

Help unlock the potential of the local church



Your church can bring life in all its fullness, by releasing the power of the local church

If you'd met Rene and Odile from Ivory Coast four years ago, you'd have found a couple plagued by fear and worry. They worked hard to farm their land and raise their children, but struggled to make a living and could barely afford to put food on the table – let alone pay for school fees or medicine when their children got sick.

‘In the past, it was difficult for us to make money. We couldn't send the children to school, pay for the transportation fares. We couldn't send them to hospital or buy the medicines for our children.’

Rene, Ivory Coast

This story of extreme poverty can be found all over the world. Conflict is rife, climate change is forcing millions from their homes, and one in ten people are still living in extreme poverty. This is not God's plan.

But there is an answer. Together, we can release the power of the local church.

☐ Above top to bottom: Rene stands outside his current home in the village of Loukoukro, Ivory Coast. Thanks to the success of their farming business, the family will soon be moving to their newly completed home.

Rene and Odile, farmers in Ivory Coast, work hard to manage their plantation and successfully grow their pineapple business.



The local church: ending extreme poverty and injustice

For more than 50 years, Tearfund has seen how local churches can bring effective and lasting transformation to whole communities. Churches are often best placed to address extreme poverty – they understand the needs and strengths of their communities, and are able to reach some of the most vulnerable groups.

Tearfund's Church and Community Transformation training (CCT) brings change that is both sustainable and empowering. It is through the training that the local church, working with its local community, recognises the skills and resources God has given them to overcome poverty from within and build greater resilience, with immediate effect.

When churches and communities are empowered to fulfil their God-given potential, everything changes.



Rene and Odile's story

'In the past, we were falling sick, children were falling sick and they were sick all the time,' explains Rene. 'When we cannot sell our products and when people are sick, you are afraid.'

Although the family went to church, Jesus' promise of life 'to the full' seemed a long way off. But Tearfund's Church and Community Transformation training helped the congregation to realise and unlock their God-given potential. Through prayer and Bible study, Rene and Odile's local church learnt that, with God, the power to overcome poverty was possible.

The couple received training on savings and farming. They learnt to diversify their crops – rotating between pineapples and yams – and today they have a thriving pineapple business with a good yield throughout the year.

'Today, I can send my children to school. So I can say that a real change has come.'

Rene, Ivory Coast

'God has blessed us. Today, I can send my children to school,' says Rene. 'Today, I am building. Today, I can use money to buy fish, to buy a bag of rice. So I can say that a real change has come.'

Training up a local church breaks poverty's grip

Rene and Odile's story is just one example of a family realising that God has given them what they need to lift themselves out of extreme poverty. We are seeing stories of transformation, like this, in the places we work, all over the world.

Poverty is a complex issue and, at Tearfund, we believe it is a consequence of four broken relationships which stem from the fall: our relationship with God, our relationship with each other, our relationship with ourselves, and our relationship with creation. The role of the church is to help restore these relationships and we call this integral mission. This approach addresses the holistic needs of a person – physical, emotional, spiritual, economic, environmental, and social.

Local church members receive training to facilitate Bible studies that help them understand the root causes of poverty. These studies encourage people to recognise the church's mandate to help restore the four broken relationships, address the practical needs in their communities, and identify the resources they have available to respond.

A recent independent study into the impact of Tearfund's training through local churches found that:

27% **27% of participants** are more satisfied with their lives in general, with communities seeing significant transformation that is sustained for years beyond Tearfund's initial involvement.

£1 **Every £1 that Tearfund invests** in Church and Community training, unlocks £7 of additional resources within a community



9 out of 10 communities who participated in the training built new or improved community assets such as schools, roads or access to water



Tearfund's Church and Community Transformation training is sustainable, empowering, biblically-based, and cost-effective.

Together, we can release the power of the local church

When your church gives, your money travels to where it is needed most – to churches that sit in the midst of conflict, in the midst of drought, in the midst of famine. It's those generous donations that enable everything we do behind the scenes to provide biblical training to churches – unlocking powerful, limitless potential.



We are already working with **25,000 churches** in some of the poorest areas of the world but we have an incredible vision to see **250,000 churches** trained up through our Church and Community Transformation training. **Your church's support will help us reach the most vulnerable.**

How your church can help today

We are so thankful that your church has a heart to support people, like Rene and Odile. With so many people in the world living in extreme poverty, your help is needed today more than ever.

This resource, packed with a service guide, prayer points, children's resources and so much more, is designed to give your church the opportunity to pray and give at focused times throughout the year. It would work well for your church to use this pack during Harvest, Christmas, Lent or other seasonal moments. We know every church is unique – so this resource is flexible to adapt as you choose.

Give

A gift from your church will help us reach thousands of new churches with our training, which could mean the difference between life and death for families like Rene and Odile living in extreme poverty.

£32 could train a local church member to lead a community transformation programme to support families like Rene and Odile's.

£68 could run a transformation programme for a whole community and lift many people like Rene and Odile out of poverty.

£113 could train a church leader to bring transformation to their community to help families like Rene and Odile's.

£297 could train three people like Rene and Odile in business skills to provide for their family's needs.

Pray with us

Tearfund's Church and Community Transformation training was an answer to prayer for Pastor Amani in Ivory Coast. Along with Rene and Odile, Pastor Amani's congregation has been transformed.

'People discovered that they were in fact perishing for lack of knowledge,' says Pastor Amani. 'It was through the Bible studies that they understood that Christ had already set them free.'

We long to see this miracle of transformation spread like fire around the world.

- **Pray for families living in fear and worry, unable to feed their children.** Pray that Tearfund's partners will be able to reach these communities with our training so that they can be equipped to realise and unlock their God-given potential.
- **Pray for churches around the world.** Pray that through uniting together, they will be the answer to break the root causes of poverty – releasing the power of the local church.
- **Praise God for Rene and Odile, and families like them all over the world.** Praise God that they had the opportunity to realise that they were the answer to solving their own problems. Praise God that today their family can eat, attend school and afford medical care.

For more stories and ideas to inspire your prayers, visit tearfund.org/stories

tearfund.org

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