

Participatory development initiatives have been around for approximately 30 years and the debate as to their worth continues. In order to investigate the impact of their participatory community programmes in Uganda, Tearfund engaged Gamos to design and carry out in-depth, grassroots research. The resulting study has produced quantitative evidence demonstrating the considerable achievements of these programmes.

Since 2001, Tearfund's Participatory Evaluation Process (PEP) in Uganda has aimed to challenge and build the capacity of local churches to champion development issues and community involvement. Local leadership is encouraged and capacity to solve problems even without external intervention is developed (details as the unique features of this initiative can be found in the full report below).

Gamos' design brief was to create a household survey to explore the impact of the Church Community Mobilisation (CCM) process where Tearfund had been working. The following transformational indicators were of specific interest:

- Material – health, HIV, livelihoods
- Psychological / Social/ Political change – confidence and self-esteem, community relationships, girls in education, access to services
- Spiritual growth – interest in Jesus, deepening commitment, changing world view.

The questionnaire was designed to gather three types of data:

1. Poverty indicators – such as access to education and healthcare, employment, HIV knowledge, food security etc.
2. Specific areas where previous evaluations had observed impact – Such as engagement with agricultural services, gender based violence etc.
3. Changes in the prevalence of problems within the community over recent years.

There is little evidence that respondents were drawn from any particular demographic group – there are no significant differences in the following indicators between those who had heard of PEP and those who had not: Total household expenditure; Male adult literacy; Gender.

The results of the data analysis provide compelling evidence for the positive influence of PEP among those engaging with the process. Even those who were not engaged but had heard of PEP had significantly higher standards of living, as measured across a range of sectors, than those who had never heard of PEP.

For example:

Health

- Respondents involved in PEP are most likely to have improved latrines;
- Those unaware of PEP are less likely to own a bednet, and the mean number of bednets owned is lower;
- Under 5 morbidity (across three indicators) appears to be lower in households represented by a respondent that was involved with PEP.

HIV/AIDS

- Stigma appears to be lower among respondents involved in PEP, although people
- who are unaware of PEP are equally willing to look after relatives with AIDS;
- Testing rates are highest among respondents who are involved in PEP.

Economic Activities (including agriculture)

- There is no clear evidence that involvement in PEP is linked to food security. Although respondents involved in PEP were less likely to feel that anybody in the household had gone hungry in the last month, differences in the past years indicator were not significant.
- Respondents involved in PEP are more likely to have used improved seed varieties;

Community Participation

- Involvement in PEP is linked to greater involvement in groups – notably women’s groups, “other community groups”, and religious groups;

- Respondents involved in PEP spend more of their household expenditure on community projects (but not a lot more);

Attitudes Towards Poverty

- Those in PEP show a greater degree of religious commitment, and feel most strongly that it is important for churches to meet material needs within the community and;
 - are less likely to believe it is acceptable to beat a wife if she refuses to have sex, and if she argues – the two most commonly held beliefs.

Read the full report here - [BASELINE HOUSEHOLD SURVEY](#)