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Session created by Cathy James, Rick James & Steffie Kemp for Home Groups.
View the session and the rest of the series here.

home groups

Session 4 - Locally owned and led

Key Text: Matthew 14:13-21

Prepare: sealed box with different objects inside (not too obvious) e.g. gravel, flowers, chalk, leaves, coins, pen, soil, stones, bottle tops, string, candle, bottle, seeds etc.

Feedback from Act of Love:

Ask everyone to share a few sentences about the organisation which they found and how it brings long-term change.

Activity: Secret in a Box

Steps:

1. Introduce the three characters: the first is internationally travelled; the second has travelled nationally (e.g. in Malawi or any other country); the third has not travelled far from their village.
2. Hand the sealed box to the one playing the international traveller and ask them to say what is inside without opening it (but they may shake it). Announce how many they identified correctly, but not which ones.
3. Blindfold the one who has travelled nationally, open the box and allow them to feel the objects. Then ask them to say what they can feel. Announce how many they identified correctly.

4. Then hand the open box to the ‘community member’ and ask them to list the objects as specifically as possible (i.e. with their colours and other details).

Questions to discuss:

- Imagine that the box represents the third person’s community. Who knew most about it?
- Who could each of these three characters represent?
- What do we learn from this illustration about how community development can take place most effectively?

Key point: The first person could be a UK donor – mainly dependent on head knowledge; the second a government official or local organisation – with some local knowledge, but not in-depth understanding; the third a community member. Communities are the experts about own their lives. They are the ones who understand and can plan and lead action most effectively. National and international organisations may have useful knowledge to provide support.

Bible study: The Feeding of the 5000 (Matthew 14:13-21)

Pray that God will speak to us and help us to engage emotionally as we read the passage. Then read the passage together.

Questions to discuss:

- What was the need in this story? What were the resources?
- What did Jesus answer his disciples when they told him that people were hungry?
- Why do you think Jesus took this approach to performing the miracle?
- What does this mean for the way Jesus wants us to help others?

Key point: God wants people to identify and use their own resources to bring about transformation in our own lives and the life of our community. He takes the little we have and multiplies it beyond what we can imagine when we trust it to him.

Discussion

- What does the principle of ‘locally owned and led’ mean for the kind of organisations we should support?
- What implications might this have for volunteering? What are the questions that we should consider?

To find out more:

https://www.wearelumos.org/

Principles in Practice: Malawi

Case study: Chachacha Luhanga (a village in Northern Malawi) struggled with filthy water. Without proper wells, diarrhoea and other illnesses were a constant challenge. Eagles showed them how to use participatory activities to prioritise their challenges, identify their resources, plan action and take responsibility for their own development. Not surprisingly, they chose water as their first issue. They knew they could contribute sand, bricks and their own labour to build a borehole, they could not afford the pump. Someone had heard on the radio about an organisation called 'Wells for Zoe'. Representatives from the village walked to the nearest town to find the office and persuaded Wells for Zoe to provide the pumps, pipes and cement. Now everyone is much healthier, and children get diarrhoea much more rarely.

Yet the biggest transformation is that the community realised God had given them the creativity and resources to improve their own future and that they did not need to be dependent on others.

The chief said**: "In the past, we used to hope some NGO or politician would come to help us. Now we just meet as a community, decide what we need to do, and do it... In the future, our village will be so advanced! If you depend on organisations, they come and they go, but if you are self-reliant, you develop yourselves."**

Other community members agreed: **"If ['Wells for Zoe'] had just come here to build us a well, people's commitment would not have been there. It was because we identified the problem and approached them that we were all so committed to the work. One pump was damaged by thieves, and the community immediately repaired it by ourselves! We would not have done this if it hadn't been initiated by us.".** *(www.eaglesmalawi.org)*

Principles in Practice: UK

Ellie, Spear coach: "I am a coach on the Spear Programme, a programme that equips and empowers young people (who face barriers of various kinds) to get into work, education or training. We believe that they already hold the answer to problems they face and so use a coaching approach to enable them to discover this. As coaches we ask questions in order to raise awareness and activate responsibility within young people. This helps them realise the abilities and options they already have available - increasing their confidence and breaking patterns of dependency."

Act of Love

Ask God to reveal any resources that we have not entrusted to him. Reflect on what holds us back from doing so and what the result could be if we took action now. Pray for one another.

This week, find an organisation that works outside the UK that supports vulnerable people by helping them to identify and use their own skills and resources. Remember that taking the time to find effective organisations is an act of love to God and to others.

Preparation for next week: ask everyone to read Nehemiah 3:1-32 and jot down all the different people that became involved and the roles they played.

Cathy James

Cathy James is a social development consultant and practitioner with over twenty-five years' experience in international development. She combines a strong academic background with twelve years living and working in Africa and Latin America. Her extensive consultancy work provides support for UK and international organisations and their southern partners across the world. It includes working with faith groups and organisations, helping them work in effective, empowering ways that bring about long-term and holistic change. She brings expertise in church and community processes, participatory development, theory of change, monitoring and evaluation and assessing. She has also co-founded two Malawian NGOs and two UK supporting charities.

More by Cathy James

Rick James

Dr Rick James is an organisational change specialist in international development. He has spent 30 years working in Africa, Latin America and Europe, consulting for more than 100 aid agencies and churches. His focus is on leadership development, strategy and culture change. As well as consulting, coaching and training, Rick is a Senior Teaching Fellow at CASS Business School, London University, as Course Director for the Masters in NGO Management pathway. Rick has published extensively including books on: 'Consulting for Change', 'Creating Space for Grace'; 'Inspiring Change'; and 'Capacity building for NGOs: Making it work'.

More by Rick James

Steffie Kemp

Steffie Kemp has lived in Malawi for twelve years and currently works for Eagles Relief and

Development Programme (www.eaglesmalawi.org) in church and community mobilisation as the Advocacy and Learning Coordinator. Eagles mobilises and empowers local churches and communities to work together, take responsibility for their own development and achieve holistic change. Her focus is on the role of faith and mindset change in community-owned development and the connection to long-term change. Her consultancy work includes UNICEF, Mothers' Union, Comic Relief and the Joint Learning Initiative (JLI). She is pursuing an MSc in Human Rights Law from Oxford University.

More by Steffie Kemp

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