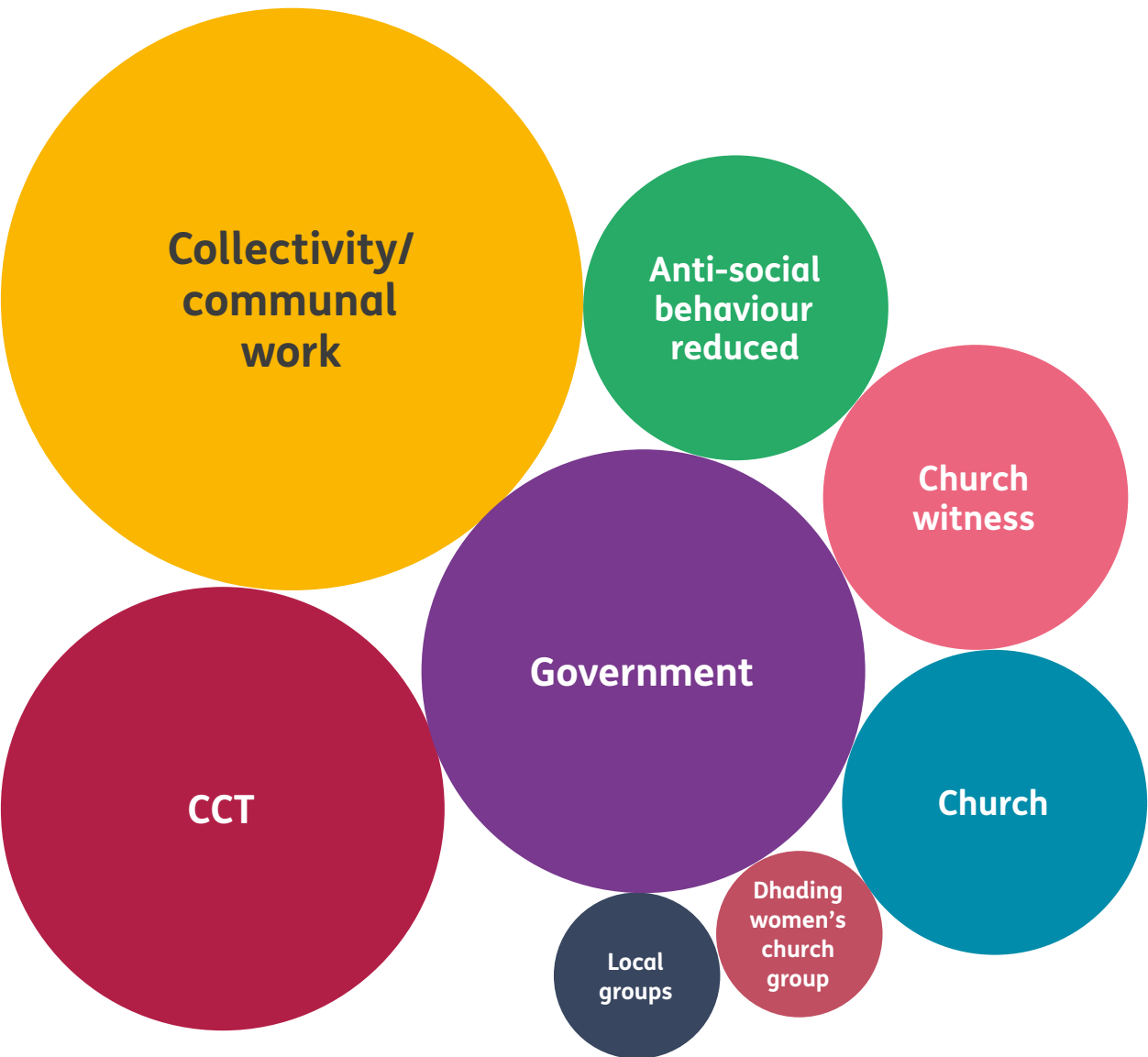


☑ Men from the local community playing khajjadi (drums) and other percussion for a traditional Magar cultural dance in Nepal.  
Photo: Chris Hoskins/Tearfund



Improved community relationships/social connections

Figure 9: Drivers of change leading to improved social connections



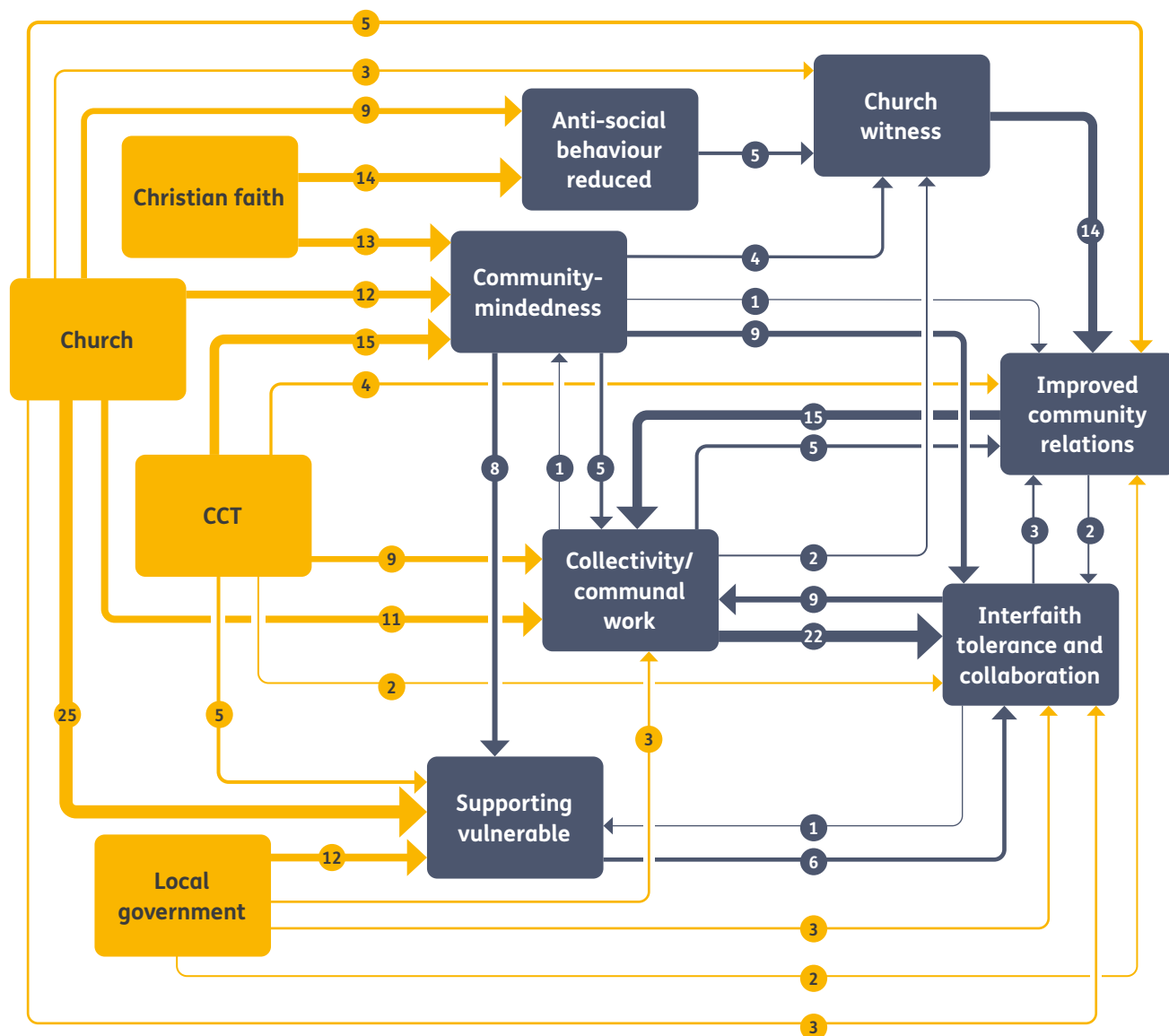
Seventy-one per cent of respondents reported that community relationships had improved, with 79 per cent of Christian respondents citing improvements. The church and Christian faith were said to be key factors in bringing about these positive changes, through encouraging community-mindedness and seeing others as made in the image of God, and embracing the church's and Christians' role to reach out to be salt and light to the wider community. As Christian attitudes on this changed, communal work increased.

When describing community relations, participants in all locations cited interfaith tolerance and collaboration as a key improvement. As different faith groups worked together, people were becoming more understanding of each other. In turn, as interfaith harmony improved, there was an increase in communal work. Again, a key

driver was the church, Christian faith generally and CCT encouraging Christian believers in community-mindedness. Seventy-five per cent of the other faiths interviewed noticed this, as they described Christians as being 'clean-living', abstaining from drink, having fewer family arguments and serving their neighbours. Some 13 per cent also mentioned better education generally, or a modernised attitude leading to more tolerance. Forty-eight per cent of other faiths said interfaith harmony had improved. The main outcomes of this were improved community organisation, more communal work, improved communal assets/resources, improved access to water, and greater community engagement in advocacy. Figure 10 on page 20 demonstrates how participants frequently described the change in community relationships and interfaith tolerance.

The diagram below demonstrates how CCT, the church and Christian faith generally are leading to increased interfaith collaboration through CCT Bible studies promoting community-mindedness.

The thickness of the arrow corresponds to the number of respondents who mentioned this connection. The orange lines indicate the initial change described by participants and the blue lines demonstrate the subsequent change described.



**‘The youth of my church came and cleaned the drainage. Neighbours were curious and I explained that the church youth wanted to help the community. The photos of that event are placed in the ward office. This gave a good example in the community towards church and also improved the sanitation status of our locality. This all happened because DCS has taught us during Sangasangai that we must not be confined in the church but walk alongside the community.’**

### Women's Christian focus group, Dhading

**‘The communities do not have negative actions or behaviour against the church. I think the changed behaviour of Christian people is the main cause for this because of the works of the church to the people in need. The teachings and role models in the church have inspired church-goers to lead a good life.’**

**Female, 29, Makwanpur**

## Cohesive community and collective work

Improved community relations were the second highest positive driver of change cited. Many people we spoke to discussed community cohesion as both a driver and a positive outcome that had improved their wellbeing, reflecting the complex interconnectedness of changes in people's lives. Community cohesion was more than just pleasant community relations; many people described communal work that had been undertaken such as improvements to roads, water sources and sanitation. Joining in collective work encouraged collaboration across social boundaries and between faith groups and also raised levels of wellbeing for some participants.

**‘From Sangasangai we have to learn and practise to have good relationships... We learnt that we have to be united and together as community members... Now we are invited and we work together, we engage in community development works such as building roads, cleaning public taps.’**

Mixed Christian focus group, Kavre

## Productive farming, availability of land, and savings groups

When asked, ‘Overall, how does your financial stability compare to five years ago?’ many said that their income and material assets had reduced. However, 58 per cent of the people interviewed stated that their income had improved at certain points and 88 per cent also mentioned that their material assets had improved at certain points during the five-year recall period. This is remarkable in the context of the 2015 earthquake and the lockdowns caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Many of the people we spoke to were predominantly reliant on agricultural livelihoods, so productive farming was a key factor in increasing their material assets. Access to land for farming was therefore vital for improvements in income and productivity. Those who didn't have access to land struggled, and were the ones who mentioned needing food support during the lockdowns.

Diversification was cited by 94 per cent of participants as a key to positive change. This included rearing livestock, taking on new employment and also starting a new trade such as carpentry. The reason for diversifying was not always explained, but some 27 per cent did attribute this to new training, and 13 per cent to CCT or Tearfund partners. Another factor mentioned by many was travelling abroad or in some cases to the city to work. Migration abroad was cited as a key driver of income increasing by 11 per cent. However, many had to return from working abroad during the Covid-19 pandemic.



📷 Women carrying hay in ShivNagar community in Tikapur, western Nepal, where Sagoal has mobilised churches.  
Photo: Ralph Hodgson/Tearfund



Another key factor in people perceiving that their material assets had improved was the availability of savings groups and access to loans. Seventy-three per cent of participants mentioned using a loan facility, and this allowed them to do household improvements, diversify livelihoods, and improve agriculture techniques. However, some resorted to taking loans for more negative reasons such as struggling to afford food or school fees. It was unclear if savings groups were community-owned or private businesses. In Dhading, the church women created their own savings group, which enabled vulnerable women in particular to save and have access to loans. This group also started a cooperative within the church, which provided income to take on community development projects and enabled them to support vulnerable households.

Apart from the Dhading savings group, CCT was not often explicitly cited as a cause of increased income, but many people referred to improved financial management after training at church and also cited principles similar to CCT, such as utilising existing skills or resources such as land.

**‘I have learnt about small-scale business from discipleship training and also got loan from local-level finance institution. I then applied the learning to start poultry farm, I manufactured candles, selling milk and learnt to be economically stable. I do not ask husband for money.’**

Mixed Christian focus group, Kavre

**Figure 11:** Drivers of change leading to increased livelihood resilience or material assets/resources





❏ Pastor Rajaram has led Shanti Niwas Church for 25 years. Together with Sagoal, Pastor Rajaram has worked to implement a variety of training and support programmes to serve the local community. Photo: Matthew Joseph/Tearfund

## Government and other external actors

Participants mentioned the government's ward office 39 times, particularly in relation to bringing the community together to work on initiatives such as: road clearing; providing support for earthquake victims and those in need because of the Covid-19 pandemic; and supporting new communal infrastructure. It was only ranked first by nine participants, compared to 26 for the church. Twelve NGOs were mentioned by respondents for a variety of reasons such as providing support following the earthquake and during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The communal projects such as clearing new roads and providing water sources seemed to be instigated by the local government rather than the church, although the church was getting involved and supporting initiatives alongside their neighbours. Most references were that 'all the community' regardless of faith would get involved in such initiatives. However, it was unclear if this was the usual expectation or to what extent Christians were part of development initiatives and decision-making. That said, there were lots of positive responses about the way the churches and Christians acted in their communities and this seemed to be a good foundation for future work.

## The positive influence of CCT

Eighty-five per cent linked Sangasangai explicitly – or Tearfund partners or activities known to have originated in Sangasangai – with positive changes in their lives over the time period. The modules such as 'Me and my family' were explicitly cited and linked to positive developments. Similarly, the 'healthy community' Bible studies were often mentioned as leading to positive changes in relationships and new initiatives to improve the situation of the community. Figure 12 on page 24 shows the most frequently mentioned outcomes of CCT and Figure 13 on page 25 shows the most common story of change that participants described. Participants most often mentioned CCT leading to increased community-mindedness, leading to an improvement in personal and community relationships and community assets such as roads and water sources.

**'The elder of my church advised me to start a business. I also thought that the shop is also a form of ministry service. Business was possible for me because I had some money and obtained small amount of loan too. Also Sagoal NGO provided a three-days training to church on financial management.'**

Male, 29, Kailali

Figure 12: Main outcomes of the CCT process in Nepal

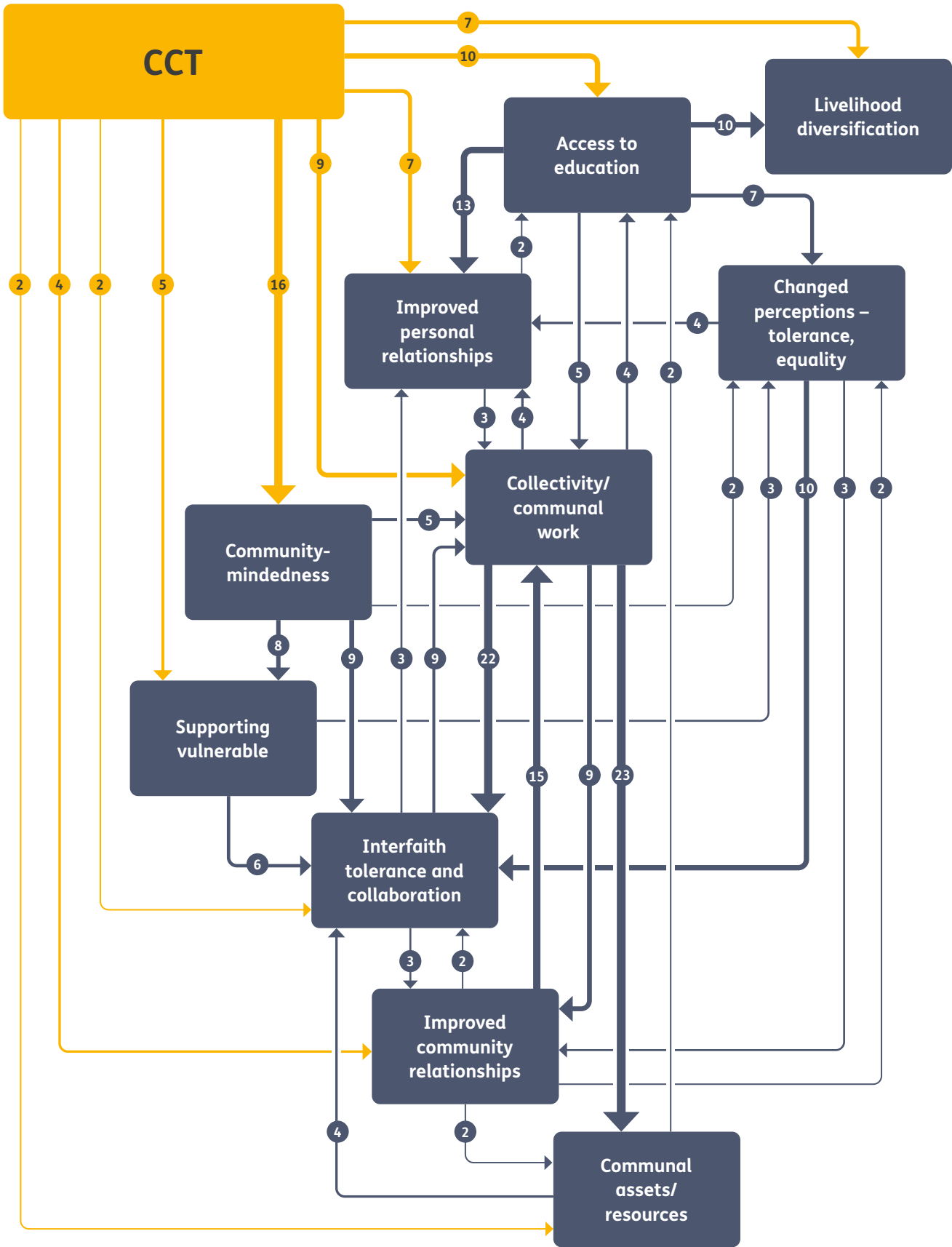




Figure 13: CCT – story of change

The diagram below demonstrates the most common story of change that respondents described regarding CCT.

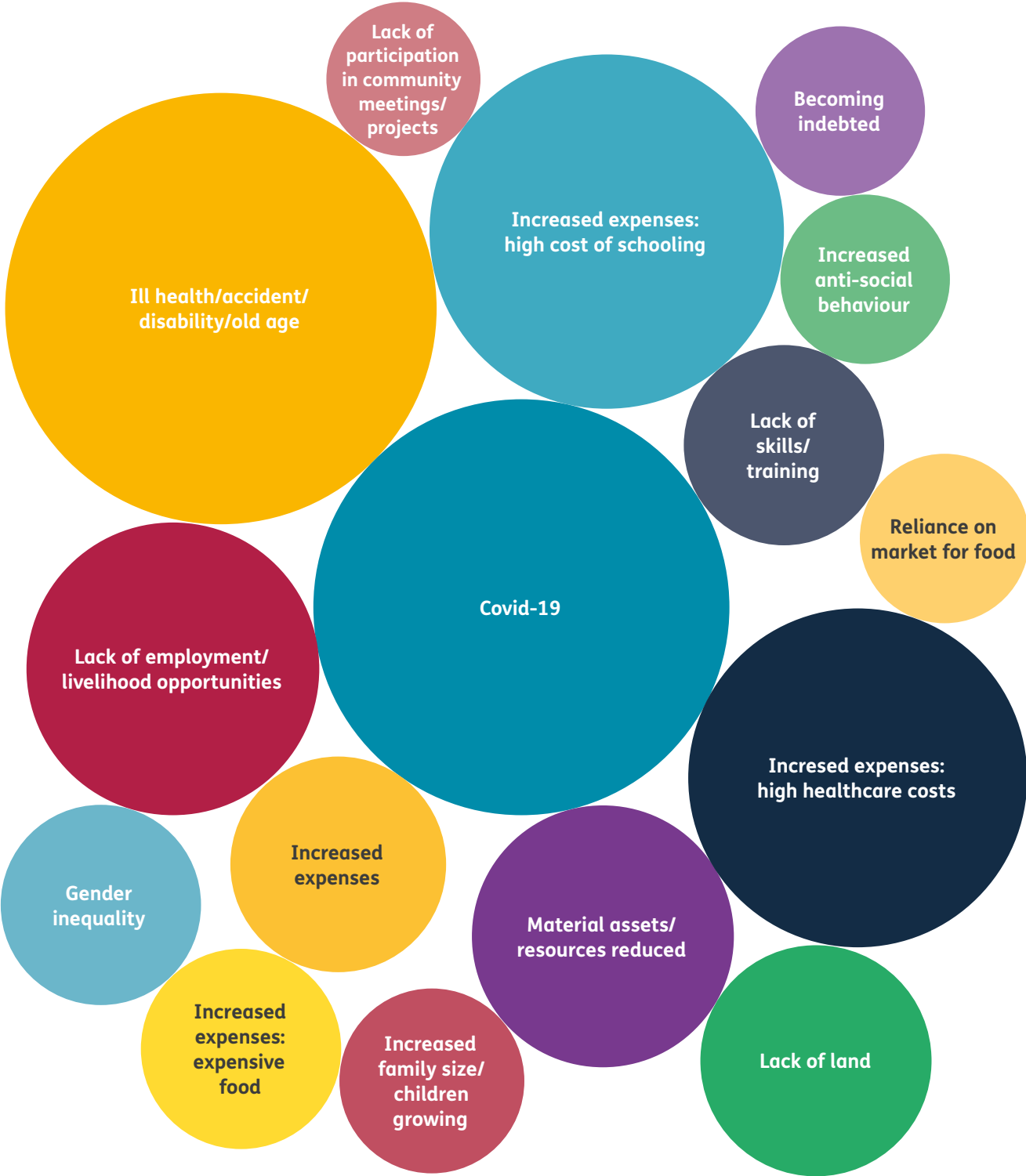
The thickness of the arrow corresponds to the number of respondents who mentioned this connection. The orange lines indicate the initial change described by participants and the blue lines demonstrate the subsequent change described.



# Negative causes of change

The study identified the main negative drivers of change as Covid-19, ill health/old age and increased expenses.

Figure 14: Negative drivers of change in Nepal



## Covid-19 and ill health

Almost two-thirds of participants mentioned Covid-19 as having had a negative impact on their lives in some way (see Figure 15 below). This was often linked to a lack of employment opportunities or reduction in income, as lockdown prevented some from working, particularly those who worked abroad. Although Covid-19 was not linked by any participants to ill health, there were many mentions of ill health, accidents, old age

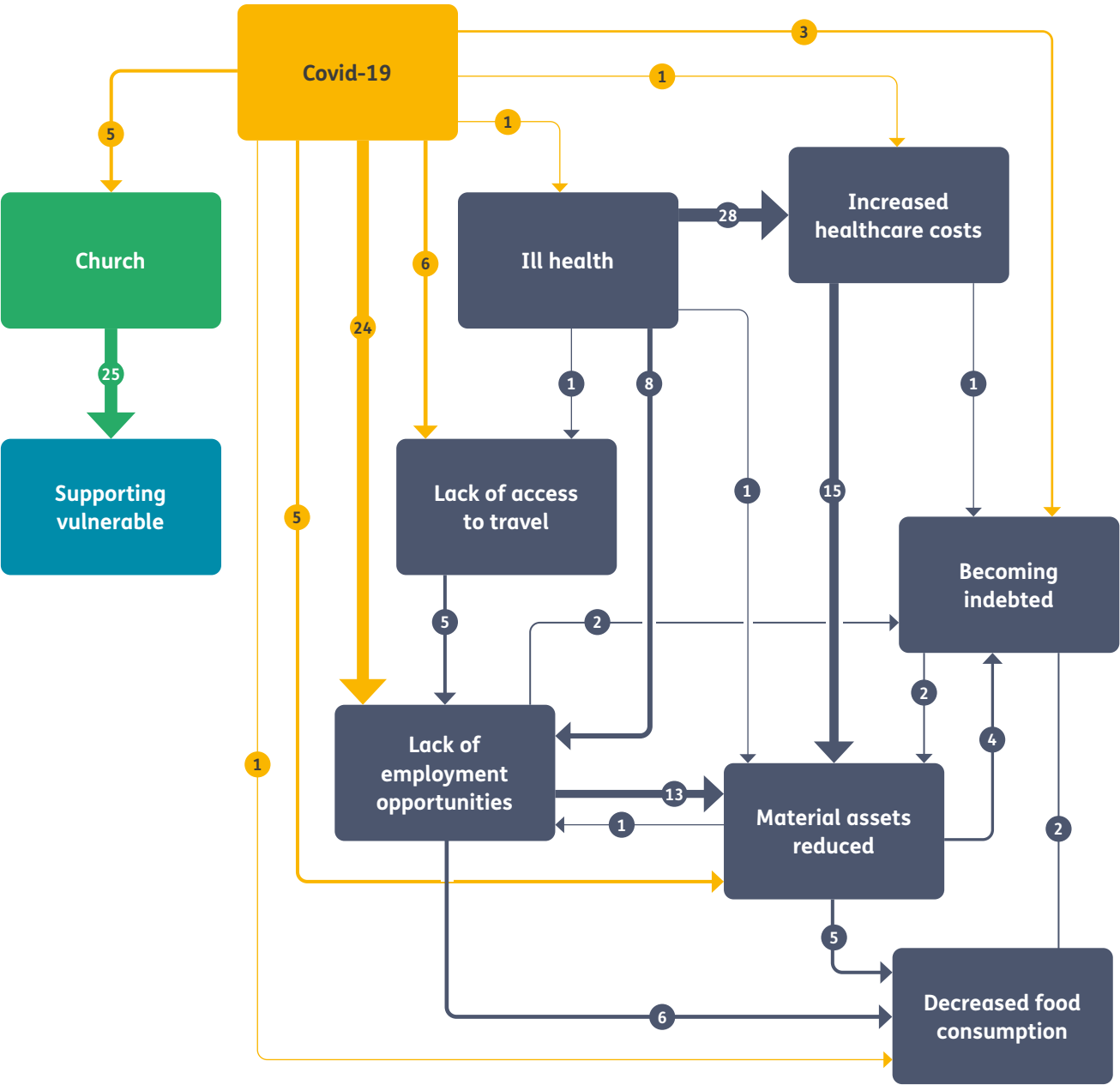
or disabilities causing problems with livelihoods. This was also frequently linked to increased expenditure on healthcare – often related to diabetes, which participants linked to lifestyle changes and eating more fast food and processed snacks. With many of the people we spoke to relying on agriculture for their livelihoods, older participants struggled with not being able to work in the fields, although some mentioned having a pension from the army.

Figure 15: Covid-19 – story of change

The diagram below demonstrates the way in which the Covid-19 pandemic led to negative outcomes described by participants. However, the crisis also prompted the church to positively reach out to the most vulnerable.

The thickness of the arrow corresponds to the number of respondents who mentioned this connection. The

orange lines indicate the initial change described by participants and the blue lines demonstrate the subsequent change described by participants. The changes described were all negative except for the green lines which indicate how the pandemic prompted the church to support those most affected.





## Worsening economic situation

Increased expenses were cited by over a third of participants. This included education costs, with some people sending their children to private schools because of their commitment to good-quality education. Food had increased in cost, and when some people could not get enough produce from their farms they cited their dependence on the market for food as a negative driver of change. The resulting reduction in material assets led some to take loans – leading to indebtedness – and others to sell assets such as land.

Lack of land was a negative driver of change for 30 per cent of participants, as many relied on some sort of agriculture and those without land relied on others permitting them to use theirs (giving part of the produce in payment) or they depended on the market for food, which led to high costs.

Others mentioned that lack of skills, such as literacy, or lack of knowledge on diversifying their livelihoods, led them to feel stuck. In Dhading, some had been trained in construction but this was driven by the government's response to the earthquake. When the construction projects were completed, the people trained in construction struggled to find work.

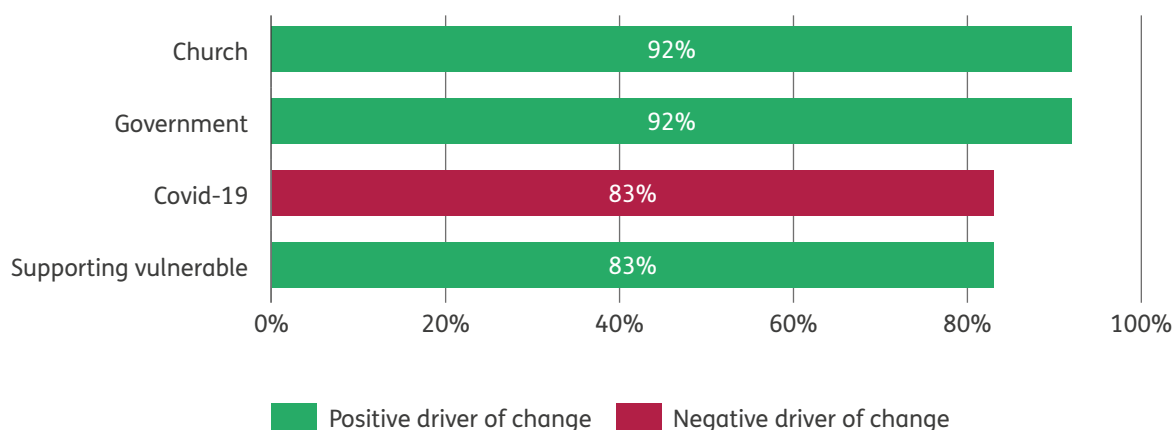


📷 Women working the cooperative's fields in ShivNagar community in Tikapur, western Nepal, where Sagoal has mobilised churches.  
Photo: Ralph Hodgson/Tearfund

# Community-specific findings

## Dhading

**Figure 16: Top drivers of change in Dhading**



Overall, there were 187 references to CCT across the respondents and focus groups in Dhading – more than double the other locations. In Dhading, 11 out of the 12 respondents attributed a host of positive outcomes to Sangasangai and the church. These positive references came from both Christians and the community sample of other faiths, providing evidence of the impact of CCT in the wider community.

Initiatives/changes linked to Sangasangai or the church include:

- new teaching on community-mindedness
- improved community relationships and working with community leaders
- creation of women's savings group
- cooperative farming
- supporting the most vulnerable
- livelihood training
- advocacy for vulnerable rights
- collective communal work: clearing roads, sanitation campaign and new water source
- Christians described as having a good reputation in the community.

**‘Overall, there were 187 references to CCT across the respondents and focus groups in Dhading – more than double the other locations.’**

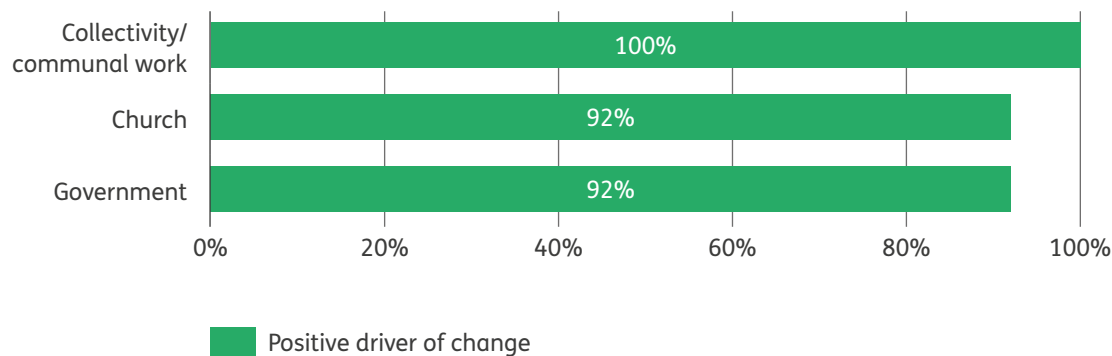
**‘We also got guidance through the Sangasangai programme. Due to this support, the women in the community have acknowledged the church as a place where needy, helpless people can get support. The church members have been recognised for their good speech and actions...’**

**Mixed female Christian focus group, Dhading**

Despite the many positive outcomes, overall Dhading had the lowest number of positive changes and many said that their situation had stayed the same. Lack of employment opportunities was particularly prevalent in Dhading. This was because after the earthquake many jobs were available to repair buildings, but now these repair jobs have been completed there is less work. Those who mentioned this problem seemed to be particularly vulnerable because they did not have training in any other skills and therefore were struggling to find ways to provide for their families. The church, DCS and UMN (United Mission to Nepal) were cited as providing training in tailoring; however, no other NGOs or other actors were providing training in livelihood skills. The church and some NGOs were, however, cited as supporting people with school fees and food. This differs from the other communities, because in Kavre, Makwanpur and Kailali the local government and CTEVT (Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training), as well as other NGOs, were providing training.

# Kailali

Figure 17: Top drivers of change in Kailali



In Kailali, ten of the 12 respondents explicitly linked Sangasangai, Sagoal or their local church to improvements in their lives. Both FGDs linked these to positive changes, including the other faith FGD. Overall, they had the most positive responses. All the people we spoke to mentioned that the community worked together well. This was particularly due to the good leadership of the local ‘Valmansa’ (traditional leader) and good relations between the church and the wider community.

Initiatives/changes linked to Sangasangai or the church include:

- new teaching on community-mindedness
- improvement in community relationships
- supporting the most vulnerable
- livelihood skills training
- reduction in alcohol drinking
- improved relationships in the family
- increased healing and prayer.

However, economic issues were still prevalent in Kailali, with 83 per cent of the people we spoke to mentioning increased expenses and 58 per cent mentioning material assets reducing during the time period. A third also mentioned difficulties with diversifying their income because of lack of livelihood opportunities, mainly due to Covid-19.

“In past five years, we have learnt about unity both in the church and with the outside community from Sangasangai. [This is] contrary to old teachings where Christians were not allowed to mingle with other faiths, quoting, “Do not be conformed to the world’s ways.” The church has responded to the people in need in the community so that church was practising about building a healthy community.’

Mixed Christian focus group, Kailali

“There is sharing among family after reading about discipleships and family relationships on raising children, how to live with harmony with family and neighbours and about working together with community. The Christians also have shown love and concern to their neighbours. The book about “Sangasangai” also had impact on the way Christian families behaved with Hindu families now, which is very different than the past.’

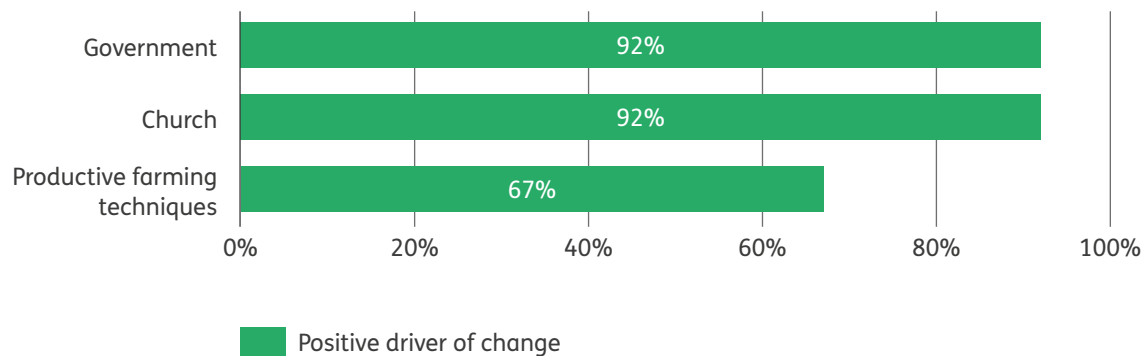
Female, age unknown, Kailali

“In Kailali, ten of the 12 respondents explicitly linked Sangasangai, Sagoal or their local church to improvements in their lives.’



# Kavre

Figure 18: Top drivers of change in Kavre



In Kavre, 11 out of 12 respondents and the Christian focus group explicitly linked Sangasangai or Micah Network to positive outcomes. Kavre also had the most positive responses about personal and community relationships, with 83 per cent of the people we spoke to reporting improvements in both.

Initiatives/changes linked to Sangasangai or the church include:

- Bible study on family relationships
- improved participation of women in decision-making
- new teaching on community-mindedness
- improvement in community relationships
- supporting the vulnerable
- teaching on financial management
- collective work leading to a new road, water access and health facilities.

‘In Kavre, 11 out of 12 respondents and the Christian focus group explicitly linked Sangasangai or Micah Network to positive outcomes.’

There was, however, no mention of Sangasangai or the church when participants were asked about food or income and only one respondent and one FGD linked expenditure and assets to Sangasangai explicitly. Kavre also had the highest number of negative changes reported. This seemed to be particularly due to economic issues such as increased expenses and lack of livelihood opportunities.

‘The relationship among Christian and other faiths has improved. Before, we used to have teaching like we should not be engaged in them. But from Sangasangai, we learnt that we can be witness through our good relationships. Before, we were not invited but now we are invited and we work together.’

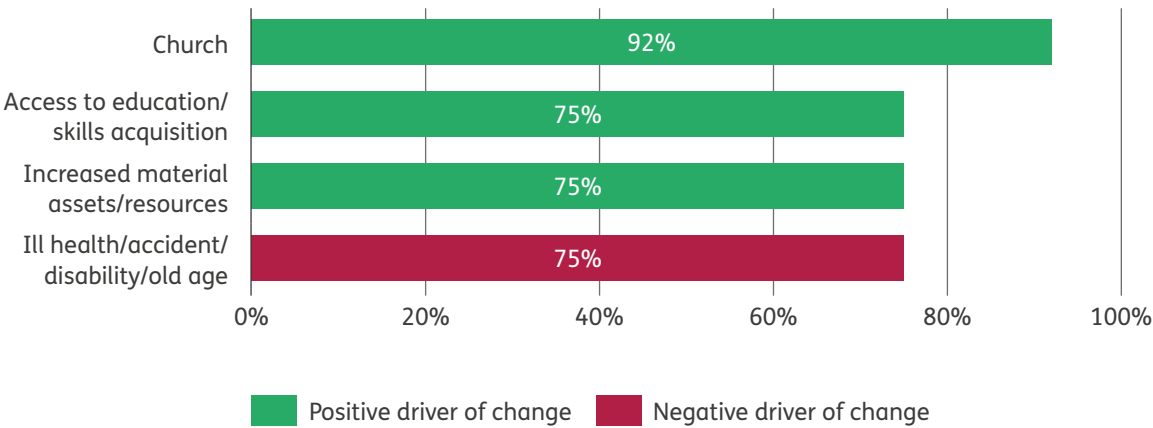
Mixed Christian focus group, Kavre

‘I learnt from Sangasangai that once we start work, we will find the helping hands. We developed public speaking, working together in community. We have been planning to dig a well, conduct health camps and coordinate with ward office for development of our community.’

Mixed Christian focus group, Kavre

# Makwanpur

Figure 19: Top drivers of change in Makwanpur



In Makwanpur, eight out of 12 respondents and both focus groups explicitly linked Sangasangai, the church or ETSC to positive changes. Makwanpur had the most respondents reporting that economic aspects of their lives had improved.

Initiatives/changes linked to Sangasangai or the church include:

- supporting the most vulnerable
- providing chickens to vulnerable families
- organising blood-donation programme
- new teaching on community-mindedness
- improvement in community relationships
- training on family relationships
- improvement in family relationships
- livelihoods training and financial management
- increased tithing in the church.

Despite this, a much lower proportion of people we spoke to in Makwanpur reported that their wellbeing had improved – 58 per cent compared to the 85 per cent overall, despite relatively better responses on economic outcomes. Makwanpur also had the fewest references to CCT and the church. There were relatively more people in Makwanpur who relied on the market for food because of lack of land to farm, which left them vulnerable to the effects of inflation. Makwanpur also had the highest reports of negative change on personal and community relationships, despite some mentioning the training from the church.

**‘During these four years, a training named Sangasangai was implemented in the church. This training taught about how to have healthy family, healthy church and healthy community... The church later learnt about giving, entrepreneurship and also to work hard for given opportunities. The church then took steps to go beyond church-building... Now the community’s families are slowly becoming positive towards the church.’**

Mixed Christian focus group, Makwanpur

**‘In Makwanpur, eight out of 12 respondents and both focus groups explicitly linked Sangasangai, the church or ETSC to positive changes.’**



## Case study

# Dhading women's Sangasangai group

This case study shows the impact that Sangasangai has had in the church and the wider community in Dhading, across all aspects of wellbeing. In this church, Sangasangai helped to encourage a group of women to form a savings and loans group. The group farms land together, and also does various other income-generating activities, from which they share the profits with the church. This has meant that the church can support vulnerable households with food, livestock to start new

livelihoods, and other initiatives. The result of these initiatives is that the wider community are appreciative of the church's efforts and see Christians as good people and the church as a positive actor in the community. Despite this, the group did also report some issues with tensions in the community. The diagram below shows how the group is influencing change holistically across all different areas of life.

**Figure 20: Holistic change reported from the female Christian focus group in Dhading**

The quotes demonstrate how the focus group in Dhading reported change in all different areas of wellbeing. Each quote is mapped against the nine aspects of wellbeing in the Light Wheel (see page 9).

In the church, we go and pray for families and encourage people and support through financial support or prayer.



Neighbours were curious and I explained that church youth wanted to help the community. The photos of that event are placed in ward office. This gave good example in the community towards church and also improved the sanitation status of our locality. This all happened because Sangasangai taught us that we must not be confined in the church but walk alongside community.



I feel confident, because I have good counselling support and emotional support from sisters of church. I feel strong because I have God. I have learnt a lot about how to be good parent, how to lead children in godly life from sermons shared in the church.



We started fund collection in church because it was difficult for women to be trusted by cooperatives in the market. For women, it is difficult to get loan, because these financial institutions do not trust women.



We have supported stationery to 26 Dalit students. One of church member provided 26 sets of school dress.

The church's leader's wife has provided training to many women like us both from church and outside church on sewing skills for free.

This piggy bank was collected annually from the families in the church... The collected money was around 83,000 [Rupees] in two years. From this fund we have already supported 70,000 [Rupees] to medical emergencies.



We received blessings from those poor women saying, 'You have wiped our tears and may your eyes be never filled with tears.'



During the lockdown, the women of the church worked together in the barren land of the church area to grow vegetables. The potatoes grew well this year. The grown vegetables are not usually sold but shared among women who worked on the field.



The women also weave socks and sell them, and started purchasing bags from a wholesale shop and selling to women. The fund is collected in the church fund.

From the church fund, we support the people who have economic problems and are in pain.

In my community, I consulted with the community women to collect all the kitchen waste and excess food. We placed bins with church logo to collect the kitchen waste so that church can have visibility. We contacted pig farmers to collect that from collection points. Now each woman in our area has a separate bucket for kitchen waste collection.



We were women who would be afraid of talking to people. Women who were busy in kitchen chores and washing husband's clothes. Now we women are so empowered after all these experiences that we have been able to speak to people, work in unison and help the needy with every possible way. We can speak on behalf of voiceless, support others financially.





# Conclusion and recommendations

The QuIP approach provides useful learning on how best to conduct effective, unbiased research in complex contexts. It also provides a space for Tearfund to reflect on its understanding of poverty and the role Tearfund can play in supporting local churches to facilitate positive change in their communities. The QuIP findings in Nepal can also offer useful practical recommendations for the improvement of Sangasangai facilitation and implementation.

## Finding 1

### CCT encourages Christians to reach out, improving interfaith relations

CCT in Nepal is encouraging individual Christians and the church as a whole to reach out to the wider community. The Bible studies have encouraged individuals to see others as made in the image of God, and to embrace the church's and Christians' role to be salt and light in the community, rather than stay separated from it. As Christians have changed their attitudes on this, communal work has increased.

As churches actively live out integral mission, they are building bridges between Christians and other faiths. Both Christians and other faiths reported that community relationships have vastly improved. Church activities to support the vulnerable and engage in community initiatives have impressed the wider community, and this has led to greater tolerance and increased collaboration.

In Nepal there are laws against religious conversion, and Christians make up just one per cent of the population. Therefore, many Christians stay in insular groups and avoid interaction with the wider community. However, in all four sites, participants spoke of how they had been inspired to take a different view on this; Sangasangai promoted a new attitude of serving the wider community and working together. Both Christians and other faiths mentioned examples of communal projects where all groups worked together, in activities begun by the local government such as clearing roads and activities organised by the church.

An integral part of the CCT process is to mobilise church members and their wider communities to identify and prioritise issues and aspire to see change together. In this study, there was less evidence of a formalised process to mobilise the whole community to assess their situation and decide on initiatives together. Instead this was done by the church for the community. This reflects the fact that Sangasangai does not include the community

description and information-gathering stages of CCMP. However, the steps made by the church to reach out provide an important foundation for building more community-wide initiatives, leading to community-led and relevant transformation. The church could benefit from increasing its collaboration with NGOs or civil society organisations on this, and accessing relevant government resources.

## Recommendations

- Tearfund in Nepal and partners should investigate how to build on their success to encourage wider community engagement and relevant initiatives.
- CCT approaches must support churches to collaborate with other civil society organisations.
- Tearfund and partners should provide more training in social accountability skills to CCT churches and communities so that individuals and the community can advocate for their rights and leverage government policies and resources.

## Finding 2

### Emphasis on family relationships broadens CCT outcomes

The Sangasangai approach to encourage 'healthy families' was evident in how people had begun to discuss together more as families. This was also observed by non-Christians, who described Christians as having more peaceful family relations leading to better outcomes for the household. This was evident in all four locations, with specific references to 'Me and my family' – the module included in Sangasangai. The teaching from the church encouraged greater participation in decision-making, particularly for women and children, leading to changes in cultural/gender norms such as men taking on household chores and consulting their families on financial issues. In other Tearfund countries, CCT does not necessarily include such specific teaching, but it could add value to the process. In Sangasangai the emphasis is on 'healthy family' before individuals consider 'healthy church' and then 'healthy community'. There was evidence that this provided a good foundation for change.

## Recommendation

- CCT approaches should consider integrating Bible studies related to family and household relationships.



📍 Woman minding newborn piglets in ShivNagar community in Tikapur, western Nepal, where Micah Network has mobilised churches. Photo: Ralph Hodgson/Tearfund

### Finding 3

## Improvements in wellbeing rely on holistic change

In individual, household or community life, there are complex interconnected factors at play, both positive and negative, and anticipated and unanticipated. Often change cannot be explained by a simple line of cause and effect. This study proves this point, with many factors appearing as both drivers and outcomes of change.

Using Causal Map helped us to explore these connections. This study – like the other QuIP studies – shows that faith plays a key role in providing impetus for change, emotional resilience in times of difficulty and a common bond to bring people together with a sense of communal purpose. Similarly, communal relationships, often an effect of faith and church, were the most-cited positive factor of change. This research highlights the holistic nature of people's lives and the importance of relationships, emotional resilience and spirituality in improving overall wellbeing. CCT encourages these less tangible – and often neglected – aspects of people's lives.

Tearfund understands that flourishing well-being relies on improved relationships with God, with self, with others and with the environment. In Nepal, it is evident that faith, self-worth and relationships all contributed to the positive changes seen in other aspects of participants' wellbeing, such as improved social connections, personal relationships, material assets, participation and capabilities.

### Recommendations

- Tearfund should continue to work with and provide space for churches and other actors to explore the role of faith and the local church in promoting holistic change.
- Tearfund should further explore the multifaceted and holistic nature of wellbeing and learn first hand from participants what areas of their lives are important to them.
- Tearfund should continue to influence wider development actors to look at wellbeing holistically.

#### Finding 4

### Churches need to be equipped to address economic problems

The premise behind CCT is that every individual and community has capacity for change, which can be mobilised. However, structural forces, such as economic, political or security issues, can disempower individuals. The three previous QuIP studies of CCT in Uganda, Sierra Leone and Bolivia highlighted the need to address wider contextual factors such as economic instability and climate change. This study in Nepal has highlighted the key problem of the economic downturn after the Covid-19 pandemic, which has led to inflation on everyday necessities and lack of livelihood opportunities. Those most vulnerable, such as individuals with little education or skills and a lack of land, are particularly affected.

Although there is evidence that savings and loans groups and also livelihood diversification had helped some households remain resilient, this was not always linked to CCT. External input may help to address some of these issues and support the Sangasangai process. This could include training in specific livelihood skills based on a market analysis of value chains. In Dhading, the church-led savings group has been very successful and could be replicated elsewhere. This type of assistance could help to maximise CCT impact while continuing to allow the process to be organic, self-led and autonomous.

Finally, the study helped to demonstrate how urban settings can leave households in much more difficult circumstances when there is a lack of land. This could be explored further to understand how CCT can be applied in such contexts.

### Recommendations

- Tearfund and partners should explore ways to complement the CCT process with technical resources and capacity building, particularly in relation to addressing structural/economic challenges.
- Tearfund partners should consult churches and communities to understand their needs and provide relevant skills training.
- Tearfund should conduct further research to understand the role of savings groups and cooperatives and how churches could complement such approaches.
- Tearfund should explore urban settings and different forms of CCT to cater for transient communities.

### Next steps for CCT in Nepal

The Tearfund team in Nepal is in the process of developing a CCT strategy for 2022–2027, with the aim of ensuring that individuals experience positive changes in their lives through church and community initiatives.

The recommendations from this report and other evaluations will feed into the new strategy, which will focus on three key priorities:

1. Strengthening CCT through denominations, church networks and theological institutions
2. Equipping local churches to be agents of change in the communities that they live in
3. Empowering facilitators and trainers to support community transformation initiatives based on the findings and recommendations in Tearfund's *Sangasangai facilitator's quality assessment report 2022*.

We will also initiate CCT in urban contexts in this strategic period.

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**‘Sangasangai taught  
us about how to have  
a healthy family,  
healthy church and  
healthy community.’**

**Mixed Christian focus  
group, Makwanpur**

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