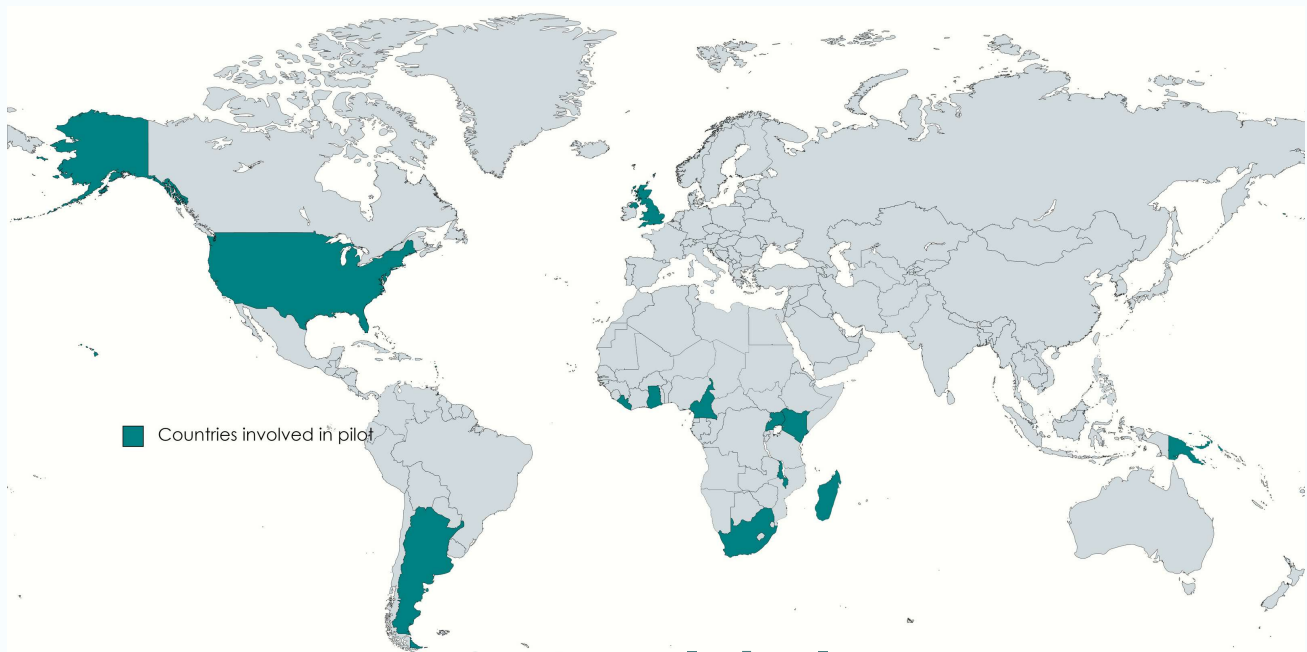


CONNECTING LIVES

Eagles Relief & Development Programme
www.eaglesmalawi.org



This issue celebrates Eagles' new online CCM course. We share the fruit already growing from the pilot - even before participants have completed the course or facilitated the full CCM process.

We hope what you read inspires you to reflect on how it could help catalyse lasting change in your own context.

Steffie shows you round the course here:

<https://youtu.be/FcWIBkp55js>

Going global

Eagles launched its online Church and Community Mobilisation (CCM) six-month course in February 2021. Long before we knew about Covid-19, Eagles envisioned this way to extend transformation to other parts of the world. It bursts a huge bottleneck in the lack of trained facilitators to roll out CCM.

The era of traditional projects is coming to an end. Tightening aid budgets and growing evidence of lack of local ownership/ sustainability means we must do things differently. CCM awakens churches to their call to integral mission and gives them the tools and the confidence to work with their communities to bring lasting and holistic change.

30 people are taking part in the pilot, which is supported by All We Can and All Saints Weston church in Bath. The participants include church leaders, and staff from organisations like Tearfund, Compassion International and Mothers' Union.

Digging deep

The Eagles certified online course takes everyone through a mix of Bible studies, activities and videos from the Eagles' staff, Bible Project and others. It is designed primarily for Christians but is open to people of all faiths or none and brings transformation for everyone. It is interactive, challenging and life-changing. It equips participants to facilitate:

- Bible studies that enable churches to understand God's heart for justice and to care for others, physically, spiritually and emotionally
- participatory activities that enable communities to prioritise the changes they need and work together to find solutions, using their own resources

Participants take a two-hour online session every fortnight and then carry out the Bible study and activities with a group or church after each session. Every Bible study leads to 'Acts of Love' that emerge from listening to God and each other that equip people to put their learning into practice. They post their reflections and actions so they inspire others - and are inspired by others.

But it does not stop with Acts of Love. The course shows the church how to work together with their community (or groups in the community) to enable everyone together to prioritise issues and take action.



Changing ourselves

Participants in the pilot shared the changes they see in themselves:

- a deeper commitment to God
- understanding the Bible more
- opened our eyes to practical ways to serve the needs of others
- no longer dictating solutions but helping people discover their resources and potential
- facilitating more confidently
- applying what I preach
- knowing every moment is precious and every resource valuable

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"I have been VERY impressed with the thoughtful design of the course, the incredibly simple yet powerful illustrations, and Eagles' caring leadership. The course has been a true blessing for those of us in Compassion who are participating. I am very optimistic about its potential to change the world!"

SENIOR STAFF MEMBER, COMPASSION

Acting in love

Participants in the pilot course are still on the first slope of the mountain (*previous page*) so have not yet begun working strategically with their community. Yet they are already putting Bible studies into practice through 'Acts of Love' - sometimes small, sometimes big, all bringing hope and healing. Below, James who is taking the course, visits a 24-year old young man with a disability. James and his team find that the young man's wheelchair is broken and he cannot walk or even crawl. Together they replaced the tyres and helped his mother take forward her idea of selling tomatoes and cooking oil to generate enough to provide for their basic needs.



Other Acts of Love have included;

- conflict resolution in a family where the daughter's pregnancy resulted in the family abandoning her. She resolved to abort the baby and commit suicide. Now relationships are healed; mother and baby are healthy; and she is back at school
- educating the community to avoid selling land for short-term gain and how to become more economically self-reliant
- identifying those with disability and making sure they access government grants to help
- reaching out to youth who are struggling with alcohol and drugs
- breaking the cycle of abusive relationships by talking in church about the need to share bad experiences; and supporting perpetrators to access therapy
- helping a child-headed household and funding basic expenses so children not in school can go
- paying a debt to release someone from jail and helping them think how to manage in the long-term
- intervening in domestic abuse of a girl by her step-father
- buying a birthday cake and caring for for an old woman who is alone
- linking someone with cancer to a hospice and providing basic needs

Church & Community Mobilisation in action

We share this story again from Mpyupyu village, Central Malawi, to remind you how the three stages of CCM work in practice. “This is a priceless thing that we have received in our community! What has started here, let it spread everywhere! ...” (Village Chief).

Stage 1: Mindset change in the church

The CCM Bible studies inspired Mpyupyu churches to understand God’s mandate for justice. They put their learning into action, supporting widows, orphans, the elderly and others. Despite their poverty, church members all contribute. The pastor explains, **“We are poor and we used to think that it was impossible to help others. But now we use the little that we have.”**

Stage 2: Mindset change in the community

The pastors explained CCM to the community leaders. The leaders were excited and called everyone together for a series of community meetings where everyone took part in activities that Eagles had taught them to identify and prioritise their challenges and to find solutions, using their own resources.

Stage 3: Taking action together

The village had desperately needed a bridge and road for years. They were almost cut off from the hospital and could not get to market to sell their produce. They waited and waited for someone to fix this for them. CCM united church and community to work together. They built their bridge and road less than a year after Eagles' training. People now see the churches in a new light, attracted to their passion for others - both churches more than doubled their membership. **“We used to expect people from town to come and do things for us; now we do things for ourselves.” (Chair of Area Development)**



Reaching further

The pilot course ends in September 2021. Many participants have already set in motion their own CCM processes. Mission agencies including Tearfund, Compassion International, Mothers' Union, Anglican Alliance and Hope International are reflecting how they want to use and adapt the course, and a new cohort of 60 pastors has already started! Watch this space!

“ I am incredibly impressed with the Eagles course and the Bible Studies in particular. I recommend that everyone in [our organisation] should take the course. It is that good!

MISSION AGENCY