

PILLARS Newsletter No 6 September 2005

Apologies for the long delay in sending you another PILLARS newsletter. With no coordinator now in place, it's not so easy to find the time to put one together! But in the meantime there have been lots of encouraging developments. We've had news from several organisations that have been translating PILLARS guides into languages new to PILLARS. An Urdu translation of Mobilising the Church is now completed in Pakistan and a Farsi (Persian) translation of Mobilising the Community is also available. We've had two separate requests from people in Uganda translating PILLARS into Luganda. We've put them in touch with each other and they seem keen to support each other in the work of translation.

In Mozambique Jorge Ramos of AMM has been busy. He comments "This work of God has been such a blessing, despite great difficulties we encountered in obtaining the materials and using this new approach to help us in training.

Currently we have three churches that are working on development projects following our training using the PILLARS manual. Groups in some churches have begun to develop activities that display a significant change in their attitudes. They are speaking positively of association between the Churches, the organising of support for the poor at several levels, and cultivating gardens in order to support orphan children.

The edition already translated is currently in the hands of 230 people in various provinces that speak the Macua language. It is clear that the material is very useful to us, and for the community. We have put a great effort into this work because we can see what benefits the translations bring to the churches and other groups."

In Brazil the Greenwoods (BMS World Mission workers) have been using Credit and Loans for an income generation group in a small town with high unemployment. The group started as a mixed group i.e. church and non-church people, and folk interested in two enterprises - mending electronic goods and handicrafts. The non-church people and those interested in mending electrical goods dropped off fairly soon. They have now completed the guide and are in the planning stages of their handicraft activities.

A selection of guides has also been used to put together a training course on Holistic Mission for the United Baptist Convention in Ceará. The training material is based on pages from three

PILLARS guides (Mobilising the church, Mobilising the community, and Capacity building) together with some additional Bible studies and practical activities. A pdf of this is available in Portuguese only, called "Capacitação em Missão Integral". Since returning to UK in August the Greenwoods have heard that sections of this guide were recently used during the meeting of Missionary Educators from the Pre-School Education Programmes run by ABIAH-OASIS in North East Brazil. One of the trainees on the previous course (Daniel Luz) participated as a facilitator, and the sections were well received.

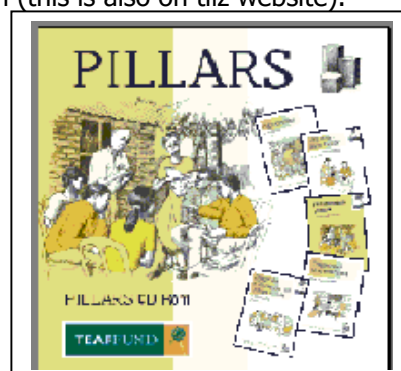
Training in Myanmar

In Myanmar a PILLARS Awareness Workshop was held recently at Myitkyina, Kachin State. The 27 participants were trainers in their community as well as facilitators. Their expectations were to understand the concepts of PILLARS, how PILLARS relates to general development and to learn facilitation skills. As part of the facilitation skills training, we asked the participants to create role plays on some topics from Building the Capacity of Local People and asked them what was the difference between teaching and facilitating. All of them were good at acting.

On the second day, we introduced how to use participatory Bible studies and PILLARS guides in their community. People are very keen to speak in their own language. The participants were really interested to see the Burmese translations we had done. They practised using discussion and facilitation skills in small groups with each other. As they are development workers, they learnt very quickly. I hope they will now be able to link PILLARS guides with their development work.

CD Rom

The new PILLARS CD Rom version 3 is a considerable improvement on previous versions. Not only does it contain the pdfs of all existing guides and workbooks, but it also has all the alternative illustrations – Asian, African and occasionally Latin American versions. In addition there is lots of information on translating and using PILLARS guides and on getting the most out of them (this is also on tilz website).



New website for PILLARS



The tilz website has moved! It is now part of the main Tearfund website. (Website address <http://www.tearfund.org/tilz>). It has a very different appearance and is packed full of useful information about PILLARS. You will now find all the PILLARS guides there (in html format) in all four languages. Pdfs of the PILLARS workbook and the facilitation skills handbooks are also available. Everything is free of charge to download. There is also a list of all the organisations that have produced translations of different guides, or written their own guides in local languages.

The site is low bandwidth and easy to navigate. You can search for specific issues in agriculture, health, water or community development. You can use sections of the facilitation skills handbook to train others in facilitation skills. You could look up a bible study from Footsteps, ROOTS book or Guide our steps to provide an introduction for a discussion.

One completely new addition is a large section on 'Using PILLARS' that gives lots of ideas about different ways in which PILLARS can be used for different aspects of work such as improving nutrition, disaster mitigation or income generation. If you want to place orders, the latest publications catalogue and order form are there. Do have a look, add it to your favourites, and tell others about it. We have a useful promotional box about tilz available to send by email to others if this would be useful. Just email PILLARS@tearfund.org and we'll send it to you.

Radio stations extend Tearfund's work

ACROSS, Tearfund's partner in Sudan, made the decision to move its radio station into South Sudan within weeks of peace being agreed. This radio station has been broadcasting news, teaching and a Christian viewpoint into South Sudan for years in a number of local languages. It has provided much encouragement in a country where there is no free press, no newspapers and no postal service.

Now the support station in Arua, North Uganda is helping the radio with recorded broadcasts of Tearfund publications. They are translating articles and pages from [Footsteps](#) and [PILLARS](#) into Zandé and Juba Arabic. These are heard by many thousands of people. The key person involved, Emmanuel, attended one of the first PILLARS

workshops in Yambio where participants translated and wrote guides in Zandé. Emmanuel writes; "This will help Tearfund's efforts in developing communities around the world to develop themselves. There are many who don't know how to read and write. The radio can help them learn by listening to the articles on the Radio in their own languages". He asks for our prayers to make the presentations sound really interesting to the listeners.

In addition, further help is coming from another organisation. ZOA is including "recording radio programmes" in the duties of its health workers. ACROSS are helping them to train their workers and record some health programmes in the Bari language. This helps ACROSS share more information at little cost to them.

International staff from Trans World Radio recently visited Tearfund and are very interested in extending their use of Tearfund publications. They hope initially to broadcast the Portuguese version of the PILLARS guide 'Credit and loans for small businesses' in Mozambique. They plan to broadcast one topic each week and make the printed pages available to any readers who write in.

Spreading the word

Many of us put huge effort into writing, translating, proof reading and printing PILLARS guides. People work together on translating content or writing new material. New illustrations may be ordered, different experts are asked to check the contents. The work goes on for months. Finally the moment comes when everything is completely ready and the work goes off to be printed. What a relief! Boxes of crisp, clean books arrive a few weeks later. We open them with pride, pass a few copies around with even more pride – and then what?

Sometimes its easy to be so focused on producing good quality guides, that we forget about the business of using them well. Producing the guides is only the beginning of the story. Making sure many people and organisations are aware of them and help people to use them effectively with good facilitation skills, is a key part of the story.

Many of the groups wanting to produce and use PILLARS are new to the processes of translation, printing and promotion. We've tried to make the processes as easy as possible. In the past year Tearfund was given funding from THASP/DCI which has enabled the production of a Footsteps issue, a ROOTS book and a PILLARS guide on the subject of our response to HIV and AIDS. This

funding has also enabled the production of a number of language translations. The Footsteps issue (number 61) is available in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Hindi, Bangla and Chinese. The ROOTS books is available in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese, with Hindi, Chinese, KiSwahili and Russian translations in progress. The PILLARS guide is now available in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Hindi, Kinyarwanda, KiSwahili, Amharic and Chinese. (If you'd like copies of any of these the details are available on tilz website.) The group who produced the KiSwahili guide were new to the idea of PILLARS. Their enthusiasm for this work has been wonderful. However, not only did they produce a good quality book, they also had very ambitious plans for launching this guide. They worked really hard, planning an official launch in a central Nairobi hotel, inviting politicians, NGOs, government agencies and church groups. They had speakers to explain about PILLARS, free copies, refreshments and made sure the press were there too. There was a great response to this, with lots of enquiries and orders coming in as a result. Here is an article Maria Wanza Kanini wrote following the launch for the Christian Professional Magazine.



Launch of new PILLARS guide

For a very long time, I've been working on the Launch of the Pillars Guide - Responding more effectively to HIV/AIDS*. It has a Christian perspective to it. It is clear and to the point. If you would like to find out more about it, just let me know and I'll get you a copy. It's been worth all the effort. But you can't believe what you have to go through to get an audience of 150 people seated and listening to an idea you think is great.

This is a book that helps the church to deal honestly with HIV and AIDS. In June this year, for the first time in the living memory of any Kenyan, we witnessed four clergy come out in the open in our country without fear or shame about their HIV and AIDS status. I am appalled that some of them have suffered discrimination and stigma in the hands of the church, an institution that is supposed to have protected and even embraced them. But there is now a strong feeling about making the church respond to this disease. Not

just acknowledging its existence, but tackling it.

Trans World Radio – Kenya in conjunction with Tearfund, launched a Kiswahili HIV/AIDS Pillars Guide manual titled - Jinsi Ya Kukabilia Kikamilifu na Viini vya HIV na Maradhi ya Ukimwi. The English translation - Responding more effectively to HIV and AIDS is also available.

Hearing these brave clergymen acknowledge that they had HIV in a public place has become a plus in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Canon Gideon Byamugisha of Uganda, one of the first clergy to declare he was HIV+, said something strategic. "Many of Africa's deaths are preventable, postponable and reversible if only we can defeat stigma, shame, discrimination, denial and inaction"- Nation June, 2005. This statement shows a great gap in the efforts of the church and its fight against HIV/AIDS. This is the gap that this book addresses in its 24 topics. In its highly interactive format, it helps the reader acknowledge not only the existence of the disease but also the growth of stigma and discrimination in the church. This book looks critically at the role of the church and what its response should be. It covers health issues like medicinal drugs, tests for HIV and healthy eating.

What stands out is the format that it has been presented in. After every subject has been highlighted, then comes the discussion. At the end of the book there are 11 soul searching Bible studies that call for open discussion. This Pillars Guide is meant to be used in small groups. The Bible Studies cover subjects like Attitudes towards AIDS, Sex, caring for orphans and widows and God's amazing love among others.

Church leaders who find themselves overwhelmed with the idea of starting discussions on HIV and AIDS will find this material valuable. This book will not only help them start discussion on this subject, but will also help them tackle different areas as far as HIV and AIDS is concerned. A church leader, Faith Based Organization or any individual experiencing difficulties in breaking the silence about HIV and AIDS in the Church should get this book and use it as a tool to do so. Leaders can buy it in bulk for their members at discounted prices and encourage their members to get it.

The book is now available at Trans World Radio – Kenya (off Ngong Road on Kamburu drive) and in bookshops in Kenya. The costs are as follows: Ordinary cost – Kshs 350, 15 or more copies – Kshs.325, Orders above 25 - Kshs.300. Call us and ask for Maria Wanza at 573938/20/46

Falling forwards in grace.

The day dawned bright and the spirits of the participants at the first Tearfund Pillars conference held in Chiang Rai, Thailand, were high. We were all looking forward to leaving the walls of the Bethel Bible Institute and going to the hills to visit communities and try out ideas and skills from the PILLARS GUIDES.

The organisers had done their best to ensure there was adequate transport and they had conferred with the host communities about our arrival. We were divided into three groups and each group was to practise a different item with a different group. One group (of which I was a member) was to practise the art of questioning about a project using the hand tool with a women's group. The other was to work with the youth and the other with the general community. My group was slotted to start and in the process break the ice and set the pace for the rest of the team members. I was picked to be the lead facilitator.

We drove to the village in high spirits and when we arrived after passing through winding roads up the hills. On the way, we passed through places where teams were campaigning for their candidates in the elections. (Allow me to digress a bit) Coming from Africa, I was amazed at the number of motor bikes and vehicles that were used in the exercise. Here we are used to bicycles and foot campaigners unless one is lucky to belong to the ruling party where one may be lucky to get an old jeep. The big cars belong to the big guys.

Arriving at our village, we found a group of fifteen Akha women waiting for us. By the end there were twenty eight. The chief who is also a member of the group led them. Culturally, the members do not talk when the chief is around.

We started our discussion with the greetings and introductions. We had considerable language and culture barriers to overcome! A colleague from Burkina Faso was my right hand man supported by another colleague from Sudan. After the introductions, we started by asking for the history of the project and what the women were doing. They informed us how they began with very little money saved from workshop allowances and what they had done as a group. They had constructed toilets for the families among other activities. They have been raising funds through the sale of traditional jackets and bags. As the discussion continued, I realised I was doing an interview just with the chief! No matter how much I involved the other women, it was difficult for them to contribute because they looked to her to respond.

To break the monotony, I asked them to respond in their local language, which, I repeated after them, and when they saw me struggling with their language, they were all excited and started talking. By this time the group had relaxed and I requested my colleague to take over, but it was not to be. I realised I had to break the discussion so that others could participate. Eventually we were able to divide the group into smaller manageable units.

As a strong supporter of participatory processes, I saw myself falling and breaking the rules but because of culture, finding it very difficult to practise what I know. So in order not to offend the chief and our host, we had to find a way out as a team. The lesson here, for me, was that no matter how experienced you are, you may find yourself in a difficult situation. If you do, find a graceful way out, where you will not embarrass your host and which will maintain the team effort.

At the end of the exercise, we were treated to a sumptuous traditional Akha meal, thanks to the efforts of our hosts.

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Consultants available

The PILLARS materials are designed to be as easy as possible, to use with workbooks to help both in training facilitators and in translating guides. However, remember that if you want support for beginning work with PILLARS, there are six trained consultants available, in different regions of the world, to support any organisation wishing to embed the PILLARS approach into their work.

Planned research

During 2006, a research exercise is planned to observe and assess the impact of PILLARS within community groups. Are you aware of any 'ordinary' groups who are quietly getting on with using PILLARS on a regular basis during part of their meetings? In particular, groups who do not have the benefit of outside help or trainers. If so, Isabel would really appreciate hearing about their work and also hopes to make several visits to such groups.

New publications

In addition to the new CD Rom and a number of new translations, a new PILLARS guide on public health will be printed next month called 'Encouraging good hygiene and sanitation.' In preparation is a guide which looks at increasing understanding and awareness of issues of human rights, justice and gender.

Strengthening groups with PILLARS

Fernando Bochio, PILLARS consultant in Brazil has sent in this encouraging case study from Brazil:

In Brazil, the experience of CAF (Casa de Assistência Filadelfia) with PILLARS helped people living with HIV/AIDS to get together and face their difficulties. CAF is a partner of Tearfund working in São Paulo with children and teenagers at risk. In 2002, the leadership of CAF received some PILLARS guides. They thought they could apply them in their work in helping families living with HIV/AIDS. The families that attended their meetings were very poor. Because they lacked specific skills, they had difficulty finding work and it was very hard to raise their children. They wanted to live as normal citizens and not depend on the favour of the government or the society. To promote healthy development, people themselves need to work out their own priorities, make their own decisions and choose strategies to deal with any problems. People need to learn to take control of their own destiny.

Pastor João Raul, the coordinator of the CAF Family Program, used the Pillars Guides to initiate discussion, hoping that this would help the individuals who attended their centre to see each other as part of the same community. Maybe together, they could find solutions to the problems they had in common. They started with using the "Mobilizing the Community" Guide. After the very first meeting, it was possible to see their enthusiasm with the new ideas and possibilities that were discussed in the group. They agreed to begin making decorations for Christmas to be sold as gifts. They enjoyed being able to make things with their hands and use their creativity. The group grew in self-confidence and faith. The experience of selling the products was a new challenge. They had to face barriers and difficulties. It helped them to improve their relationship and skills and to discuss other possibilities to be able to carry on working together.

The building where they met to work had very limited space so João Raul found them space in CAF headquarters. They studied another PILLARS guide on "Building the Capacity of Local Group". They used this to help them in the planning of their new workshop. At they had just one old sewing machine, a table, some pieces of materials and many uncertainties. Slowly they gained skills in sewing and began to use the workshop.

Now CAF Family Program has a permanent patchwork workshop with six sewing machines and

new tables to cut out materials. This workshop is helping families to learn new skills. As well as earning money, this work is restoring their self-esteem and developing hope for the future. In the future, members hope to improve the quality of their products, improve their skills in presenting and selling their products, and expand the work to welcome and involve other families.



CAF are very enthusiastic about using the PILLARS Guides in Brazil. PILLARS are not just manuals, but are about a real process that helps the development of communities. For Pastor João Raul, the biggest contribution of PILLARS was "to restore people's capacity to learn, develop and believe in their own abilities as a means of overcoming their problems".



I hope you've enjoyed this collection of experiences around the world. Please send in your own stories and observations to share in the next PILLARS newsletter.

Isabel Carter