CHAPTER 6

Faith-based rural poverty reduction in Uganda

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The Qualitative Impact Protocol (QuIP) was commissioned by the faith-based charity Tearfund to gain deeper insight into its Church and Community Mobilisation (CCM) programme in Uganda. CCM is based on a theory of development which is centred on self-empowerment and community-based social improvement, fostered through theological resources and religious spaces. The QuIP was conducted in four villages in the east and north of the country, where Tearfund had partnered with Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG) and Church of Uganda (CoU), respectively. The case study illustrates the scope for combining faith-based and evidence-informed approaches to rural poverty reduction. A priority of Tearfund's was to share what it learned through the QuIP not only within the organization, but with its partners and community participants. To do so, it organized feedback and 'unblindfolding workshops'. This chapter presents one of seven case studies exploring how the QuIP was used in specific contexts during 2016 and 2017.

Keywords: impact evaluation, causal attribution, Tearfund, Uganda, faith-based development, community development

Introduction

SOME TIME AGO, THE LEAD AUTHOR of this chapter took a taxi ride across Kampala, intending to have dinner with a friend. It didn't go well. The traffic was gridlocked, and in nearly three hours he advanced less than three miles; eventually the dinner was abandoned, and he returned to the hotel where he had started. During the journey the driver maintained a quite extraordinary serenity; but more remarkable still, he held on to an unshakeable faith that the traffic was about to clear: '... just round the next corner'; 'after this roundabout'; 'once we get through those traffic lights'; 'past this junction ...'

Where does such faith come from? How about belief in the emancipatory power of faith? Does it have to be blind? And how well informed is doubt in the power of faith? These are interesting questions to address in a book about impact attribution and the scope for a more evidence-informed approach to development. Scepticism runs deep in social science, particularly towards positive evidence generated by those who have a vested interest in demonstrating success, whether to justify their salary, or to sustain the 'warm glow'

they derive from what they do.[1] If social scientists ever felt the need for a patron saint then Thomas the Apostle – latterly dubbed 'Doubting Thomas' – would be a good candidate: 'Thomas […] was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe"'.[2]

While strongly influenced by the principle of separating religion and state, the field of international development is nonetheless replete with 'faith-based organizations' (FBOs), and the issue of how faith affects their performance has attracted considerable scholarly attention. Clarke (2006), for example, concludes his review by suggesting that

> FBOs … have a number of characteristics that distinguish them from their secular peers. They draw on elaborate spiritual and moral values that represent an important and distinct adjunct to secular development discourse. As a result, they have a significant ability to mobilise adherents otherwise estranged by secular development discourse. They are highly networked both nationally and internationally and are highly embedded in political contexts and in processes of governance in both horizontal and vertical terms. They are less dependent on donor funding and they have well-developed capacity and expertise in the key areas of development practice (Clarke, 2006: 845).[3]

Tearfund is a UK-registered Christian charity, established in 1968 and currently working in over 50 countries to eradicate poverty.[4] In 2016 it had a total budget of over £70 m, allocated between disaster response (35 per cent), community development (29 per cent), church mobilization (9 per cent), and advocacy (7 per cent).[5] A large component of the community development budget is allocated to the Church and Community Mobilisation (CCM) programme, a partnership-based development process that Tearfund has promoted and supported through local churches and rural congregations for over 15 years, and in 41 countries. Its aim is 'to envision local churches to mobilise communities and individuals to achieve "holistic transformation" in which people flourish materially, physically, economically, psychologically and spiritually' (Tearfund, 2018: 2). Unencumbered by targets and timeframes, CCM is mostly funded through private donations, and can also be viewed as a leading example of an explicitly faith-based approach to development practice.[6] Its emphasis on 'social transformation' rather than on 'managerial' institutional logic also makes it an interesting case study of impact evaluation methodology (Elbers et al., 2014).

This chapter reports on an evaluation of CCM in Uganda using the QuIP. The next section elaborates on the project. This is followed by an overview of how the QuIP study was designed, implemented, and utilized by Tearfund. The chapter continues with a review of the empirical findings from the study and concludes with further reflections on the relationship between evaluation methodology, evidence, faith, truth, learning, accountability, and legitimacy. The chapter was drafted by James Copestake and Marlies Morsink, incorporating material from the QuIP study report (BSDR, 2017)

produced by lead evaluator Michelle James (2016). It also draws on a key informant interview with Charlotte Flowers in November 2017 (cited as CF), who played a leading role for Tearfund in commissioning, overseeing, and disseminating findings from the QuIP study. James and Flowers also reviewed and commented on the initial draft. The lead QuIP field researcher for the study was Moses Mukuru.

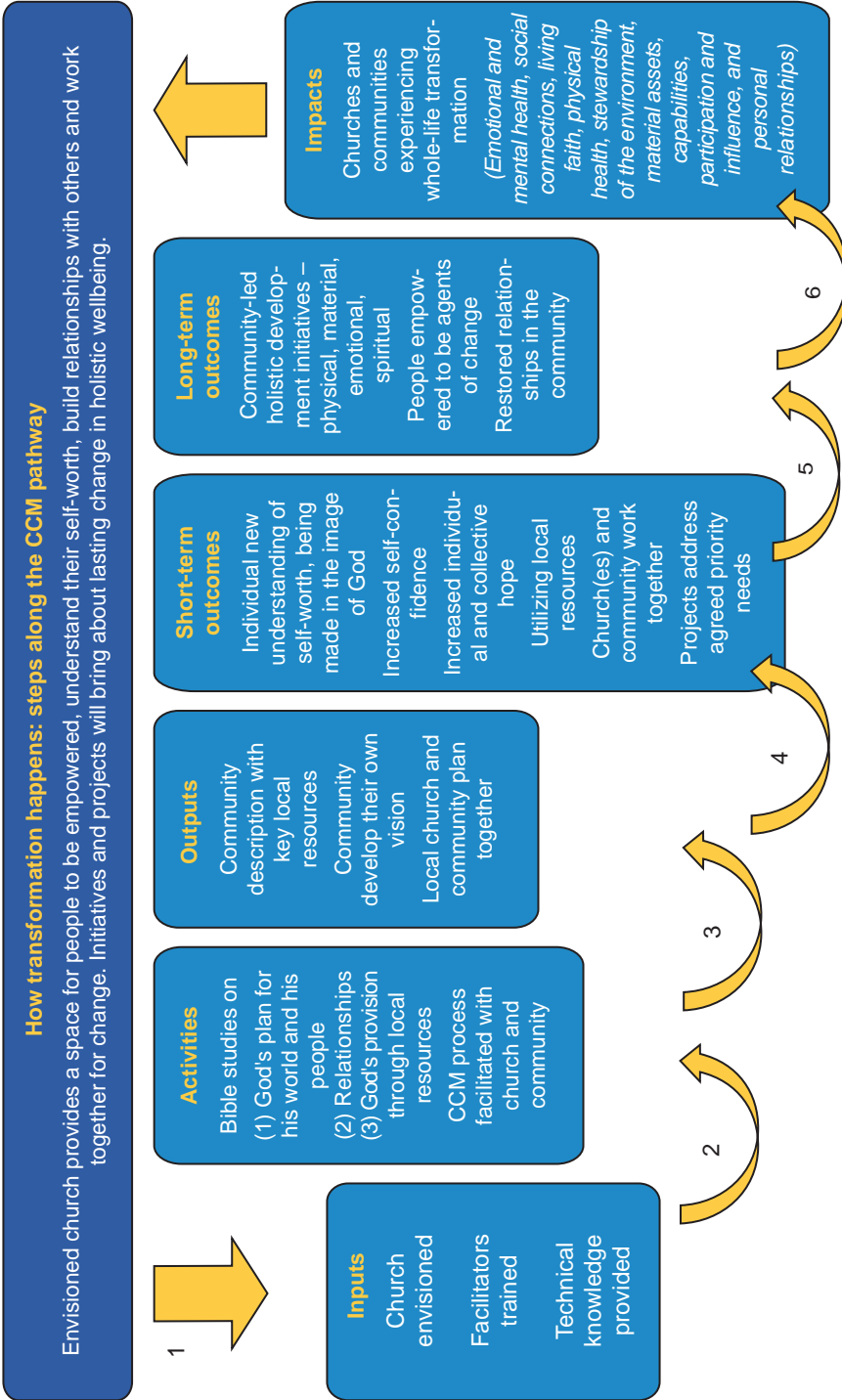## The theory and practice of Church and Community Mobilisation (CCM)

As with the YQYP programme in Mexico (see Chapter 4), CCM is based on a theory of development centred on empowering people to help themselves. It proposes that to reduce material poverty, attitudes of helplessness and dependency need to be replaced by self-belief and agency. It draws partly on the theory and practice of participatory development going back to Paulo Freire (1970); but it also draws heavily on Christian theology. 'It's about building self-esteem, and trying to break that emotional poverty where people see themselves as too poor to do anything; it's about saying, in Christian terms, "You are made in the image of God, you are of value"; and encouraging people to think about what they can do' (CF).

The more specific theory of change (see Figure 6.1) underpinning CCM is to foster a dynamic interaction between theological resources, religious spaces, and their context, to promote social mobilization based on the rationale that 'when the church is envisioned to provide a space for people to be empowered, to understand their self-worth, to build relationships with others and work together for change, initiatives and projects will bring about a change in holistic wellbeing' (Tearfund, 2017).

CCM is not a programme with clearly defined physical deliverables or time frames. Rather, through the utilization of bible studies, discussion tools, and group activities, it seeks to 'awaken' local church leaders, congregations, and poor rural communities and encourage them to collaborate in realizing their own development.

Tearfund's involvement in CCM is mediated by partnerships with local churches, to whom they look for close understanding of rural communities, commitment to sustained relationships, and capacity to provide leadership and training. Its own role is primarily to support partner churches in training facilitators. To this end, Tearfund publishes relevant material, including a CCM manual that its partner churches can adapt to suit their own denominational traditions.

CCM facilitators are equipped with a set of questions, techniques, and stories (many drawing on or illustrated from the Bible) to help community members think about what they need and what their community would look like if it were the best community it could be. They then coach community members to take up roles as information-gatherers, review the resources already at their own disposal, reflect on how to use them, and decide on priorities for collective action. This process is left in the hands of the community, but Tearfund and its partner churches remain open to requests for help.

How transformation happens: steps along the CCM pathway

Envisioned church provides a space for people to be empowered, understand their self-worth, build relationships with others and work together for change. Initiatives and projects will bring about lasting change in holistic wellbeing.

Inputs

Church envisioned

Facilitators trained

Technical knowledge provided

Activities

Bible studies on
(1) God's plan for his world and his people
(2) Relationships
(3) God's provision through local resources

CCM process facilitated with church and community

Outputs

Community description with key local resources

Community develop their own vision

Local church and community plan together

Short-term outcomes

Individual new understanding of self-worth, being made in the image of God

Increased self-confidence

Increased individual and collective hope

Utilizing local resources

Church(es) and community work together

Projects address agreed priority needs

Long-term outcomes

Community-led holistic development initiatives – physical, material, emotional, spiritual

People empowered to be agents of change

Restored relationships in the community

Impacts

Churches and communities experiencing whole-life transformation

(Emotional and mental health, social connections, living faith, physical health, stewardship of the environment, material assets, capabilities, participation and influence, and personal relationships)

1   2   3   4   5   6

Figure 6.1 Theory of change for Tearfund's CCM process
Source: Tearfund (2017)

> The idea is that the help Tearfund provides is demand-driven rather than supply-motivated; Tearfund is keen to support the community development process, but without trying to lead it in any particular direction. […] For example, if we hear from a partner that a church is really interested in having a well, then that church or community needs to come to us to say what it wants, and we might provide training on how to dig a well, or provide specialist technical support if that is what's needed. But we'll never say, 'We think you need a well, and we're coming to dig it for you' (CF).

In a new locality CCM starts with bible studies, touching on such topics as justice, self-worth, and community-spiritedness. This serves as the basis for broader discussion of how the church can serve its members as well as the larger community, and how to work together to address issues of common concern. The first project that an 'awakening' congregation decides on has often been to build its own church, with members of the congregation making the bricks and doing all the construction work. From here, what direction CCM takes depends on the priorities and decisions of the specific congregation and its wider community. 'This is where things can go in lots of different directions. Even though Tearfund has developed a theoretical CCM process that is standardized, it aims simply to facilitate how communities can recognize and prioritize their own needs. They are the ones doing the development and deciding what is needed in their context' (CF).

In some cases, Tearfund supports livelihood training – in how to fix mobile phones, make and lay bricks, or adopt different agricultural techniques, for example. 'It's alright to get people coming up with ideas, but sometimes they just don't have the competencies to implement them, and we can help them build competencies' (CF). In Uganda, Tearfund has also developed a specific CCM programme of advocacy training to foster local-level social accountability and governance (Tearfund, 2016).[7]

The QuIP study in Uganda

Commissioning the study and country selection

Tearfund's interest in conducting an impact evaluation using the QuIP was to gain deeper insights into CCM for the organization, its partners, and intended beneficiaries; the request arose from within the organization, rather than being prompted by an external funder. 'We get lots of nice impact statements from our visits and internal evaluations, but wanted to dig deeper; we were keen to see what robust research would reveal' (CF). Tearfund had already conducted an external evaluation of CCM in Tanzania in 2015 using a difference-in-difference approach (Scott et al., 2014; see also Chadburn et al., 2013). This generated information about what was happening on the ground, but left unanswered the questions about how observed changes were taking place.

> We have our theory of change, and our idea of what we think happens in CCM – that is: Tearfund does facilitation training, the church gets inspired, they work with the community, and then lots of nice things happen. We wanted to test those steps and the links between them: Is the training in fact leading to these other steps? How does that work? That's what really appealed to us about the QuIP: it would help us really learn, because it would help us understand more about the drivers of change (CF).

Congruence in the values behind the CCM and QuIP was also important.[8]

> QuIP methodology ticked a lot of boxes for us, because CCM is led by the people themselves. The ethos is about empowering people to take charge of the process, and not have us trying to control the process. The fact that the QuIP allows those beneficiary voices to be at the forefront of the research, we thought was really special (CF).

Tearfund's decision to invest in a pilot QuIP study entailed extensive internal consultation and discussion, extending beyond those specialized in monitoring, evaluation, and learning.

After an initial meeting, Tearfund created a working group, including representatives from several countries doing CCM, and people from Tearfund's Technical Team. There was some apprehension about trying a new and qualitative approach (one that would not generate statistically robust evidence of CCM's impact on poverty, for example) and it was important to ensure clarity about what could realistically be expected, and to secure wide support based on this understanding.

Another issue that prompted internal discussion was country selection. CCM varies substantially from country to country; hence there are good grounds for conducting several QuIP studies. Tearfund decided to start with a pilot study, leaving open the decision to then repeat it elsewhere. Uganda was chosen, as one of the countries in which CCM was oldest and most established (along with Tanzania and Kenya), and because there was strong support from the country representative.

> We know the situation and the context in Uganda better than some other countries. Uganda is a bit of a flagship for CCM because it's been going there so long. We wanted to learn what's worked well there, and then move on to how things can be adapted or done differently in places where it's a bit more of a challenge (CF).

Approximately 84 per cent of Uganda's population self-report as Christian.[9] The incidence of absolute poverty (defined as living on less than $1.90 a day) is high but has been falling quite fast – from 62.2 per cent to 33.2 per cent between 2002/03 and 2012/13, for example (World Bank, 2016). These figures suggest that Uganda is likely to have provided relatively favourable conditions for CCM to flourish in recent years. However, in Soroti and Kitgum, the areas of the study, there was evidence that poverty had worsened – against the trend in the country as a whole.[10]

Consultation with local partners and sample selection

Tearfund first started working in Uganda in 1973 and currently partners with 11 local Christian agencies in 30 districts. CCM was introduced in 2001 and by 2017 Tearfund estimated it had reached 300 churches and 105,000 individuals. Tearfund's main CCM partner is Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG), followed by the Church of Uganda (CoU). Having no country office in Uganda, Tearfund relied on virtual communication to invite its partners to participate in the study. While this led to contrasting initial involvement (see Box 6.1), both were actively involved in subsequent unblindfolded meetings to discuss the findings.

In line with the hands-off philosophy of CCM, Tearfund had very little monitoring data to offer the QuIP research team to aid sample selection. What they did have was a list of villages where there were known CCM facilitators in two eastern districts where PAG had been operating CCM since 2012, and for three northern districts where CoU had been operating since 2011. They also had household survey data with CCM beneficiary names, although this

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Box 6.1 Involvement of local partners in the study

Tearfund relied mostly on virtual communication to brief their partners on the study and invite them to participate. A fortuitous face-to-face meeting with relevant PAG staff helped. 'I asked them whether they thought it would work, and for their ideas about what sorts of questions it made sense to ask. I wanted to make sure what we were asking covered the areas where they wanted to see change.'

In contrast this wasn't possible with CoU.

Whereas I had previously worked with PAG and had met face-to-face on another research project, I was unable to meet with the Diocese of Kitgum staff, and only managed a few very bad reception phone calls and emails. They were on-board for the research to happen, and they gave us sampling information for the churches and people involved. But they didn't really understand the process: for example they couldn't understand why they didn't have to meet the researchers, or introduce them to the participants. As a result they didn't invest in the research process the way they could have. We sent them samples of interview questions to get their input, but they didn't really engage as much as PAG did.

It wasn't until after the field research had been completed that the Diocese of Kitgum central management really came on board. They really 'got it' once we met face-to-face at the unblindfolding meetings and I could explain more. When they heard all the good feedback from the local churches about the experiences they'd had with the QuIP interviews and the participatory events we organized in the villages to explain the project afterwards, they could see how the research provided so much learning. CoU as well as PAG got very involved in building recommendations during the workshop. At the start of the process they were a bit unsure, but they really bought in by the end, and contributed a lot during the workshop. I think CoU were really pleased with how the study went, and really understood afterwards why we'd done it the way we did. We really want this kind of buy-in from our partners, because we don't want the learning to stay with us, we want it to be with them. It's about our partners thinking about what they can learn from this research, and what they are going to do differently.

Source: Charlotte Flowers

was 5 years old and didn't have any addresses. 'Kitgum District in Northern Uganda is where the LRA (Lord's Resistance Army) had been very active and a lot of people had been forced from their homes. It's a poorer area than Soroti District in Eastern Uganda for example. We wanted to have that as a comparison' (CF). The QuIP field research team – recruited through academic contacts and trained over two days in Kampala – was provided with the name of an independent gatekeeper at sub-county level to assist with identifying selected villages. But the team was not provided with the names of CCM facilitators and remained unaware throughout of the identity of the programme being evaluated, of the involvement of Tearfund, and of the names of the two partner churches. They carried with them an introductory letter from BSDR and Makerere University explaining the background to the study, but not naming Tearfund, CCM or the partner churches. The household survey names proved difficult to use: because of the civil conflict and the time elapsed, many people had moved, and therefore the researchers had to use snowball sampling. Box 6.2 provides further information about sample selection.

Box 6.2 Sample selection

The two villages selected in each area were where the number of known CCM participants was greatest. This may have biased selection towards villages that had been more active, although this turned out not to be the case for one of them (Kweyo). In the east the villages were Angopet in Soroti district and Omagara in Serere district. In the north they were Lubene and Kwewyo in Kitgum district.

Two teams of field researchers (one man and one woman) were trained to collect data in each region: one fluent in Atkeso for the eastern villages, and the other in Acholi for the northern villages. Once in each village, they relied on snowball sample selection to identify 12 people for interview, and additional participants for the focus groups. The final sample for each region comprised 24 interviewees per region, plus four focus groups – one each for older and younger men, and for older and younger women.

Overall, the sample size and selection procedure were not sufficient to permit generalization across the more than 100,000 people believed to have participated in CCM in some way over the years. On the other hand, the analyst reported a lot of repetition in statements from respondents drawn from the same village. This may partly reflect a tendency for snowball sampling to include similar people and/or extended family members. The best way to improve on the scope for credible generalization would be to cast more light on the characteristics of the four selected villages relative to the 300 estimated to have participated in CCM.

Domain selection and data analysis

Given the broad and deliberately under-specified goals of CCM, the structure of interviews and focus groups was necessarily broad. It was also influenced by an initiative within Tearfund to develop a standard normative framework for assessing 'whole-life transformation' across its entire programme of activities,

Table 6.1 CCM activities in Uganda

CCM initiatives across Uganda	PAG in Soroti and Serere districts	CoU in Kitgum district
Building permanent churches	Apprenticeship skills training (construction, electrical repair, citrus trees management)	Child care programmes
Building permanent brick houses		HIV education and care
Infrastructure: clearing roads and digging shallow wells	(Re)training nursery and primary school teachers, and chaplains for PEP schools	'Ot me Gen' (faithful house) training for married couples
School building		
Adult education, including teaching gender equality		Formation of savings and loan groups for parents of children with nodding syndrome*
Savings and loan groups	Adoption of energy-saving stoves	
Environmental protection	Planting trees to reduce flooding	
Improved sanitation		
Support for vulnerable people (orphans, widows, people living with disability, people living with AIDs)	Advocacy and disaster risk reduction training	Energy-saving stoves
New livelihoods (fruit growing, livestock, crops, fish farming, brick-making, motor bike taxi, carpentry, radio/phone repair, shops/kiosks)		

Source: PAG and CoU via Tearfund

Note * Nodding syndrome is a neurological condition with unknown aetiology. In addition to northern Uganda, it occurs in Tanzania and South Sudan.

called the Light Wheel (Tearfund, 2017).[11] This was largely compatible with the domain structure of previous QuIP studies conducted in rural areas, except that 'living faith' was added.

The QuIP analyst referred to secondary data provided by the two partner churches about community initiatives conducted by CCM groups in the two regions, as shown in Table 6.1.

In the absence of specific data on CCM-inspired activities in each village, the QuIP analyst was asked to code causal statements as implicitly consistent with Tearfund's theory of change if it was clear from reading the whole interview that specific actions were triggered by the respondent's participation in CCM activities, even if this was not repeated explicitly in each and every statement. This reading was supplemented by secondary data provided by the two partner churches about support activities conducted in the two regions, also shown in Table 6.1. 'CCM is like a cascade effect, which is part of what makes it so hard to monitor' (CF). Both PAG and CoU appointed their own trainers, who received coaching from Tearfund, and in turn trained facilitators in local churches. While difficult to assess all the individual activities, there was strong commitment to CCM. 'PAG wants all its pastors to be trained in CCM now, it's part of the 2020 Vision that all PAG churches will be facilitating CCM' (CF).

Blindfolding, unblindfolding, and feedback

Blindfolded data collection took place in October 2016. When subsequently informed about the activity being evaluated, the QuIP field researchers reported that they had not guessed the commissioner was Tearfund, assuming instead that it was another NGO (World Vision, to be specific) that had been mentioned in the interviews.

> What was interesting was that the field researchers didn't know Tearfund at all before or during the research, despite CCM being explicitly mentioned frequently. Tearfund wasn't mentioned that often in the interviews, it was more the church or CCM itself that was mentioned – but the programme isn't advertised as Tearfund's, it is run by the partner (CF).

The QuIP field researchers met with PAG and CoU project staff to discuss and verify the initial QuIP findings. This allowed the partners to challenge any initial coding they disagreed with and also began the process of engaging with the findings to build recommendations.

Given the participatory ethos of CCM, it was important to Tearfund that participants in each village should also be able to engage with the evaluation findings, and thanked for their participation.

> In December 2017, I visited each community, firstly to thank them for taking part in the research. Then the main thing was to share the findings and celebrate their success, reinforcing the message that 'you have done this, not us.' I told them we'd been a bit reticent about doing it in a way where we weren't telling them who the research was for. We were concerned people might feel we were deceiving them, but at the same time we wanted people to feel completely free to talk about their whole wellbeing. It turned out that people were very understanding. They said 'yes, that makes sense, because this way we could be more honest with you.' They really understood why we'd done the interviews blindfolded, so that was good (CF).

Participants were furthermore encouraged to give feedback about preliminary findings from the study.

> I facilitated mini workshops where we went through a five-year timeline of CCM and created a pictorial diagram of what had happened and how the community had grown. Then we talked about the findings from the QuIP and dug a little deeper. For example, sometimes participants had mentioned things Tearfund didn't know about, like a small local NGO; and we wanted to verify those kinds of things. So we got some really good stories, which were helpful in understanding some of the results. People shed a bit more light on things that had come up in the interviews, and it was nice to go deeper where we were unsure of some of the results (CF).

The visits also provided the commissioner with a chance to obtain feedback on the research process. This was reassuring: 'The field team really related to the participants; they built up a good rapport, which I think is vital for the study to work well. One lady said to me, "Oh, he was my son – he can come anytime" which confused me at first before I realized she was just saying they really got on, which is brilliant. You really need people who are not only adept at the interview process, but know how to build that rapport' (CF). Holding feedback workshops in the villages fulfilled a double purpose: not only was this commensurate with Tearfund's participatory ethos, it deepened and enriched the study findings. 'Going back to the communities and doing the unblindfolding was great. We'll definitely be doing that again' (CF).

These were not the only follow-up dissemination events that Tearfund sponsored and organized following completion of the report. Findings were also presented at a conference of the Joint Learning Initiative (JLI) on Faith and Local Communities in Dublin in December 2016, as well as being shared internally within Tearfund and disseminated to a wider audience through a summary report (Tearfund, 2017). In November 2017, findings were shared at a workshop in Kampala attended by staff from PAG, CoU, and other CCM partner organizations, with time devoted to thinking through recommendations for doing the programme differently.

> It's about the partners "owning" some of those recommendations. Tearfund was there to play a supporting role. It was really good for our partners to get a secular or non-Christian point of view, an "outsider" view, via the researchers. It's good for the secular and the Christian worlds to meet – as well as the academic and NGO worlds (CF).

In February 2018, the annual 'Facilitator Conference' brought together people trained in CCM, and five days were devoted to presenting the Uganda QuIP report (Tearfund, 2018), talking about what could happen differently and what could be improved, and creating action plans.

Illustrative findings

Reported change across different domains of wellbeing

Individual interviews with 48 people included 10 closed questions about the direction of change in different domains of wellbeing over the last five years. Responses from the 48 respondents (25 women and 23 men) were strikingly mixed. Those living in the two villages in the east were fairly evenly balanced between positive and negative. In contrast in Kitgum district in the north, one village (Kweyo) reported strongly negative change overall, while respondents in the other were on balance positive.[12] This serves as a reminder of how sharply the fortunes of even nearby villages can diverge during the same period. The question most widely answered positively across the whole sample, was 'overall, how do you feel that community relations and decision

making changed over the past five years?' (44 better, 2 worse, 2 same/don't know). This was true even in Kweyo, where it contrasted sharply with mostly negative responses across all other domains. At the other extreme, responses to the question 'overall, how much are you eating as a household compared to this time five years ago?' were mostly negative (10 better, 30 worse, 8 same/don't know). This illustrates the limitation of relying on a single indicator to capture overall changes in wellbeing.

Explicit attribution of change to CCM-related activities

Many narrative statements about the drivers of these changes in people's lives explicitly mentioned PEP (the local name for CCM), Tearfund's two partner churches, and/or associated village level facilitators and faith leaders. Not surprisingly, these causal connections were made most often during discussion of people's 'living faith' and of links with organizations from outside the village. Respondents frequently also made explicit causal connections from personal faith to household and wider community relationships, with some connections made also to livelihood activities and material outcomes. This is shown by Table 6.2 and the illustrative quotations in Box 6.3.

There are only a small number of negative changes explicitly linked to PAG and CoU and none related to CCM/PEP specifically. In one instance an interviewee was asked to stand down from her church position as a result of her husband abandoning her and the church. The other references were to tensions or lack of collaboration between different religious groups. For example, a 32-year-old woman in Lubene commented: 'The different faith groups do not work together. Each one has its own programme and works for its followers. The only time we see them teaching together is when someone dies in the community and the different groups come to pray for the dead. Beyond that, each one works on its own.'

Table 6.2 Frequency counts of explicitly attributed causal statements[13]

	Positive explicit		Negative explicit	
	Interviews	FGDs	Interviews	FGDs
Household composition	12	–	–	–
Ability to produce food	9	2	–	–
Ability to earn money	5	–	–	–
How you spend money	6	1	–	–
Household and village relationships	29	3	1	–
Overall wellbeing	19	3	–	–
'Living' faith	40	7	6	4
Links with external organizations	41	4	–	–

Source: BSDR (2017)

Note: Totals from 48 interviews and eight focus group discussions (FGDs)

Box 6.3 Illustrative positive explicit statements

Omagara, 36-year-old woman

'In the past, people didn't care about faith, but it is now a fountain of comfort, peace and hope. Faith leaders also counsel us to be strong and to help us overcome our difficult situations. Yes, in the past, I was a drunkard. From 2010, when I got saved, I became a much more focused person.'

Kweyo, 45-year-old man

'When you belong to a faith group you can have peace of mind because you get consolation in the word of God. Sickness has reduced because we pray, conflicts have also reduced because we have hearts of forgiveness. When you respect the word of God, you don't waste money on alcohol.'

Angopet, 59-year-old woman

'Five years back we were in absolute poverty. Now we are much better in all these respects. Our relations are also good, and we have learnt a lot on health, human relations and our rights from the different programmes from government, CCM, World Vision and even our VSLA (Village Savings and Loan Association) meetings.'

Lubene, 47-year-old man

'The excess food that I produce, I also sell to earn more income for the household. One of the reasons for these changes has been the support that we received from AVSI [Italian NGO], LWF [Lutheran World Federation NGO] and Church of Uganda. As a group member I got training, which increased my knowledge in financial planning and management.'

Angopet, 59-year-old woman

'There is an improvement in our relationship with other people in the village because only a few still drink but the majority are now saved. In addition, when PEP came here, they didn't target only members of PAG. Everyone was targeted, and the message was, "everyone is of value and useful". Out of this message, community relations have improved. We also now speak well. We share problems and we visit each other. In the past it was not the case. There was also theft. If I came out, I would also be beaten. There were many bad people. Further, previously some differences in the village were religious. But now, even when we are building our church, members from other churches, especially the Catholics and Anglicans, invited us 'come to our homes, we will contribute to the building of the church of God'.

Angopet, 53-year-old man

'PEP gave us comprehensive mind-transforming functional education that touches every aspect of life from bible studies to self-help. After PEP came here, there is a lot of behavioural change towards self-help and development.'

'... with the PEP training we got we have started a boda boda [motorbike taxi] business and we now sell firewood as an income generating activity right from October 2014.'

Omagara, 50-year-old man

'What we are doing now is to make manure and put it in the gardens, but the challenge is that there are many trees and one person cannot make all that manure, it needs some support where manure can be made on a large scale. To reduce the impact of drought, I have continued to plant trees, but it cannot be of help if I do it as one person. It needs everyone in the community to do it. So I thank the PAG church that has helped support communities to carry out their activities of planting trees. They support by facilitating transport and providing teaching materials that are used in the community.'

(Continued)

Box 6.3 Continued

Lubene, 43-year-old woman

'Church of Uganda trained me and other community members in making local energy-saver stoves, the church has also supported group savings by training its members but also by providing small startup kits.'

Source: BSDR (2017)

Other drivers of change

The important context for this generally positive evidence of project impact was an abundance of accounts of livelihoods being adversely affected by weather and climate change, with adverse knock-on effects on food consumption and asset ownership. The second most widely raised problem area focused on rising costs, particularly of schooling but also of health care. Hence, what the study documented were often grim stories of people, families, and communities struggling in adversity, in which religion and the support that can be derived from it can be viewed as a coping strategy. This fuller picture is captured more comprehensively by the inductive drivers of change analysis set out in Tables 6.3 and 6.4, with the negative driver data deliberately shown first in order to place the more complex data on positive drivers in this context. Investing in children's education could be viewed as a way for many respondents to offer them a more secure long-term future, but one that entailed high risks and suffering in the short-term. A 47-year-old man in Lubene illustrates this: 'The older children have dropped out of school and they are now helping me with farm work. The reasons for the significant change have been because I spend all my earnings to send my other children to very expensive schools in Kampala. I sold all the assets that I had to pay to put my children in the good schools … I even sold a motorcycle, 20 cows and two oxen.'

The contribution of different external agencies to change

At the end of the interviews, respondents were asked to name key external organizations operating in their area and to rank them according to how much they valued them. The results are reproduced in Table 6.5, and are consistent with the frequency of coded citations in the narrative data.

The number of organizations referred to came as something of a surprise to Tearfund: 'Over 60 different organizations were mentioned. CCM can work in a bit of a vacuum sometimes, not relating to other NGOs and other things that are happening out there, including what the government is doing. It could definitely be better at understanding the context and the different stakeholders' (CF). When combined, Tearfund's two partner churches ranked as the most important positive influence over the households in the sample group by a significant margin (322 references), followed by World Vision (129) and Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) (83).[14]

Table 6.3 Most commonly cited negative changes and associated drivers of change

Drivers	Outcomes						
	Livelihood vulnerability or inability to grow income sufficient for needs	Decreased material assets and resources and productivity	Reduced food consumption and variety	Worse community relationships	Worse physical wellbeing	Worse family relationships	Lack of peace/ inner turmoil
Lack of skills or equipment to improve livelihoods	8	2	1	–	–	–	–
Reliance on market for food	–	6	–	–	–	–	–
Lack of capital/being in debt	7	4	–	–	–	1	–
Lack of employment	2	3	–	–	–	–	–
Climate change/irregular weather patterns	39	48	17	5	4	4	7
Poor soil health	22	21	2	–	–	–	1
Ill health	4	11	2	–	12	1	1
Selling personal assets	3	4	–	–	–	1	1
Higher percentage of income spent on food	–	8	1	–	–	–	–
Destroyed/failed crops or livestock dying	6	12	–	–	–	1	–
Profit margin on business reduced	2	6	–	–	–	–	–
High health care costs	2	17	1	–	1	–	–
Increased cost of schooling and materials	3	30	3	1	2	2	4
Private school fees	1	13	2	–	1	1	–
Anti–social behaviour	–	2	1	2	–	4	–
Robbery/corruption	–	8	1	2	2	–	2
Conflict over land	1	1	–	3	–	1	1
Family breakdown/tensions	2	2	1	–	1	4	3
Individualism in the community	1	2	–	12	–	–	–
Inter–faith tension/fear	–	–	–	3	–	–	–

Source: BSDR (2017)

Note: Totals refer to number of times selected change was cited by respondents across all domains (can be cited in up to six domains across 56 interviews).

Table 6.4 Most commonly cited positive changes and associated drivers of change

Drivers				Outcomes							
	Livelihood resilience	Skills acquisition/ education	Increased material assets and productivity	Hope in the future	Improved wellbeing	Improved self-worth and confidence	Improved family relationships	Improved inter-faith relations	Improved community relationships	Increased empowerment	Changed perceptions	Reduced anti-social behaviour
Moving to cash crops and new markets	15	2	29	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Increased livestock rearing/trading	11	1	13	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Farming a larger area	4	–	5	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
New farming methods/training	31	3	31	6	–	1	–	–	–	2	–	–
Livelihood diversification, incl. paid employment	14	5	24	1	–	1	–	–	–	1	–	–
Training in business skills/leadership	–	6	6	1	1	4	–	–	1	6	–	–
Training in advocacy and human rights	–	–	–	–	–	15	–	–	4	8	15	1
Ot me gen training in family relations	–	–	3	1	2	3	14	–	1	1	6	2
PEP (CCM)	9	11	11	9	8	14	10	12	19	24	11	–
HIV training	–	–	–	2	1	2	2	–	1	–	2	–
House improvements and new assets	–	–	10	2	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Membership of savings groups	4	4	17	2	4	4	–	3	18	14	1	1
Faith groups and holistic ministry	–	2	3	1	5	–	2	1	2	2	3	1

Table 6.4 continued

Drivers	Outcomes											
	Livelihood resilience	Skills acquisition/ education	Increased material assets and productivity	Hope in the future	Improved wellbeing	Improved self-worth and confidence	Improved family relationships	Improved inter-faith relations	Improved community relationships	Increased empowerment	Changed perceptions	Reduced anti-social behaviour
Increased church involvement	1	4	1	14	15	13	10	1	19	2	14	21
Becoming a Christian/actively pursuing a Christian faith	–	–	2	12	10	5	8	–	8	4	6	16
Spiritual wellbeing improved	–	–	–	1	3	2	–	–	–	–	–	–
Improved family relations	–	–	–	1	1	–	2	–	–	–	–	–
Better relations with govt, police and law	–	–	–	–	–	1	1	–	4	4	–	–
Interfaith collaboration	–	–	1	–	3	–	–	17	7	–	3	1
External support for development projects	2	3	12	2	5	–	–	–	2	1	–	–
Improved community cohesion	–	1	9	3	3	1	1	1	18	3	3	–
Taking on community responsibility	–	–	–	1	–	10	1	–	1	2	–	–
Increased education/ attainment	1	12	–	11	4	3	1	–	–	–	2	–

Source: Adapted from BSDR (2017: Table 4).

Notes: Totals refer to number of times selected change was cited by respondents across all domains (can be cited in up to six domains across 56 interviews)

Table 6.5 Ranking of external organizations by importance

Organization	Ranking							
	1st	*2nd*	*3rd*	*4th*	*5th*	*6th*	*7th*	*Total*
World Vision	11	7	5	–	3	–	–	26
Village Savings and Loan Associations	3	2	6	5	4	3	–	23
PEP: local name for CCM	6	5	1	3	1	2	1	19
Church of Uganda: Tearfund partner	13	1	1	–	–	1	–	16
Lutheran World Federation	2	1	6	2	1	–	–	12
National Agricultural Advisory Services	1	4	2	1	2	–	–	10
AVSI (Italian International NGO)	4	3	–	1	1	1	–	10
Pentecostal Assembly of God: Tearfund partner	3	2	1	1	1	1	–	9
Soroti Rural Development Agency (SORUDA)	2	1	1	–	1	1	1	7
Send a Cow	2	3	1	–	–	1	–	7

Source: BSDR (2017: Table 6.1)
Note: The frequencies give equal weight to the rankings of 48 individual respondents and eight focus groups.

Box 6.4 Illustrative quotations on the role of savings groups

Omagara, 60-year-old man

'Being a member of the SACCO [Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization] has also improved my physical and financial wellbeing. Relationships with people have changed because for example in the SACCO where I work we treat people fairly. The knowledge and skills that I have now have greatly improved my wellbeing and this goes together with my faith.'

Lubene, 43-year-old woman

'There is change after the Diocese training on saving. We learnt how to save money … I now see that alone, I could not address the challenges that I was facing in my household.'

Lubene, 47-year-old man

'Most of the trainings came through the church, AVSI and World Vision. All these three NGOs have helped in income generation. Putting people in groups has increased productivity of the group members.'

Source: BSDR (2017)

Village Savings and Loan Associations

VSLAs and other savings groups were widely reported to be a positive driver. CCM was often not the sole or even main instigator of these, but respondents did often link them, for example as a means by which they were able to

respond to church-based encouragement to save. That several respondents reported falling income but increasing assets can also be attributed to the role of savings groups in enabling them to save and buy assets such as goats as security against future shocks. Box 6.4 provides some illustrative examples of how different organizations contribute to promoting savings groups, and how the groups in turn contribute to diverse outcomes.

Discussion and conclusions

Tearfund's pilot use of the QuIP in Uganda provided a rich body of evidence about their faith-based approach to rural poverty reduction. In its own publication (Tearfund, 2017) based on the findings, it picked out five positive drivers of change (faith, self-esteem, relationships, new knowledge, and local savings groups) and two negative (environmental change and school fees). It also highlighted four general insights:

- Changing hearts and minds is vital to impact all aspects of people's lives.
- The local church encourages faith in action.
- Changing weather patterns are restricting progress.
- The QuIP provided excellent evidence of positive impact and its causes.

Not surprisingly, the publication presented a generally positive message about the direction of development in the four villages, as well as Tearfund's own contribution, for example, by highlighting that '52 per cent of households cited CCM as a positive driver of change in the last five years' (19 per cent through PAG and 33 per cent through Church of Uganda) – without framing this statistic in the context of the citations of other organizations, or emphasizing the non-representative nature of the sample. Nevertheless, it did provide a relatively holistic account of the complex combination of drivers of change in four villages. Tearfund was also particularly innovative in finding a range of different ways in which to use the findings, not only to inform external audiences but also for its own internal learning and to feed back to respondents in the four villages studied. In reflecting on the method-ological benefits of using the QuIP, the publication picked out six features in particular: alleviating bias through blindfolding, understanding attribution, rigorous coding, accountability to beneficiaries, use of local research expertise, and scope to inform internal learning associated with the supply of evidence on causal drivers of change rather than just their magnitude. This chapter has also documented how it was possible to adapt the QuIP to evaluate a programme with a deliberately open and fluid (faith-based) theory of change, particularly to throw light on the mechanisms by which intended outcomes were being achieved. Furthermore, it illustrated the scope for utilizing the QuIP, through unblindfolded follow-up meetings, as a participatory evaluation approach to support community-based development action.

Of course, it is impossible to be entirely objective in the interpretation of rich qualitative data sets, and subjectivity inevitably also introduces some selectivity

on the basis of the data user's own interests and values. Chapter 10 returns to this issue. Nevertheless, this case study did illustrate that faith-based and evidence-informed approaches to development practice are not antithetical – in other words, there is scope for combining them. The study was not designed to be a piece of research into the efficacy of faith-based organizations in development, but it did provide evidence to illustrate how shared religious values and discourse can contribute to positive outcomes, particularly in a context such as Uganda, where this cultural resource is shared not only within and between development organizations but more widely within society. To take such an analysis further it would be necessary to reflect also on the counter-factual question of how a secular (i.e. not religiously 'faith-based') NGO might have performed in reducing poverty in the same area with similar resources – although of course the resources deployed by Tearfund were also a product of shared values with many of their supporters.

This case study also illustrated how the role of impact evaluation extends beyond the supply of better empirical evidence on what is working and how – important though this is. The introduction to this chapter made clear that Tearfund's motivation in commissioning the study was primarily to promote internal learning and improvement rather than external accountability. However, the chapter also illustrated the way in which the study was able to serve a legitimating purpose by affirming Tearfund's broader theory of change, including its partnership model (James, 2016). Using the typology of approaches to producing and maintaining NGO legitimacy proposed by Thrandardottir (2015) it can be argued that the QuIP study demonstrated the potential to conduct impact evaluation in a way that is compatible with the more democratic and political culture of the 'social change model' of legitimacy, rather than the more functional and technocratic 'market model'. This is also consistent with Tearfund being able to maintain what Gulrajani (2010) describes – and not in a pejorative way – as a more romantic view of development management, as an alternative both to a colder managerial culture or one that is more radical in its critique of global and national power structures. In short, the sustainability and efficacy of faith-based approaches to development is of interest not only in itself, but also as a leading example of the potential to do development differently.

Notes

1. See Copestake et al. (2016: 6) for a discussion of the concept of 'warm glow' in this context.
2. New International Version of the New Testament, Gospel according to John, Chapter 20, Verse 24.
3. Tomalin (2012: 609) is more cautious, concluding that 'further assessments of the characteristics, roles, and activities of all types of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are needed to assist in the choice of development partners and to test claims of distinctiveness and comparative advantage.'

4. 'A short history of Tearfund', https://www.tearfund.org/en/about_us/history/

5. 'Where your money goes', https://www.tearfund.org/en/about_us/#changing-policies-section. The remaining 20 per cent goes to fundraising (13 per cent) and support and running costs (7 per cent). 'Envisioning' is widely used by Tearfund to refer to 'awakening local church leaders and subsequently parishioners to their God-given mandate for integral mission' (Tearfund, 2018).

6. CCM has been evolving within Tearfund since 1973. It has been funded from a wide range of sources, including some Christian grant-making institutions in the USA and 'integral mission partners' in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Australia. Tearfund has undertaken regular evaluations internally which are required by donors as part of their standard programme cycle, but had not commissioned an external impact study since 2014.

7. Field work under the QuIP study reported here, however, took place in areas not yet covered by this programme.

8. Staff at Tearfund were also aware of the tradition of research at the University of Bath into wellbeing in developing country contexts (Gough and McGregor, 2007; Copestake, 2008; White and Blackmore, 2016). This resonated with its own attempts to develop a normative framework for assessing its work (see below).

9. 84 per cent of the population is Christian (according to the 2014 census) and 14 per cent Muslim. Roman Catholicism was the largest denomination (40 per cent), followed by Church of Uganda (32 per cent), with 11 per cent belonging to Pentecostal congregations (Government of Uganda, 2016).

10. The proportion of poor living in the eastern or northern region has risen from 68 per cent in 2013 to 84 per cent in 2016 (World Bank, 2016).

11. Arranged as spokes in a wheel this comprises nine domains: personal relationships, social connections, participation and influence, emotional and mental health, physical health, material assets, capabilities, stewardship of the environment, and living faith.

12. Subsequent to the research it was found that in Kweyo there has not been as much engagement in CCM as in other places. The CCM process began in the central church while people were still living in the displacement camp (during the Lord's Resistance Army conflict). Once people went home the main CCM members were dispersed and the programme lost momentum. A change in church leadership also meant less backing from the church.

13. Given the transformative aspirations of CCM (encompassing individuals' attitudes and beliefs, social relationships, and material circumstances), a high proportion of the remaining narrative data was coded as 'implicitly' consistent with CCM's theory of change, both positively and negatively. But, being consistent with so many other possible causes, this is hard to interpret, and for this reason frequency counts for implicit coding are not shown.

14. Although mentioned in open interviews, Tearfund itself was not named in this section, but this was as expected, given its approach of supporting local church partners to be the active agents in the community.

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