MAKING ALL
VOICES COUNT

A GRAND CHALLENGE
FOR DEVELOPMENT

# Faith, empowerment, church and community mobilisation advocacy: insights from Tearfund's partner in Uganda

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tearfund

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# Summary

Tearfund, a Christian faith-based international non-governmental organisation, envisions and empowers local churches in over 50 countries. For more than 15 years, Tearfund has supported local churches to mobilise communities through a process called Church and Community Mobilisation (CCM). Recently, it has been supporting one of its partners in Uganda, Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG), to build on CCM through CCM advocacy, which mobilises PAG's communities to engage with local government.

The CCM advocacy pilot project in Uganda led to improvements in service delivery. Tearfund received a practitioner research and learning grant to examine the role of local churches, CCM and CCM advocacy in fostering transparency, citizen empowerment, inclusion and government responsiveness. Tearfund also wanted to understand how best to scale up its CCM advocacy work in Uganda and beyond.

Using a conversational format, this practice paper discusses Tearfund's findings and how CCM and CCM advocacy work. It highlights:

- the roots of CCM and CCM advocacy
- the culture of learning and sharing at Tearfund and how this shaped the research design
- the role that CCM advocacy plays in changing individuals' perceptions of themselves and their communities
- the ambition to embed inclusiveness in CCM advocacy
- how, through CCM advocacy training, citizens changed the way they engaged with government officials, which in turn affected how decision-makers saw and engaged with them
- the challenge of decentralisation, with citizens and government officials at the lower tiers struggling to access and understand information about national government plans, budgets and policies
- how PAG, and the church more generally, is trusted and well-connected in Uganda. These social relationships and networks need to be utilised more – particularly at national level – to help improve service delivery, governance, and transparency and accountability across the country.

## Key themes in this paper

- Social capital and the distinctive nature of faith-based mobilisation.
- Faith and empowerment, both individual and collective.
- Community mobilisation, strategic advocacy and shifting the power dynamics between local-level government officials and citizens.
- Scaling up local-level accountability successes to the national level.

# Setting the scene for practitioner learning

Making All Voices Count is a citizen engagement and accountable governance programme. Its Research Evidence and Learning component, led by the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), focuses on building an evidence base on what works in technology for voice, transparency and accountability, how it works, and why (McGee, Edwards, Minkley, Pegus and Brock 2015). Through research and learning grants, IDS gives practitioners around £25,000 for tech for transparency and accountability (T4T&A), along with mentoring support. This provides them with the space and capabilities they need to explore the key questions that will enable them to better implement their governance projects. It is hoped that this real-time applied research will contribute to project learning and improved practice.

The practitioner research and learning grants support grantees to form their own learning and judgements, and the development of the Making All Voices Count series of practice papers is part of this process. Practice papers document the practitioner research and learning processes from the perspectives of both the grant recipients and the fund managers. They situate the research findings and the reflective processes that guided them in the contemporary debates in the field of transparency and accountability.

Making All Voices Count practice papers are co-produced and intended to prompt critical reflection on key learning questions. The Making All Voices Count–IDS team does not proscribe research questions and methods; rather, it encourages grant recipients to explore the questions that they believe are of importance to the implementation of their project. Some of the practitioner research is embedded in Making All Voices Count's innovation and scaling grants, which are curated and managed by Ushahidi and Hivos.

This practice paper focuses on the work of Tearfund, a Christian international relief and development agency. Its practitioner research, undertaken by Charlotte Flowers, part of Tearfund's Impact and Effectiveness Team, set out to identify, analyse and better understand the strengths, challenges and distinctive characteristics of local churches in catalysing citizens to engage with their local government.

This paper summarises a conversation between key members of the Tearfund team – Charlotte Flowers, Joanna Watson, Lucie Woolley and Sarah Onduko – with Ciana-Marie Pegus at IDS. It describes: how and why Tearfund has been involved in church and community mobilisation advocacy; the questions Tearfund sought to answer through the research, and how it went about getting answers; the context in which Tearfund works; what the research showed and the implications of the findings; recommendations and the way forward for Tearfund.

# What is Tearfund and what is Church and Community Mobilisation?

Tearfund is a Christian faith-based international non-governmental organisation, which gives vision to and empowers local churches in over 50 countries – to see communities developed, disasters responded to and governments held accountable. It works globally to end poverty and injustice, and to restore dignity and hope in some of the world's poorest communities.

For more than 15 years, as part of its community development work, Tearfund has supported Church and Community Mobilisation (CCM) in over 25 countries.[1] The aim of CCM is to give vision to churches to mobilise communities and individuals to be able to achieve a 'holistic transformation' in which people flourish materially, psychologically and spiritually. CCM is sometimes referred to by the Swahili term *Umoja*, which means 'togetherness'.

CCM draws on an asset-based community development (ABCD) approach. Instead of looking to outsiders for solutions to social, economic, development and infrastructure problems, ABCD encourages a community to build an inventory of the human, financial, social, physical and natural assets of individuals, households and the community as a whole (Mathie and Cunningham 2003; Kretzmann and McKnight 1993). ABCD tries to move away from understanding a community as a 'list of problems and needs' (Kretzmann and McKnight 1993: 2) and this thinking underpins CCM.

CCM, developed by Francis Njoroge in partnership with Tearfund, is directly derived from Participatory Rural Appraisal, which sought to use Freirean methods to involve marginalised people in community development (Chambers 1983). Trained CCM facilitators encourage reflection on passages of the Bible that relate to faith and development, social justice and servant leadership (Carter 2004), enabling participants to critically reflect and act to better understand their social reality – what Freire calls the "conscientisation process" (Freire 1968). CCM utilises the unique position of local churches to bring about mindset change and empowerment, and the local church creates a safe space for this empowerment and new thinking through the existing meaningful relationships in the community.[2]

# What is Church and Community Mobilisation advocacy?

Communities cannot solve all the issues that they identify on their own. In recognition of this, with Tearfund's guidance and support, Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG), one of Tearfund's partners in Uganda, piloted incorporating advocacy into the CCM process.[3] Tearfund provided PAG with advocacy training, and PAG then trained, coached and accompanied citizens to enable them

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1 For more information on CCM, see: http://tilz.tearfund.org/en/themes/church/church_and_community_mobilisation.
2 For more on social capital and faith communities, see Furbey, Dinham, Farnell, Finneron, Wilkinson, Howarth, Hussain and Palmer (2006).
3 Uganda was selected as the site of the pilot CCM advocacy programme because Tearfund felt that there was scope to do so and Tearfund's partner, Pentecostal Assembly of God, was keen to trial it.

to articulate their needs and rights, to access resources and services from local government, and to hold government officials to account (Flowers 2016). PAG trained CCM facilitators on citizen rights, government responsibilities and the local government planning and budget cycle.

These facilitators then trained members of various communities, who were encouraged to form advocacy committees, adopt strategic approaches to local level advocacy, and regularly review the success of their strategies.

## Research focus and methods

Tearfund believed that the CCM advocacy pilot demonstrated promise, with particularly high levels of improvement in service delivery. A key research objective, therefore, was to learn from and strengthen the CCM advocacy programme in Uganda. Tearfund wanted to understand the particular role of local churches, CCM and CCM advocacy in fostering transparency, citizen empowerment, inclusion and government responsiveness, and in shifting power dynamics.

Tearfund studied 18 PAG communities in the Teso region of Uganda. Communities fell into one of five categories: (1) no CCM training, (2) CCM training, (3) CCM training with incomplete advocacy training, (4) CCM advocacy training without implementation and (5) full CCM advocacy training and implementation.

Tearfund then followed a multi-stage research, learning, review and dissemination process:

- Phase one of the field research: four focus group discussions in four locales; 17 key informant interviews; 140 structured interviews in 18 communities

- Writing of the first draft of the report

- An in-country workshop with 20 participants (from the PAG Soroti and Serere pastorates, PAG national staff, Tearfund staff and staff from Tearfund partners in Kenya, Zambia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe) to discuss the draft report findings, learn from the phase one research and shape the phase two research

- Phase two of the field research: 12 focus group discussions in 12 communities; 33 in-depth structured interviews with community members, church leaders, programme staff and decision-makers

- Writing of the second draft of the report

- Webinar for Tearfund and PAG staff, and other Tearfund partner staff, to discuss the second-draft report findings, learn from the phase two research, and inform the final report

- Final report

- Research dissemination among Tearfund staff, Tearfund partners, non-governmental organisations, academics, politicians and other interested parties.

# Tearfund's culture of learning and sharing

**Ciana-Marie:**

Cross-institutional learning and sharing can be quite a challenge, but from the beginning of this research, I was really impressed with Tearfund's internal learning mechanisms, especially considering that Tearfund works at different levels, in different countries and on different programmes. Can you tell me more about your internal systems? What works and what do you think can be improved, and why? Also, how did this organisation-wide learning approach shape your research design?

**Joanna:**

Tearfund works in over 50 of the world's poorest countries, in partnership with local Christian NGOs and local churches. Our partners operate independently in each country and work with Tearfund through our country offices. Tearfund only has on-the-ground operations in five countries, all of them fragile conflict- or disaster-affected states. Our structure requires us to work closely with partners, and therefore it's important to be able to listen, learn and adapt quickly. Part of growing as an organisation for us is understanding where our partners are working well, or not so well sometimes, so we know when and where to build on successes, and when and where to adjust the ways in which we are supporting them and the humanitarian and development work they are doing.

Our previous Chief Executive, who left last year, was really passionate about learning, and it has been inculcated into our culture. We have weekly and monthly in-house interactive learning sessions, communities of practice for Tearfund staff and partners, an annual face-to-face fortnight to share learning, reflection and planning for international staff, and online learning spaces like the 'Just Policy' blog, and Tearfund's International Learning Zone. We also publish Footsteps magazine, which targets grass-roots development workers. As part of our quality standards commitments, we constantly strive to share learning within and beyond our networks, focusing particularly on sharing feedback with the communities that we and our partners serve.[4]

With this research, we thought it was important to design an iterative, reflective, action-oriented research process, so we deliberately included a workshop and a webinar. This enabled us to encourage Tearfund staff in other countries and regions, supporting partners that are doing CCM, to help shape the research parameters, and reflect on how the findings relate to their context. We also used Tearfund's multiple online and offline learning spaces to discuss the research and to share its findings internally.

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*The CCM process allows people to reimagine themselves, their lives, their communities.*

# CCM and CCM advocacy as pathways to empowerment

### Ciana-Marie:

In your research, you highlight that, prior to CCM and CCM advocacy training, citizens were afraid to speak up. In your report, a member of the advocacy group in Arapai proclaims that "Before CCM advocacy, I would never attend a meeting. I am old and uneducated. But now I take part, I speak out, I have even gone with the group to the sub-county to request boreholes and for the road to be cleared. Now I am confident and have a voice!" (Flowers 2016: 34). CCM and CCM advocacy focus on shifting individuals' perceptions of themselves and of their contexts, and making them aware of their capacity to make changes to their attitudes and their lives, which Rowlands (1997) refers to as 'the power within'. CCM advocacy is also a powerful unifier: building community solidarity, enabling individuals to take action together, and generating strength in numbers. Can you say more about how the CCM and CCM advocacy empowerment strategies work from: (1) an individual perspective, and (2) a collective perspective?

### Charlotte:

Amartya Sen (1999) talks about the freedom to aspire and the freedom to look to the future. He has been roundly critiqued because people who have been living in poverty often internalise ideas about their inferiority, and their experience has made it hard for them to be hopeful about the future. The CCM process allows people to reimagine themselves, their lives, their communities. It might sound cheesy, but the *Umoja* manuals ask participants to dream dreams. In CCM, through Bible study and deep, introspective reflection, there is a lightbulb moment when people see themselves differently.

When I met Akello, the lady you mentioned, she was so passionate, I was really moved – by how she saw that she herself and her community had changed through her involvement with CCM advocacy. She had a new sense of agency, a new sense of hope.

When I facilitated focus group discussions with CCM and CCM advocacy participants, they were quick to point out – unprompted by me – that their first and greatest strength was unity. I heard this time and time again. With CCM advocacy, people pull together, not for their own interests, but for those of the community more broadly. And that's what really brings people together.

### Sarah:

CCM Bible studies enable individuals and communities to restore their broken relationships: between themselves and God, themselves and other members of their communities, and themselves and their environment. This creates renewed relationships based on shared values, a sense of belonging and increased self-worth. This is then reflected through their Bible study groups, where their shared love for God, self, one another and their community is affirmed. CCM provides the conviction to act for the benefit of the community, with the local church as the catalyst to make it happen.

### Joanna:

The consultant that we hired, who conducted phase one of the research, was a governance researcher who had studied development interventions in Uganda for many years. She was blown away by the confidence, passion and achievements of groups that had implemented CCM and CCM advocacy.

CCM is powerful because it enables people to cast a vision collectively, to imagine solutions rather than problems. In some communities, there's a history of people seeing themselves as victims and as recipients of aid. CCM tells you that you have the resources within you and within your community; that you are able to meet your development needs.

# Inclusion, CCM and CCM advocacy

## Ciana-Marie:

Faith communities are often considered to be rich sources and creators of social capital (Furbey *et al* 2006), which could be defined as "the information, trust, and norms of reciprocity inhering in one's social networks" (Woolcock 1998: 153).[5] Communities that form around the church are built on common values and understandings (Woolcock 2001) and there are "strong ties" between participants in CCM and CCM advocacy.[6] And this gives rise to what Gilchrist (2004) terms "bonding social capital", which she affirms is "based on enduring, multi-faceted relationships between similar people with strong mutual commitments such as… close-knit groups" (Ibid.: 6). But sometimes these close-knit groups can be inward-looking, appear unwelcoming to outsiders, and reinforce their own norms to the exclusion of other viewpoints and values (Ibid.; Farnell, Furbey, Hills, Macey and Smith 2003). Tearfund has been supporting CCM for several years. When does CCM best promote inclusion? What helps in building bridges with adherents of different faiths and non-believers?

## Charlotte:

The process encourages values of inclusion and unity, which were evident during my fieldwork. I met with people from different backgrounds and religions – including Pentecostals, Anglicans, Catholics and Muslims – who had engaged in CCM advocacy. I think this works well in Uganda because there isn't much tension between different faiths. In other parts of Africa, where there is inter-religious conflict, CCM would need to be adapted to work.

Everyone I met with in areas where there was CCM or CCM advocacy had participated in the process in some way. They were adamant that CCM and CCM advocacy are open and inclusive, but participation in CCM and CCM advocacy is self-selecting, and that made it quite difficult for me to understand the extent to which CCM and CCM advocacy involved the most marginalised members of society, namely people who were elderly, young or disabled, for example. If people are not used to having their voices heard, then they may see themselves as inferior or believe that there is no hope for change and therefore might be hesitant to participate in CCM and CCM advocacy. While I don't think there was intentional exclusion, efforts to be inclusive need to be more conscious and thought-through.

## Joanna:

CCM and CCM advocacy are driven by a pro-poor social justice agenda, and are underpinned by the Christian belief that everyone is equal in dignity and rights (Carter 2004). PAG believes that anybody who wants to participate in CCM and CCM advocacy should be encouraged to do so. While this works in terms of engaging people from different faiths, there is a desire to be much more inclusive of the most marginalised. It's not sufficiently embedded in the process as yet, and there's a need for greater foresight and planning to enable this to happen.

## Lucie:

That said, the church is also seen as a trusted broker and a bridge between the government and communities. We called the final research report *Bridging the Gap* because the church creates a safe space in which the two groups can engage in constructive dialogue, where mutual suspicion is replaced by collaboration and trust.

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5 Social capital is a contested term. For more information about different perspectives on social capital, see: Social Analysis and Reporting Division, Office for National Statistics (2001).
6 See: Granovetter (1973).

*As people had advocacy training and built up relationships with decision-makers, they had more understanding of the limitations of government; they were able to get more specific details on what stage their proposal was at and why it was rejected or delayed, and to understand how the system worked.*

# Shifting perceptions, power dynamics and the challenge of working with local government

## Ciana-Marie:

The CCM process focuses on getting communities to understand the potential resources that they have to solve the problems that they identify in their community. In Oleicho, through CCM, the community built boreholes, roads and churches, improved accommodation for teachers, and opened a nursery school. CCM advocacy is a different proposition: after collectively mobilising to identify needs and resources, communities present petitions for rights-based entitlements to government officials. The success of CCM advocacy is very much contingent on different government actors' willingness and ability to accede to citizen demands. How does this affect the members of CCM advocacy committees?

## Charlotte:

CCM and CCM advocacy are different, but they are also very much linked. The civic strength or social capital that is built into CCM makes the community engage with government in a new way. I don't believe that advocacy training without the CCM process first would build the same sense of unity and empowerment, and it wouldn't generate the same results. CCM and CCM advocacy are supposed to be cycles. As part of the cycle, you identify your collective community issues and resources. Some of these issues will be solved by the communities themselves, and some will require government action. Part of the process is for the

group to identify which issues they can address together and which they need to partner with the local government to address. When a community's collective resources are limited, that community will also need to access government resources, so CCM advocacy is a natural extension of CCM.

In communities where there was no CCM and no CCM advocacy, the people I spoke to were very antagonistic towards government officials, especially those operating at the sub-county and sub-district level. I saw a lot of hostility, a lot of suspicion, a lot of mistrust. In the Katakwi focus group discussions, people were saying "the government doesn't protect us from cattle raids", or "the government doesn't care about us". And there was a real lack of understanding of how local government operates.

In the sites where there had been CCM advocacy training, in the focus group discussions and the key informant interviews I convened and organised, it was clear that people were concerned about the slow pace of progress, but they were more charitable towards government officials at sub-county levels. It seemed that, as people had advocacy training and built up relationships with decision-makers, they had more understanding of the limitations of government; they were able to get more specific details on what stage their proposal was at and why it was rejected or delayed, and to understand how the system worked. This meant that they were more tolerant of lengthy waiting times.

Sometimes people do get disillusioned and start to become disengaged in the process. But when people see "little wins", they stay involved in CCM advocacy. In the district of Serere, particularly where the CCM advocacy training had been done in full (in Okulonyo, Akoboi and Owii), people were happy that government officials were now coming to them and soliciting their opinions, as this had not been the case before.

### Ciana-Marie:

The 2014 census in Uganda reported that 84% of the population was Christian (Uganda Bureau of Statistics 2016). And in the 2015 Afrobarometer survey, 72.2% of Ugandans said that they trusted religious leaders a lot (Afrobarometer 2017). Participants in your research perceived the church to be a respected institution that modelled accountability (Flowers 2016), while government officials also see the church and its leaders as important mechanisms for disseminating information to citizens. For example, churches inform citizens about immunisation drives, HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns, and encourage them to observe law and order. The CCM advocacy model is trying to shift the position of the church from a disseminator of information to a vehicle that enables citizens to identify and articulate their demands for service delivery. How has this change of role worked? Has it shifted the perception of the church and its congregants in the eyes of the public? Has it had implications for how government actors see the church and its congregants?

### Charlotte:

In Uganda, the church is seen as a key intermediary between the government and its citizens. The church is considered to be a neutral actor, and people don't feel that it has a political agenda. But the church has a lot of clout, it has the ear of the people. Government officials at different levels respect and fear the church, especially at election time.

The church also has links abroad and is able to get resources from institutions that do not normally give development funding to governments, like Tearfund for example. In Uganda, all big churches have development arms, which provide services to the needy. This has helped to strengthen the power,

legitimacy and authority of the church in the eyes of the government.

However, with CCM and CCM advocacy, there has been a shift in how the church sees itself. It has gone from seeing itself as an institution which provides aid to the needy and pastoral care to its members, to an institution which has an explicit focus on empowering people, both church members and community members, and social justice.

### Lucie:

I know that in Owii, where we made a film on CCM advocacy,[7] the relationship between citizens and the government improved drastically. The chairman of the Serere District County complained about what he thought was an over-reliance on government support prior to CCM. And when CCM advocacy began, sub-county representatives were hostile. The chairman of the sub-county council even brought police protection to a CCM advocacy meeting. It was only through engaging with the CCM advocacy committee that he realised there was nothing to fear.

### Joanna:

One local government official said to me that, before CCM advocacy, he didn't know where to begin. There weren't structures in place for citizens to routinely provide input and feedback to government officials, so he used to field ad hoc requests from citizens. He told me that now, when he speaks to the members of a CCM advocacy committee, he knows that they are legitimate representatives of the community, and they have focused demands.

Through engaging with local officials in a collaborative way, advocacy committees also realise how finite and limited government resources are. In Owii, the advocacy committee identified the need for a school and provided free labour, land and bricks to construct the building. It wanted the government to provide the teachers, their salaries, desks and the roof. The members' initiative really impressed government officials. There's normally an expectation on the part of government – that the community contributes some resources to development projects, for example land for a

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7 Watch the CCM advocacy film at: https://vimeo.com/203441997

borehole – but sometimes communities can be quite reluctant.

### Charlotte:

When I went to communities whose advocacy training was incomplete, they showed me a long list of demands. Whereas those that completed CCM advocacy training, like Kagwara, Owii, Akoboi and Okulonyo, had more strategic petitions and better articulated demands, and were future-focused. The advocacy committees provided evidence, prioritised key issues, did a stakeholder analysis, and approached key stakeholders and allies strategically. In comparing the length of time between demands for services and their delivery, the communities that had undergone full CCM advocacy waited for shorter periods, some less than a year compared to eight years in communities with no training. And through dealing with the CCM advocacy committee, government officials saw local people in a different light: as people with resources, knowledge, determination and focus. This helps to shift the power dynamics, I think.

### Sarah:

Local government officials have come to see advocacy committees as close allies. For instance, the local leaders gave examples where, before CCM and CCM advocacy, the government struggled to have community members participate in meetings to discuss community issues, such as health. They now attest that the community engages and asks questions, which helps them to agree on modalities of working.

### Ciana-Marie:

Something that came out strongly in your research was that participants in CCM and CCM advocacy felt that they lacked information on the Ugandan constitution, national government policies, planning processes and budgets, especially at the village level and the parish level. Only one in five respondents – participants in CCM or CCM advocacy in some capacity – said that they were informed of the government's plans. For most respondents, a key way to receive information on official government policies and plans was to meet with government representatives. You also indicate that the government officials at the lower tiers (village, parish) don't always get information from district, county and sub-county representatives. What do you think are the causes of this lack of routine information-sharing?

### Charlotte:

There's decentralisation on paper, but not always in practice. While there are robust laws that have instituted decentralisation, implementation has lagged. There are supposed to be yearly village budget meetings, where citizens outline their needs and priorities. Village proposals are then consolidated at the parish level, and then they go on to the sub-county council, and then to the district. Resourcing decisions are guided by the assessment of the priorities by technical officers, the resources made available at the higher levels of local government by central government, and the priority areas identified by central government (Kasozi-Mulindwa 2013). Many of the people I interviewed did not know about, or had not attended, any local budget meetings. Also, many of the institutions that are meant to deliver services at the local level are grossly under-resourced (Steiner 2006) and decision-making power and resources are still very much concentrated at the national level.

It's not easy to get information about plans, policies and budgets at different tiers of government. This can't just be attributed to people covering up corruption. Often, the village and parish councils don't have information on the plans and policies of the sub-county and district councils. At the district level, budgetary information is often displayed on noticeboards, and village and sub-county officials need to physically go to the district council's offices to obtain information about regional plans. People also need to be literate to read this information and understand it.

There's a real lack of accountability, and people aren't aware of their rights and entitlements. Through CCM advocacy, people are finding out about the local government systems that are supposed to be in place, and also about their rights. Part of CCM advocacy is helping people figure out what they don't know. Now they are asking to see plans and budgets; to claim what they are entitled to.

### Sarah:

From my experience of supporting CCM advocacy, many officials at the lower tiers of government do not understand some of the more complicated policies themselves, so they can't effectively inform the public. Also, government policies are seen as something that only the elite or learned can engage with; the language used in most of the policy documents is complex and difficult for

*Government policies are seen as something that only the elite or learned can engage with; the language used in most of the policy documents is complex and difficult ... Simplification of these policies, and relating them to the needs of the communities, is vital.*

communities to engage with. Simplification of these policies, and relating them to the needs of the communities, is vital, but government officials say they don't have the resources to simplify, publish and disseminate these policies. As we scale up CCM and CCM advocacy in Uganda, Tearfund and PAG will be mapping 'infomediaries': organisations with technical expertise that are able to simplify government policies and plans so that they can be used by citizens and CCM advocacy groups that want to hold government to account. Through its networks, PAG is well positioned to share these simplified policies with CCM advocacy groups and more broadly.[8]

### Ciana-Marie:

Tearfund works with PAG in Uganda, and its leaders are politically well connected and trusted at the district level and the national level. At the local level, church leaders are considered to be respected authority figures. Most CCM advocacy appears to take place at village, parish and sub-county council levels. But pastors, through their role as respected community leaders, may be able to build links with non-religious leaders at the county level and the district level, and exert influence beyond their congregation and their peers.[9] Can you comment on the role of these pastors who serve as bridges between communities, and who link across different levels of decision-making? And is there coordination between local church leaders and the leadership of the PAG, which has access to, and some degree of influence over, national-level decision-makers?

### Charlotte:

Even prior to CCM advocacy, pastors and religious leaders are invited to participate in public meetings convened at the sub-county and sub-district levels. Bishops often attend district-level meetings. CCM advocacy is about building on existing relationships and capitalising on spaces where religious leaders already are and using them to enable citizens to raise their concerns. The pastors I interviewed had been on a 'journey' to understand their role as community leaders and community representatives. CCM advocacy pushes them to use their position well, and speak and act on behalf of the community.

### Sarah:

Although pastors and bishops have had opportunities to engage with the government for the longest time, these opportunities were not well utilised. They did not know what to ask for and how to package their information. Before CCM advocacy, they did not appreciate their roles as people's advocates. This has increasingly changed in pastorates where CCM advocacy has been implemented.

### Joanna:

At present, there aren't formal structures that link local-level advocacy to national or international campaigns, but this is certainly part of our plans to scale up and replicate CCM advocacy.

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8 For information on different types of infomediation and open data intermediaries, see: Van Schalkwyk, Caňares, Chattapadhyay and Andrason (2014).
9 For more information on linking social capital, see: Gilchrist (2004) and Woolcock (2001).

# Growing and sustaining CCM and CCM advocacy

### Ciana-Marie:

CCM and CCM advocacy are supposed to be ongoing processes, not time-bound trainings. There are some communities in which CCM and CCM advocacy have stalled. Why do you think CCM and CCM advocacy really took root in some communities, and continued long after they received training, whereas these initiatives have stalled in other communities? What do you think is needed to really sustain and embed CCM and CCM advocacy?

### Charlotte:

When CCM starts, people are inspired to take action but sometimes, after a little while, their enthusiasm plateaus. At the start, things can change quite quickly as people are excited about new ideas and initiatives, but as this newness wears off, change might be slower. The CCM process builds in time for rest and reflection, acknowledging that regular pauses are needed for momentum, and that there are times when certain community members might not have time to be engaged in CCM and CCM advocacy.[10] These rest periods are not always observed, but they are important.

There's also a problem of the transfer of inter-generational knowledge. The facilitator is supposed to train new people, and those who have already been trained are meant to pass on their knowledge to others. This was picked up by the Ugandan consultant, who conducted the first phase of field research and, as an organisation, Tearfund needs to reflect more on what type of follow-up interventions are needed to sustain CCM.

As for longevity and sustainability, when I visited communities where CCM advocacy had stalled, people were still part of the church, still contributing to communal life, and still spoke about CCM and CCM advocacy with enthusiasm. Unlike NGOs, which may come and go, the church is a deeply embedded, enduring institution, and it's conceivable that CCM and CCM advocacy can easily be revived.

### Joanna:

Our informal learning reviews of CCM note that it's essential to have the right facilitator. Usually, we look for a sociable person with a good reputation who is a good listener and learner, and who shares Tearfund's values and beliefs.[11] We convene a Tearfund community of practice for CCM facilitators and others who are interested in CCM. It's an opportunity for peer support where facilitators can learn from each other, share their successes and challenges, and figure out how to improve.

### Charlotte:

The kinds of individuals we look for are people who can create space for others to speak. When you think of a traditional church leader, you think of someone standing in front of people, telling them what to do and believe. We want people who are humble, willing to be challenged and who allow people to learn.

### Sarah:

In order to ensure sustainability, CCM and CCM advocacy is to be embedded in the PAG structures as a mechanism to reach out to communities. Primarily, this means that the ownership of CCM and CCM advocacy should not be just at the pastorate level, but at the national PAG level too. As such, PAG will keep training their own CCM and CCM advocacy facilitators within their own structures, to be able to continue with the cycle of training and the inter-generational transfer of knowledge long after Tearfund exits.

10  See: Njoroge, Raistrick, Crooks, and Mouradian (2012a, 2012b).
11  A film on the selection of a good facilitator for the CCM process is available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=r_1QVkHsLrw.

# Unexpected challenges and limitations of the research

**Ciana-Marie:**

What were some of the limitations of the research?

**Charlotte:**

As I mentioned earlier, it would have been good to speak to people who chose not to participate in CCM and CCM advocacy groups to fully understand aspects of inclusion.

Also, in the research we look at whether citizens' demands were fulfilled, for example whether boreholes, schools and health-care centres were built. But we didn't investigate the quality of these outputs or whether they were being used, or whether citizens were satisfied. This wasn't in the scope of this research, but this is an area we hope to look at in the future.

Initially, we wanted to adopt a mixed-methods approach, but in the end the research was primarily qualitative. I don't think this was a limitation per se, as it provided us with granular detail on the lived experiences of the members of CCM and CCM advocacy groups.

**Joanna:**

After we had written the proposal, had been awarded funding and agreed a timeline, early elections were called in Uganda. Electoral campaigning happened during the first phase of fieldwork and it was near impossible to speak to government officials. During the second phase of fieldwork, it was the presidential swearing-in ceremony, and that had an unexpectedly disruptive impact on the research too; it was equally difficult to get hold of government officials. If the research had happened at a better time, or if the time frame had been more flexible, it would have been good to interview national leaders, as well as more local government officials, in order to get their perspectives on devolved governance and local-level advocacy and policy processes.

# The way forward: what does the future of CCM advocacy look like?

## Key recommendations from the research

- Advocacy training should be provided alongside CCM, and proactive steps should be taken to include the most marginalised people.

- Partners should encourage churches and communities to review and restart CCM and CCM advocacy periodically.

- Facilitators should involve village leaders, parish council staff and local government officers in CCM advocacy training.

- Partners and facilitators should provide translated and simplified policy documents.

- There should be more emphasis on monitoring government performance and budgets in advocacy training.

- Local churches should provide a model of transparency to the community, and actively build relationships with the different tiers of government.

- Partners should organise learning visits between advocacy committees and facilitate coordination among local communities working on similar advocacy issues.

- Partners should use networks to promote local advocacy and connect to national and international campaigns.

**Ciana-Marie:**

What's next for Tearfund in Uganda? How does Tearfund plan to build on the success of CCM and CCM advocacy? What are your key considerations for scaling up the CCM advocacy work?

**Joanna:**

The Pentecostal church is the third biggest denomination in Uganda, and by 2020, they want all their parishes to be doing CCM advocacy. Tearfund's vision is for a more synched-up, coordinated approach to CCM advocacy. In CCM advocacy processes, common demands are emerging at the parish, village and sub-county levels, for example boreholes, roads, better education and health facilities. Our partners could be encouraged to start 'pattern spotting' at the local level, and leverage their networks and contacts across different tiers of government to advocate on these issues with the national government. For example, we also partner with the Anglican Church in Uganda and other Christian denominations, and collectively they have a lot of sway with different national government ministries. We should be making the most of these relationships and connections to help improve service delivery, governance and transparency and accountability at the national level, as well as at the local level.

In relation to this research, Charlotte held a feedback workshop with some of the key participants in Soroti, and this was used as an opportunity for different CCM and CCM advocacy groups to come together, share their experiences and strategise for the future. In Kampala, we held an event targeting our national partners and their networks, which focused on co-constructing a

multi-year vision for CCM advocacy. We also had a parliamentary launch in the UK in late January 2017, where we attracted broader interest in and further support for this work.[12]

### Charlotte:

In the future, we want CCM advocacy committees to monitor the implementation of government services through social accountability mechanisms. This will require training and deepening partnerships with organisations that have experience in doing this kind of work. Another priority is learning and sharing among CCM advocacy groups, and while this has been happening informally through this research and through learning exchanges, this is something that we want to champion.

### Lucie:

We'll continue to share the film, guide and report through our networks, and through communities of practice. We want to inspire our partners in other countries to give it a go and we want to encourage other faith-based organisations to adopt CCM and CCM advocacy.

### Sarah:

Though the project has initially been done in only few pastorates, PAG in Uganda has been receptive and really taken ownership of CCM and CCM advocacy. With Tearfund's support, it has started scaling up the CCM advocacy project to more than ten districts in Uganda. This scaling process has started, and will continue, to harness research findings and recommendations.

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12 See: www.makingallvoicescount.org/blog/bridging-gap-churches-communities-engaging-accountable-governance.

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## About Making All Voices Count

Making All Voices Count is a programme working towards a world in which open, effective and participatory governance is the norm and not the exception. It focuses global attention on creative and cutting-edge solutions to transform the relationship between citizens and their governments. The programme is inspired by and supports the goals of the Open Government Partnership.

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## Research, Evidence and Learning component

The programme's Research, Evidence and Learning component, managed by IDS, contributes to improving performance and practice, and builds an evidence base in the field of citizen voice, government responsiveness, transparency and accountability (T&A) and technology for T&A (T4T&A).

## About Making All Voices Count Practice Papers

The Research, Evidence and Learning component has made a series of practitioner research and learning grants to support a range of actors working on citizen voice, T&A and governance to carry out self-critical enquiry into their own experiences and contexts. The main output of each grant is what the practitioner learns and applies to their own practice. Practitioners can also decide to produce their own written outputs. The purpose of the practice paper, written on completion of each grant, is to capture the essence of that learning process through a reflective dialogue between programme staff and funded partners, to share with a wider audience of peer practitioners and policy-makers.

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