

CCM advocacy case study - Owii

Summary

Owii is a small community in Northern Uganda. Following training from Tearfund's partner PAG, the Pastor at the local church trained the community in advocacy. Community members identified issues in their local area requiring an advocacy response and requested a 'community dialogue' with the local government. Initially the local government were unresponsive and were suspicious of the community. But over time, the relationship improved and as a result of the community's advocacy work, the local government provided mobile health services, a new school, desks, teachers and emergency food relief after flooding. Furthermore, the community's advocacy work highlighted that some government funds were going missing. The community are now participating in the local government planning cycle and monitoring the implementation of government plans.

Owii is a community in Northern Uganda. For several years Tearfund's partner the Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG) has been working with the community through the Church Community Mobilisation Process (CCMP) which has empowered the church and community to use the resources available to them. In 2011, Tearfund's partner PAG recognised that there was a limit to what the community could do with the resources available to them and that the local government had the responsibility to provide public services. But community members in Owii didn't even know they were entitled to these services and had no idea about how to call on the government to address some of the issues in their area.

So PAG trained Pastors from Owii and nearby communities in advocacy methods – training them in their rights, the responsibilities of local government and how to engage constructively with local leaders. Consequently, the Owii Pastor trained the community and set up an 'advocacy group' who wrote to the local authority requesting a 'community dialogue' meeting. The sub-county ignored the first two letters and became suspicious of the Owii community and asked the police to arrest the Owii leaders. The police refused as could see that the community just wanted to meet their local leaders. So the police offered to accompany the sub-county officials to attend the community dialogue and offer protection.

At this dialogue meeting, community members outlined issues they had identified and detailed which they were responding to directly and which they required the local government's input. The sub-county changed their approach from being confrontational, to being supportive and could see that the community wanted to bring development. The sub-county immediately offered new mobile health services to Owii.

Since then the relationship between the community and the sub-county has grown closer. Through this it has emerged that the Ministry of Health were paying for drugs for a health centre in Owii – which didn't exist, and funds were going missing. So central government ministries have trained Owii Councillors on their plans and how to monitor implementation, and have provided Councillors with mobile phones so that the ministries can check if the services are being delivered at the community level.

Furthermore, the local community are now participating in the local government planning cycle and influencing plans. This has led to a new government school, desks, teachers and emergency food relief following flooding.

