

Partnerships for Transformational Community Development: Prioritizing Churches as Assets

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Abstract

In this era of globalization, tackling the root causes of poverty cannot and should not be done from one perspective or by one organization alone. Addressing the complexities of poverty with a goal of sustainable change and transformational development in a community requires a collaborative approach. A case study reporting on the relationship between Bethany Community Church in Seattle, Washington; World Relief Rwanda; and communities in Musanze, Rwanda, has revealed the core components required in a partnership striving for transformational development, as well as the need for ongoing research and evaluation of collaborative efforts in the community development process. Churches, non-governmental organizations, and community leaders in the global North and the global South need to be working together with humility, intentionality, and shared purpose in order to empower communities and meet people's physical, psychological, social, and spiritual needs.

Key words: Partnership, collaboration, church, transformational development, Rwanda

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Partnerships for Transformational Community Development: Prioritizing Churches as Assets

Introduction

There is not a one-size-fits-all solution to poverty in communities the United States or in the global South. Yet, non-profit organizations, churches, and government institutions each have developed standard fundraising, program, and partnership models in efforts to make the international development process more manageable, efficient, and measurable (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009; Martinussen, 1997). These approaches require continual refinement and planning, limited program time lines, monitoring and evaluation, and demand for tangible results, all of which can overshadow opportunities for progress and coordination between communities and partners for sustainable change. The models also can be utilized to serve the needs of external development agencies or donors, rather than the communities in need. Long-term, intentional partnerships and shared objectives between non-profit organizations and local churches could lead to sustainable, transformational development practices that empower impoverished communities.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the first shared objectives meant to guide efforts of global leaders and organizations in addressing some of the root causes of poverty around the world by 2015 (UNDP, 2010). In 2010, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) identified gaps in this approach and put into action the MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF) which includes four steps for countries falling behind in their progress toward a goal: “identification of the necessary interventions to achieve the MDG target; bottlenecks that impede the effectiveness of key interventions on the ground; identification of high-impact and feasible

solutions to prioritized bottlenecks; and formulation of an action plan, with identified roles for all development partners, that will help realize the solutions” (p. 7).

Within these recommended steps, the UNDP has acknowledged the values of asset-based community development, participatory development, and coordinated partnerships for transformational, sustainable development. What remains undefined in these steps and in the development plans for many communities and countries are the unique roles of the local and international churches or religious institutions, local and federal government, non-profit organizations, and business and corporations as partners in the development process (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009; Kretzman & McKnight, 1993; Myers, 2011). These institutions often share a vision of helping vulnerable communities and have core competencies that could complement one another’s expertise, yet limited funding, corruption, competition, pride, and discrimination can inhibit progress and collaboration in development efforts in many communities (Kretzman & McKnight, 1993; Martinussen, 1997). Understanding the values, strengths, weaknesses, and obstacles of these institutions as well as the culture and assets of the communities they aim to work with can help create a clearer picture of the potential for coordinated, transformational community development programs empowering people to escape the cycle of poverty.

Serving the poor

Without even dissecting the definition of poverty or reviewing broad responses to address it, one can claim that our humanity and our compassion draw us to be concerned for people in need – the homeless, the ill, the marginalized. Our intentions may be honorable in responding to their needs and helping them might make us feel good, but we often don’t consider the impact of our actions on the poor, ourselves, and the communities we strive to serve (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009). Governments aim to provide a safety net and ensure people’s basic human needs are met.

Community leaders and organizations want their neighbors to thrive and to be able to contribute to society and their own well-being. Businesses want to be thought of well, and also increase demand for their brand and products. And Christians, among other religious believers, feel that they are especially called to serve the poor and vulnerable, following Jesus' example. Well-intentioned individuals, organizations, and institutions – Christian and non-Christian – can often cause more harm than good in communities if they fail to consider their own cultural biases, their development perspectives, the assets of the community, and the potential long-term implications of their actions (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009; Kretzman & McKnight, 1993; Moyo, 2009). Poverty is complex, which means that solutions to poverty also need to be multifaceted and founded on more than good intentions (Karlan & Appel, 2011). And seeking collaborative partnerships – with communities and among organizations - is one of the many ways that non-profit organizations, churches, and even government institutions are working to improve their approaches to community development, to create new programs, and to realign their expertise to meet complex community needs and recognize community assets. This trend toward collaboration can allow for more community participation in the development process, shared learning, improved stewardship, and most importantly higher potential for sustainable, long-term growth.

In *Encounter God in the City*, Randy White (2006) wrote about how he observed “a trinity of institutional sectors” in his work in Fresno, California, where connections were formed between the private sector, the public sector, churches, and non-profit service organizations in the area (p. 152, 160). White (2006) also explained the importance of two-way relationships in bringing about agents of change from within communities for long-term impact. Through this paper, I aim to encourage similar partnerships among development organizations and churches–

inside and outside of communities – and with the people they serve. If multiple parties are committed to solving the problems of poverty in their communities, then their collaboration can reduce duplication of effort and competition in the community development process, and ultimately advance their work and provide greater benefit the community they serve. Although partnerships will look different in every community, striving toward collaboration can provide opportunities to address the underlying causes of poverty, engage and adequately equip community members, strengthen the core competencies of partners, and uncover potential program efficiencies and opportunities for growth (Butler, 2005). Partnership is the answer to how private and public sectors and Christians and Non-Christians can and need to work alongside impoverished communities in a sustainable, intentional manner that respects their culture and their assets.

Community development approaches and partnership

Non-profit organizations, governing bodies, churches, and businesses each have their own objectives in helping communities, and also might align with different beliefs about how to work for or alongside communities in need. Strategies for community development are continually evolving as poverty and human need persists and the number of people – in the Global North and South - working to address those needs grows. However, some of the dominating beliefs about how to break the cycle of poverty and stimulate community growth include: economic development, increased welfare and human development, advancement in infrastructure and technology, eliminating dependency or increasing community cooperatives, capacity building and participatory methods, sustainable approaches with long-term vision, increasing human rights and freedoms, and self-development of communities (Martinussen, 1997). In many cases these approaches are not independent but interwoven in community

development strategies. And the leadership roles in the development process –external and internal – also can become blurred. Partnerships can support all of these beliefs, but can have the most significant impact in capacity building, encouraging community participation, and providing sustainable approaches to development, as well as driving self-development within communities.

One of the highly debated approaches to development, which has since become a commonly referenced formula, is *transformational development*. Bryant Myers (2011) redefined this theory in his book *Walking with the Poor*, making a claim that the process of physical, psychological, social, and spiritual development of people should be taken into account together in all community development programs around the world. Myers (2011) acknowledged a gap between Western and non-Western explanations of and responses to human conditions that can affect how communities respond to development efforts. And he also claimed that Christians and their churches – in the United States and around the world – are best positioned to address the bulk of these development needs and should be leading the charge in serving the needs of the poor. Myers' (2011) theory of how churches should be leaders in community development aligns with Biblical references to a truly caring and concerned Christian community. Yet, many churches do not have the technical capacity to start development programs and fulfill all of their commitments to communities and, in turn, can actually inhibit progress and empowerment. Myers' (2011) position still has challenged development practitioners – secular and religious - to think again about what it means to be *impoverished*, what components of community development programs are essential, and how to measure success. This shift to realizing the broader range of human need also demands a collaborative response to address the physical, psychological, social, and even spiritual poverty people experience (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009).

Local leaders, churches, governing bodies, business and non-profit organizations must be working together in order to have a greater chance of understanding the root causes and dimensions of poverty and offering an appropriate, long-term response to empower communities in need (Butler, 2005).

About Partnership

Over the past decade, development practitioners, church leaders, government and non-governmental organizations have paid increasing attention to the value of partnerships in their work with urban communities. In his book, *Well Connected: Releasing Power, Restoring Hope Through Kingdom Partnerships*, Phill Butler (2005) defined partnership as “any group of individuals or organizations, sharing a common interest, who regularly communicate, plan, and work together to achieve a common vision beyond the capacity of any of the individual partners” (Butler, 2005, p. 35). A partnership requires more commitment and communication than a network of organizations. The collaboration of partners toward a shared vision beyond their individual means also separates them from the organizations with individual purposes that constitute many community development networks (Butler, 2005).

Some development practitioners argue that partnerships can be an inefficient use of time and financial resources and even cause harm to already vulnerable communities (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). Yet, communities, churches, non-profit organizations, governments, and other institutions are still seeking the best way to build and utilize networks to improve program implementation and funding strategies, and create solutions that can help them address the root causes of poverty in complex contexts (Butler, 2005). The success of these efforts remains to be seen, but in the interim a movement around collaboration in development continues. A review of the approaches to partnerships in community development and some of the observed effects on

the beneficiary communities being served will provide valuable insight (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009; Myers, 2011).

The case for partnership. It is important to recognize the value of partnerships for transformational development, while addressing the complexities of working cross-culturally, incorporating Christian mission, and being sensitive to the balance of power in the impoverished communities. There are countless examples of how people's lives and systems in communities in the United States and abroad are in the process of transformation all because alliances were formed. Yet, there are just as many stories of broken partnerships or missed opportunities to collaborate due to lack of human or financial capacity, fear of potential risks, or concern for loss of identity (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009; White, 2006). Especially in the Christian and community development contexts there is a tendency toward building partnerships to advance mission and impact and a demand for more in-depth analysis of collaborative models.

Phill Butler, who currently serves as Senior Strategic Advisor of visionSynergy and was the founder of collaborative networks Interdev and Intercristo wrote, "Working with others in partnership can completely change your perspective on ministry and the potential God has for you." (2005, p. 11). In his book, *Well Connected: Releasing Power, Restoring Hope Through Kingdom Partnerships*, Butler (2005) argued that partnerships are Biblical and part of God's design for communities, but also an answer for individuals, businesses, churches, or organizations seeking to accomplish goals beyond their own capacity and vision. Partnerships might require a significant initial investment of time and finances, but the efforts can yield efficiency in operations; ability of organizations to utilize their individual strengths, effectiveness in achieving broader outcomes; increased financial, human and technical capacity; and reduced risk (Butler, 2005).

Success has been shared about participatory development approaches that involve partnership with impoverished communities and their institutions. One such example is a UNDP project focused on restructuring the security sector in Rwanda after the genocide to aid in restoration of peace and order (Fred-Mensah, 2004). The Rwandan government was engaged in the decision-making process with UNDP and donor countries to merge all of the police forces in order to create more social capital and eliminate differences in authority structures (Fred-Mensah, 2004). Dialogue promoting or analyzing holistic development methodologies based on partnerships has continued as practitioners strive to determine what methodologies will work most effectively to end the cycle of poverty in U.S. communities as well as abroad (Conn & Ortiz, 2001; Corbett & Fikkert, 2009; Moyo, 2009; Myers, 2011).

Utilizing partnerships might not be the quickest route to developing and transforming communities. However, organizations and community members sharing in the benefits of collaboration with one another are able to look beyond their individual goals toward a broader vision for change and sharpen their strengths while maximizing their impact (Butler, 2005; Giorgas, 2000; Huxham, 2003). The work of these partners, as they each use their strengths in concert, has the potential to affect transformation in entire community systems over time. Collaboration might require more effort and investment, but the return can bring about deep and sustainable change in community development strategies, community leadership, the cycle of poverty, and even within the partner organizations.

The case against partnership. Partnership is not for every organization and can carry a negative connotation in many cross-cultural contexts (Lederleitner, 2010). Even Scott Todd, Compassion International's Senior Vice President of International Partner Development, has recommended not engaging in partnerships if you do not have to. Todd (2012) wrote, "Don't

enter into the hard, slow, and sometimes messy climb of partnership unless you must. But if your mission is bigger than your organization, then you don't have an option" (Realism over Pessimism section, para. 3). Overall, because partnerships are most often formed to achieve broad visions and objectives, they are complex relationships demanding extra time and investment. Mark Avery of Inscit Consulting, who works on strategic collaboration opportunities with networks of international development organizations, explained that often, especially among Christians, partnerships can be difficult. "There has to be a reason for each partner showing up at the table at the time," he said. "A lot of times as Christians, we go about partnership as 'let's just bring everyone to the table, we're all one in Christ.' And we forget the fact that... being one in Christ is true whether you come in or out of the partnership" (M. Avery, personal communication, January 15, 2013).

Partnerships are not guaranteed to succeed. Without a foundational and defined relationship and shared objectives, a partnership usually will not last (Butler, 2005; Todd, 2012). Organizations lacking a balance of confidence in their strengths and humility in their relationships also can affect how a partnership might be sustained (Butler, 2005; Todd, 2012). "For partnerships to work, each party must be 'all in.' Each party must see the contribution of others not just as necessary, but critical for mission success," wrote Todd, explaining the value of mutual commitment.

Lack of respect for community values also can contribute to turmoil in cross-cultural partnerships. Communities might resist against partnership, because they feel that the organization's values and influence do not align with their own, or they could feel pressured into partnership. Participatory development also can be considered a form of partnership when engaging with communities in the global South as well as communities in need in the United

States. In *Participation: The New Tyranny?*, Bill Cooke and Uma Kothari (2001) claimed that participatory development does not appropriately promote community participation at all, often does more harm than good, and went so far as to say the model should be abandoned in many environments. Critics of participatory development approaches assert that often non-governmental organizations (NGOs) construct false communities based on their naivety, influence, or pressure for equal representation of the community (Bornstein, 2005; Cooke & Kothari, 2001). What many organizations and churches fail to recognize is how their power and opinions can direct all stages of the community development process to an end where *participation* is vaguely present and community members are not empowered or engaged. Addressing this phenomenon could be more productive in the long run than abandoning the participatory development model altogether.

Cooke and Kothari (2001) shared an example from Sando village in Zimbabwe, where community members had built their own school and established income generating clubs, but were unable to ensure the functioning of their borehole pump due to their rural location, low income and lack political influence. “Development practitioners excel in perpetuating the myth that communities are capable of anything, that all that is required is sufficient mobilization (through institutions) and the latent capacities of the community will be unleashed in the interests of development,” they wrote (2001, p. 46). Overall, they desire for community development leaders to recognize their influence and power in communities and also have realistic picture of community assets before engaging in partnership with them. They argued that empowerment in many cases is an attempt to reshape personhood, not just perspective (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). Many development practitioners still agree that empowering community members through participation in or leadership of their own neighborhood’s development is essential for

transformation and can be done in a culturally appropriate and sustainable way (Myers, 2011; Perkins, 1982). Providing more opportunities for community-initiated partnerships and open dialogue with NGOs before initiating development programs could help avoid some of the harm to communities and allow for more organic and sustainable collaboration.

Approaches to partnership in development

Partnerships are valuable for broad impact and systemic change in impoverished communities. Understanding the benefits and risks of partnership, and building a case for its use requires knowing the potential approaches to partnership and the key players in carrying out work alongside communities. All influencers of community life and well-being could be considered prospects for collaboration in community development. These authorities will vary by location and culture but, in addition to local community leaders, might include local and national governing bodies, small businesses and corporations, churches or other religious institutions, schools, and non-governmental organizations. Each of these groups play an important role in the life of community members and has a responsibility to advocate for and to influence how a community develops.

Involvement of local institutions and government in recognizing community members' assets and supporting their growth is essential, however external churches and non-governmental organizations seem to be leading the charge in working to develop communities (Todd, 2012). These organizations also are in the public spotlight - attracting both most positive and negative attention – as a result of program strategies, fund allocation, and donor feedback. It is these collaborative relationships involving community members, churches, and non-governmental organizations that I aim to dissect further in this paper.

Partnerships involving community members. The definition of *community* has been debated among development scholars, as this understanding dictates the role of the community members as well as the responsibilities of key local leaders and organizations in the development process (Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Perkins, 1982; White, 2006). Most practitioners agree that empowering community members through participation in or leadership of their own neighborhood's development is essential for transformation (Myers, 2011; Perkins, 1982; White, 2006). Yet, there exists a wide range of opinions on when and how community members and institutions should be involved in or direct the development process. No perfect formula exists for a successful long-term partnership with a community, but shying away from or counting out these partnerships with community members is not an option.

There is growing consensus around the belief that community members should be considered not just the object of a development program but an essential, relational partner in the transformation process (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009; Myers, 2011). Asset-based community development and participatory development strategies are founded on this belief and seek to involve community leaders and all community members with a goal of more sustainable development and increased social capital as a foundation for the community (Fred-Mensah, 2004; Giorgas, 2000; Kretzman & McKnight, 1993). John Perkins (1982) took this understanding one step further and claimed that in order to bring about justice in a community that has been oppressed, the people and institutions in that community must take responsibility and jumpstart the development process themselves even if the oppressors will be slow to change their behavior. Perkins (1982) wrote that government, schools, and businesses needed to make changes after the civil rights movement as well, but if the African American community had not come together and understood its own role in bringing about transformation and challenging

systems those changes would likely have been impossible to realize. This understanding translates into international development and community transformation strategies as well. If community members are not invested in or even engaged in the programs that will define their future, then the investment of NGOs, government institutions, schools, hospitals, or external churches will not be successful or sustainable (Da Cruz, 2011). Community leaders and volunteers, whether part of a local church or not, need to take action in the development of their own community to realize change.

Partnership between churches and communities. Churches and other religious institutions are often the center of community life and service in the Majority World (Goh, 2010; Myers, 2011). Viewed by some as a place of hope and relationship, many churches also are a place of physical refuge when people are in need of food, shelter, or health care. Even though Christians acknowledge that God calls his people to care for the poor, there can be confusion about what that means: physical provision, evangelism, or a combination of the two. Dialogue around the role of churches as leaders and partners in the development process has continued in recent years as people have sought the solution to addressing the root causes of poverty in a sustainable manner (Bornstein, 2005; Corbett & Fikkert, 2009; Groody, 2007). Perkins (1982) reminded his readers that in the midst of the civil rights era and the difficult years following, churches were the only place that African American people could hold positions of power, so they were a natural foundation for reconciliation, justice, and development. This is not far off from the situation faced by vulnerable people in both the global North and global South today.

Other Christian development professionals have shared their perspectives on the role of the local church today in reconciling people's relationships with self, God, and community in the United States and in villages abroad. Bryant Myers (2011) offered transformational development

as answer that not only acknowledged the importance of churches in the development process but claimed that they should be leaders. In *When Helping Hurts*, Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert (2009) provided Christian ministries with a framework for challenging and changing their approaches to local community service and international mission work, recognizing the importance of harnessing and redirecting the passion and influence of churches. Now, many development practitioners and NGOs acknowledge that religious leaders often are the most aware of their community's needs and are a necessary channel for communication, but the appropriate program approach for collaboration remains undefined (Bornstein, 2005; Corbett & Fikkert, 2009; Myers, 2011; Perkins, 1982). Most churches do not have the financial or technical capacity to meet all of a community's needs but can offer human capacity. And through partnering with other churches, non-profit organizations, schools, businesses, and even local government bodies, they can gain greater insight and access to resources for the community development process. Perkins (1982) explained, "While the church must spearhead the work of community development, other organizations can and should become partners with us in our mission" (p. 200). Not only do churches need other organizations as partners to further the development process, but community institutions frequently require help from churches to communicate with the community members, advocate for change, and assist in carrying out development programs. Churches and other local institutions should work together to identify community needs, assets, and opportunities for relational service. In doing so, churches can set an example of the hope and the love that God has for all people (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009, 2012; Myers, 2011).

Partnerships between NGOs and communities. Most NGOs focused on community development aim to serve as the technician in the development process, holding responsibility

for project planning, fundraising, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation. They also can serve as liaisons or interpreters between communities and other institutions and are viewed as advocates for and partners of the poor by people in the global North (Bornstein, 2005; Martinussen, 1997). Most are equipped with knowledge of how to implement development models in impoverished communities, and they help identify the root causes of poverty in a community and propose and monitor programmatic solutions for physical or social development. NGOs are valuable partners in the development process, yet they also cannot be successful all on their own. Staff must build relationships with community leaders or volunteers in order to have their programs adopted by communities.

Collaboration with local and federal government ministries also can be required for approval to work alongside communities, which can limit an organization's freedoms and potential impact. Erica Bornstein (2005) wrote in her observation of NGOs in Zimbabwe in the late 1990s that often the lines between state and civil society are blurred because NGOs and the government concurrently collaborate on development programs and compete for foreign assistance funding. Shared vision and well-defined partnerships between communities, government offices, and NGOs could benefit communities more over the long-term than this competition. And although leaders from churches, and other religious institutions, can often act as cultural brokers, advocates, or volunteers in their communities in coordination with NGOs, they could make a broader impact when empowered and equipped by NGOs in an intentional partnership (Butler, 2005; Giorgas, 2000).

A Partnership Case Study: Bethany Community Church and World Relief Rwanda

Partnership and Relationship. Pastor Jean Baptiste crouched beside the small wooden table where we were seated in his narrow living room. As the midmorning sun began to shine

through the window behind me, warming the room, he shared openly about his journey as a pastor serving across Rwanda. In spite of all of the stress and financial concerns he and his family have faced, Jean Baptiste said knows he is called to be a pastor and share the love of Christ with his community. When asked if he was looking forward to the opportunity to partner with other churches and denominations to help his community, Jean Baptiste's eyes lit up as he smiled and pointed around the room and said "it is already happening."

I was one of three representatives from Bethany Community Church (BCC) in Seattle, Washington, that went to Jean Baptiste's home that day along with World Relief local staff member Pastor Immanuel and the World Relief Musanze office intern, Beatrice. This was one of the eight half-day visits with pastors for the five-person team from BCC, who had already spent a few days in the Musanze community and hosted an interdenominational retreat for more than 40 pastors and their wives earlier in the week. The team traveled from Seattle to spend seven days with the people of Musanze and observe World Relief's work in October 2012.

The objective of the pastor visits, among other activities during the two-week trip, was to build connections between the visitors from BCC and the pastors affected by their church's financial partnership with World Relief. BCC community members traveled to Musanze, Rwanda, with the intent to serve as ambassadors between their church, World Relief Rwanda staff, and the pastors and community members empowered by their support. About three months later, in January 2013, photos, community information, and prayer requests from each of the pastors the team met with, including Jean Baptiste, were shared with the BCC congregation on prayer bookmarks, in stories communicated during church services, and during a formal debriefing event about the trip.

BCC and the World Relief office in Rwanda are encouraged by working with one another, understanding that they both can learn from each other and the community members they serve in Musanze (personal communication, M. Greene, August 17, 2012). The initial financial agreement between the two organizations is growing from a formal partnership into a relationship that is transforming lives in the United States and in Rwanda and creating a new community. Observing the dynamics of the partnership relations in Seattle, Washington, and Musanze and Kigali, Rwanda, as well as interviews with staff, volunteers, and community members, provided insight into how lives are being affected, what is working, and what can be improved. We are at the intersection of a global dialogue about the importance of faith-based NGOs, the appropriate role of churches and Christianity in development process, and the benefits of cause collaboration. Through this case study, I aim to illustrate how this partnership between BCC, World Relief Rwanda, and the people of the Musanze district is transforming lives in a sustainable way as well as how the church can serve as a catalyst in the community development process (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009; Myers, 2011).

Background. In many contexts, community development partnerships are difficult to establish and maintain. One might believe that Rwanda – a country where tribal conflict turned into genocide – would be an even more difficult environment for cooperation between institutions and church denominations. However, the country is now serving as an example of success in cross-cultural, intertribal, and interdenominational collaboration. The future of these partnerships remains to be seen, but attention should be paid to the progress of a nation that is committed to prioritizing “Rwandan solutions” and maximizing its opportunities to advance in the social, economic and political sectors (J. Rucyahana, personal communication, October 23, 2012).

World Relief is one of the many non-profit humanitarian organizations working in this context, alongside communities across Rwanda. World Relief's (n.d.) mission is "empowering the local church to serve the most vulnerable." Its faith in churches in Rwanda as agents of change in their villages and a five-year partnership with BCC is equipping communities to address the root causes of poverty.

BCC was interested in pursuing a partnership with an organization committed to sustainable community development programs involving churches and developing relationships between community members in Seattle and in Africa. The partnership with World Relief began in 2011, following an exploratory vision trip to the Musanze district. Volunteering with BCC over the past four years has provided me with insight into its mission, vision, and service commitments. And over the past two years, I have observed a conscious shift from BCC operating as a church that encourages writing checks to support relief and development projects and organizes short-term mission trips toward a church community that desires long-term and personal engagement in the transformational development process, locally and globally.

This case study provides insight into what is sustaining the dynamic cross-cultural partnership between BCC and World Relief Rwanda, through the perspective of my volunteer service with BCC throughout 2012. During that time, the Spilling Hope 365 initiative was launched to build awareness year-round about the churches international partnerships in Rwanda with World Relief and in Uganda with Living Water International. The church's leadership also began to document the value of partnerships with NGOs and the criteria for evaluating the partnerships. Teams from BCC visited international partner organizations World Relief in Rwanda, and The Abraham Project and Roblealtos in Costa Rica. In coordination with Elizabeth Oswald, BCC's Director of Missions and Outreach, I supported the launch of the Spilling Hope

365 initiative, aided in developing surveys and evaluation criteria for BCC's partnerships, and had the privilege of traveling to Rwanda to observe World Relief's ongoing work in the Musanze district and the relationship-building between World Relief staff, BCC team members, and community members.

The Rwandan context. Today, Rwanda is viewed by many community development professionals as “a success story” (Short, 2008). Since the country's independence it has been overwhelmed by foreign aid and the presence of NGOs, which in some cases have fueled ethnic tensions within the country (Oomen, 2005). Yet, strong, forward-thinking national leadership and the balance of Rwandan and Western solutions have been lauded as the necessary foundation for the nation on its journey to restoration and economic growth (Da Cruz, 2011; Short, 2008). Rwanda is the most densely populated country in Africa, and still is most known for the 1994 genocide in which hundreds of thousands of ethnic Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed (Oomen, 2005; Short, 2008). Families turned against families, and church leaders even assisted or took a lead in the murder of their congregations. No Rwandan escaped the pain and effects of this tragedy.

By the end of 1994, more than 140 NGOs were present in the country to assist with human rights efforts rather than traditional relief and reconstruction (Oomen, 2005). A report prepared by the United Nations Development Program in 2004 to share the impact of United Nations presence in Rwanda, explained,

No single entity could confront the daunting task of rehabilitation, reconstruction, renewal and development on its own. Not, the new Rwanda government. Not, the exhausted, numbed populace. Not, any individual donor or multilateral organization. The

imperatives on the ground called for visionary approaches and concerted, collective effort, internal and external. (UNDP, 2004, p. ii)

UN agencies and other NGOs supported the government's goals for reconciliation and rebuilding (2004). President Paul Kagame's mandates about reconciliation and proclamation that all citizens are "Rwandan," not Hutu or Tutsi, set the country on a course away from tribal differences toward collective development (Fred-Mensah, 2004; Short, 2008). Yet, malnutrition, HIV/AIDS, illiteracy, and lack of education and economic development opportunities still plague rural communities across much of the country.

Rwandans have acknowledged the need for peace and justice in addition to rebuilding of their physical conditions, and they have a hunger for change (Oomen, 2005; J. Rucyahana, personal communication, October 22, 2012; Uvin, 2003). After the war and genocide, hundreds of new church denominations were formed as a statement against prejudice of some traditional denominations (Ngoga, 2012). In 2002, the government developed a 2020 plan outlining a vision for the future of the country and its poverty reduction efforts. Although a significant NGO presence remains in Rwanda, community members and government officials desire "Rwandan solutions" to carry the country forward (J. Rucyahana, personal communication, October 22, 2012).

Bishop John Rucyahana, chair of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission who served as Anglican Bishop of the Shyira Diocese in northwest Rwanda beginning in 1997, shared his belief that outsiders to a community cannot give or take away dignity or decency and thus cannot ultimately control a community's destiny (personal communication, October 22, 2012). "When a country has been shattered, its communities need propping up," Rucyahana said (personal communication, October 22, 2012). He and many other Rwandan and foreign aid

leaders have claimed that partnerships, training community volunteers and government officials, and education opportunities have provided just that when managed by Rwandans (Fred-Mensah, 2004; Oomen, 2005; J. Rucyahana, personal communication, October 22, 2012; Short, 2008). Especially in Rwanda, where everyone is looking forward to a better future, it is the responsibility of communities and leaders to take action toward their own development and know when to ask for help from other agencies (J. Rucyahana, personal communication, October 22, 2012). This mindset focuses first on the capacity, knowledge, and power of community members, rather than their needs.

The long-term outcome of Rwanda's many foreign assistance partnerships is highly anticipated, but communities there have hope for the future and great pride in their country as the process of development continues. This type of international cooperation, community-led approaches to rebuilding and development, and long-term vision are what Butler (2005), Myers (2011), and other development practitioners have encouraged communities, organizations, churches, and governments and other institutions to practice for sustainable change. In an article on donor-driven justice in Rwanda, Barbara Oomen wrote, "Rwanda not only forms a key example of this worldwide trend towards a larger emphasis on justice issues in international cooperation, but could also be considered one of the countries to have paved the way for it" (2005, p. 889).

The partnership. Churches form the foundation for both ends of this community development partnership with World Relief serving as a resource for local churches in Musanze, Rwanda, as well as BCC. With funding from Bethany Community Church, World Relief's Rwanda office began a pilot program called a Church Empowerment Zone (CEZ) in the Musanze district of Rwanda. The CEZ model employs interfaith meetings and trainings, as well

as one on one follow up with churches. Through an initial “mindset transformation” training, churches are encouraged to take responsibility for their Biblical role in serving the people of their community, understand that they should not rely only on outside sources for relief of their suffering but use the assets they have and ask for help along the way, and begin working together to bring about transformation (Ngoga, 2012). Leaders and volunteers from each of these churches have the opportunity to receive training from World Relief to lead HIV/AIDS prevention education for adults and youth and savings programs to help improve the well-being of their communities.

Partnership with Rwandan churches makes sense. An estimated ninety percent of the country is Christian (Britannica, 2013). Churches are the center of community life and do not have an exit strategy like most development organizations. Thus World Relief, with a commitment to empowering churches, has a community development model that fits well in Rwanda. And World Relief staff at the headquarters office and in Rwanda, look forward to tracking the progress of the CEZ pilot program, as churches are equipped and take responsibility for the future of their communities. BCC has also enjoyed the opportunity to be part of a project that places churches at the center of the community development and enables long-term relationships to be built with pastors and churches on the other side of the world. A memorandum of understanding drafted by the World Relief headquarters office and signed by both World Relief and BCC in 2011, documents the terms of the five-year partnership, including financial and relational commitments. Understanding the roles played by BCC, the World Relief headquarters office, World Relief Rwanda, and community members in Musanze, sheds light on why this partnership is still working well two years on.

Role of Bethany Community Church. Elizabeth Oswald, Director of Missions and Outreach at BCC, is committed to bridging the gap between churches and impoverished people in Seattle and around the world through long-term partnerships built on two-way relationships. She manages the church's Spilling Hope 365 initiative which challenges congregants to simplify their lives by moving away from materialism toward generosity, to learn about and pray for the issues of global poverty through community groups and church events, and to give throughout the year to support the church's relationship with communities in Rwanda and Uganda (Bethany Community Church, 2012). Overall, BCC believes that "global outreach does not assume that we can 'fix' the world's problems, but that we have something we can contribute to its reconciliation as representatives of Christ's body in the world" (Bethany Community Church, 2012). In *The Colors of Hope*, a book by BCC's Senior Pastor, Richard Dahlstrom, this call to action is illustrated in a more poignant manner:

When Jesus was wrapping up his last days on earth, he didn't tell us to go to church. He didn't tell us to engage in a spiritualized version of channel surfing, as we hop from place to place in search of just the right programming to entertain us. He told us to get out and actually do stuff he'd already been doing, painting the hope of God's reign on the canvas of God's world. He told us we're artists. The learning begins by following Jesus into the real world, leaving consumerism behind, and learning to see what's actually there on the canvas that is our glorious and broken world. (2011, Location 407-409)

Other authors and even missionaries mirror this sentiment: Christians are supposed to be part of God's work in the world, but often go about their work with skewed perspective and objectives (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009; Lederleitner, 2010; Myers, 2011; White, 2006). BCC is striving to acknowledge its past shortcomings in focusing on multiple short-term programs and build a

foundational model for long-term, collaborative partnerships with local and international organizations.

In the spring and summer of 2012, Oswald and BCC leaders worked to define the purpose of partnerships with international non-profit organizations in an effort to understand how they are or can be making a difference in the lives of people at BCC and in impoverished communities, develop more strategic partnerships in alignment with BCC's core values, and determine how the impact of these partnerships could be evaluated. Discussions among the pastoral staff; vision trips to visit developments projects in Uganda, Rwanda, and Costa Rica; lessons learned from the book *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor... and Yourself*; and insight from from community service groups, eventually helped church leaders define the purposes of international partnerships as follows:

1. To come together as a church and use our collective efforts and resources to make an impact for Christ in the world.
2. To teach Bethany Community Church congregants about what God is doing in the world, quality cross-cultural ministry, and/or poverty and development standards.
3. To motivate and inspire the congregation to act in the local community.

(Personal communication, Elizabeth Oswald, May 22, 2012).

Out of the purposes identified, I assisted BCC in developing new criteria for pursuing additional international partnerships in alignment with their mission (See Appendix A). Tools for semi-annual or annual evaluation of the roles of BCC and organizations collaborating in the existing partnerships also were developed (See Appendix B). Establishing guidelines for working with international development organizations has enabled BCC to set realistic expectations for its

collaborative efforts and communicate more efficiently and effectively with its partners and congregation.

BCC committed to a five-year partnership with World Relief in 2011 and has used the relationship as a model for its interactions with other organizations. The partnership with World Relief in Rwanda also is the primary global effort highlighted through Spilling Hope 365 events and community groups because it directly involves churches in addressing the root causes of poverty in a sustainable way. BCC has taken an active role in the partnership, by keeping its senior leaders highly engaged, hosting events for the congregation to learn about the projects and people in Rwanda, and building relationships through ongoing dialogue with the World Relief headquarters staff, World Relief Rwanda staff, and church leaders and families in the Musanze district. The church is striving to support its own objectives for this international partnership in the following ways:

- Hosting semi-annual events for people of all ages to learn about the issues of global poverty faced by people in Rwanda.
- Publishing a monthly Spilling Hope 365 eNewsletter that highlights progress in the partnership with World Relief every other month.
- Encouraging ongoing tithing to support BCC's local and global ministries.
- Inviting people to pray for and share prayer requests with the people in Musanze, Rwanda, by providing prayer request bookmarks for both communities.
- Sending prepared teams from BCC on trips to help continue the relationships with the Musanze community and World Relief Rwanda staff and bring stories and prayer requests back to the BCC church congregation.

- Organizing community groups to support the partnership and to stimulate a local service response. The community group that traveled to Rwanda in October 2012 was held responsible for meeting on a regular basis six months before the trip to prepare for the cross-cultural, emotional and spiritual experience, as well as six months after their trip and support BCC's communication about the partnership within the congregation.
- Communicating regularly with the World Relief headquarters and Rwanda staff to share ministry successes and prayer requests.

Lives are being transformed in Seattle, Washington, too, as a result of BCC's commitment to encourage the congregation in learning about pastors and community members in Musanze, praying for them, and building relationships with them, not just give money that will benefit them. A participant survey of the Rwanda trip team members revealed their concern for building relationships and supporting the partnership between BCC, World Relief Rwanda, and the people of Musanze. BCC pastors and trip participants aim to apply the concern for community, collaborative spirit, and reconciliation they are learning from the Rwandan people and World Relief in their own community in Seattle. BCC's willingness to understand and appreciate the mission of World Relief, pledge to ongoing communication between organizational leaders, and commitment to support long-term programs that are in the best interest of the churches and the communities in Musanze have sustained and improved the partnership, from the perspective of World Relief staff (M. Greene, personal communication, August 17, 2012; C. Pixley, personal communication, August, 23, 2012). This partnership might not be perfect, but BCC presents an outstanding example of how lives in the global North also can be transformed by a respectful and relational partnership with communities in the global South.

Role of World Relief U.S. offices. The World Relief U.S. staff served to establish the multi-year commitment with BCC, but mainly serve as facilitators of the partnership between BCC and the World Relief Rwanda office. For the most part, BCC leaders are communicating directly with the World Relief Rwanda staff about coordinating trips and program progress. They are coordinating with the World Relief U.S. office staff for dialogue about the overall partnership experience, donation processing, resources for church events, and inquiries about planned programs in Rwanda. Senior Church Engagement Director Craig Pixley shared the importance of setting expectations for partnership communication and accomplishments and providing resources to churches (personal communication, August, 23, 2013). He also attributed “alignment in development philosophy” as a defining positive element in the partnership with BCC. Pixley said, “If that piece is missing, it’s going to get off to a rocky start and be a messy partnership (personal communication, August, 23, 2013). In order to grow the relationship between World Relief and BCC, Pixley has coordinated staff speaking opportunities at BCC, set up Skype calls with the World Relief Rwanda staff, and provided supplies for BCC events. He also mentioned that in addition to ongoing communication between he and Oswald, involvement of senior pastors and intentionality in planning ministry trips also have been contributing factors in solidifying the relationship between World Relief and BCC. A verbal conversation annually between World Relief church partnership staff in the U.S., Oswald, and World Relief Rwanda Country Director Myal Greene also has served as a forum for evaluating partnership progress. However, Pixley believes partnerships between World Relief and churches are about much more than MOUs and developing good relationships (personal communication, August, 23, 2013). “I believe in faith that partnership is a platform that God has called churches like BCC into and He did it in advance.... It is a rather holy calling,” he said (C. Pixley, personal communication,

August, 23, 2013). World Relief is committed not only to transforming lives in the global South, but to helping churches like BCC in the global North experience growth in their faith and their understanding of poverty through service.

Role of World Relief Rwanda. World Relief Rwanda stands behind the mission of the broader international organization to “empower the local church” (World Relief, n.d. a) Operating under the model of transformational development, as defined by Bryant Myers (2011), it acknowledges the importance of addressing people’s physical, social, and spiritual needs. World Relief began providing relief for families in Rwanda after the genocide and following war in 1994, which lasted through 1997 in the Musanze district currently benefiting from the current partnership with BCC (World Relief, n.d. b). Based upon community assets and needs, World Relief eventually transitioned its focus from relief to development, in coordination with local churches. Now, staff and volunteers across Rwanda support programs including church empowerment, HIV/AIDS prevention and youth life skills training, mother and child health, care for orphans and vulnerable children, and economic development.

World Relief Rwanda’s primary responsibilities in the five-year partnership with BCC include implementing programs through local churches with funds received, providing written monthly reports on program progress, and hosting representatives from BCC on an annual basis to observe the ongoing work in the Musanze community area. In 2011, the Church Empowerment Zone (CEZ) pilot project began. It is serving to unite church leaders and empower churches with the goal of fueling transformational development in the most sustainable, community-led manner. To date, BCC has provided support for World Relief to begin working in three geographic sectors of the Musanze district – Rwazaa, Gacaca, and Cyuve.

The CEZ program model begins with local pastors in Musanze who are invited to attend a *mindset transformation* training session in which they learn more about how the God calls the church to serve its community (M. Greene, personal communication, August, 17, 2012). First, pastors are reminded of their own God-given strengths and abilities to serve their people and called to recognize the existing assets of their communities (World Relief Rwanda, 2010). Then, they are encouraged to seek technical expertise from World Relief, as needed, in establishing HIV/AIDS prevention programs for youth and adults, training mothers in health and nutrition, providing care for orphans and vulnerable children, and starting savings programs for economic development. World Relief Rwanda's primary objective is to equip communities for growth and advancement in the most sustainable manner they see possible - through churches. The majority of World Relief Rwanda's development programs are operated through the training and efforts of volunteers from churches in the community.

In Musanze, World Relief Rwanda employs two local pastors – Pastor Bwende Salathiel and Pastor Immanuel - to lead their fellow pastors through the mindset transformation training, follow up with them regularly, and coordinate interfaith committee meetings. The employed pastors also are responsible for coordinating with Musanze district government officials and local businesses to inform them about World Relief's work.

World Relief Rwanda also has a church partnership coordinator, Emily Haas, to aid in coordination with U.S. churches. She helps provide monthly reports to BCC and plans out the church's annual visits to the Musanze community. Haas also balances the cross-cultural components of the partnership. She encourages BCC community members to share their talents – preaching, music, and care for children – during trips to the Musanze community as part of events hosted by World Relief Rwanda. In coordination with Rwanda Country Director Myal

Greene, Haas equips the BCC trip team with education about the Musanze community and World Relief's development program model through organizing a learning session day called World Relief University. The educational day includes a presentation about World Relief Rwanda's values and objectives in working alongside communities as well as informational sessions and Q&A with each of the technical support teams – Church Empowerment, Mobilizing for Life (HIV/AIDS prevention), Savings for Life (Economic Development), and Orphans and Vulnerable Children, and Child Development. This effective and intentional coordination enables BCC to be a stronger supporter and advocate of World Relief's work.

The role of the Musanze community. The pastors and community leaders participating in the Musanze CEZ are the most active change agents in the partnership, as a result of the financial support from BCC and technical support from World Relief Rwanda staff. Pastors are responsible for coordinating with one another to address the problems facing their communities after being led through the mindset transformation training by World Relief staff (Ngoga, 2012; World Relief Rwanda, 2010). Pastors also encourage volunteers within their congregations to participate in training sessions hosted by World Relief Rwanda. As a result, their churches are equipped with leaders for an HIV/AIDS prevention Mobilizing for Life program for youth, faithfulness discussions with adults, or facilitators for Savings for Life programs that promote savings clubs within the community and disburse loans to families in times of need. World Relief Rwanda places the burden of developing a community on the trained community leaders rather than expatriate staff facilitating development programs.

Pastor Bwende Salathiel works for the World Relief Rwanda office in Musanze CEZ and also serves as a pastor at five churches in the area. He believes that the partnership with BCC has stimulated significant growth and changes in the community, but that the pastors in Musanze are

the ones advancing solutions from their churches and their people to address poverty and need (B. Salathiel, personal communication, October 24, 2012). Salathiel is responsible for coordination with about 85 local churches of nearly 40 different denominations across the three supported sectors of the Musanze district. He helps facilitate the interfaith committee of pastors in Musanze, coordinates the mindset transformation training sessions with local pastors, regularly visits with pastors and their churches to observe their work and listen to their prayer requests, and prepares monthly reports about activities in the Musanze CEZ.

In a monthly report prepared by Salathiel, and provided to BCC by World Relief Rwanda, the following story was shared of church taking initiative in utilizing its own resources to help vulnerable people in the community:

Kabumba Anglican church is located in Gacaca sector of Musanze District. It started in 1947 and it now has about 350 members. Encouraged by World Relief Rwanda through mindset transformation trainings, the pastor of this church and its members have realized that they have natural local resources that they have never been able to exploit for their own development. They have identified a place where they can get good soil for making bricks and are creating a new road to the church so that the truck will easily access the place where bricks are being made. The soil from the road construction will be used to make bricks. It is planned that 30 percent of incomes from this project will be used in serving the most vulnerable within the church.

A committee of 16 people was established for transparent management of the project. This committee is structured in a way that 4 people will be in charge of identification of those most vulnerable and the kind of their vulnerability to be assisted. Another group of 4 people will be in charge of identifying resources and outline how to

use them. The third group also composed by 4 people will be in charge of reaching the most vulnerable and give them assistance while the last group also composed of 4 people is in charge of monitoring and evaluation. (Salathiel, 2012, Success Stories section)

It is apparent from this example the pastor had been trained to recognize the assets of his church and involve his congregation in helping people in need (World Relief Rwanda, 2010).

Pastor Karara Gaspard is one of the many pastors who were committed to encouraging and praying for their community. When I spoke with him in October 2012, his church had not yet received technical training or support from World Relief, but he was already actively engaging his congregation and had been meeting with an interfaith committee of pastors in the Cyuve district. He opens up the church each morning from 5 to 6 a.m. for morning devotions and prayer with community members before they go to work. Gaspard also spends time praying with people in his community and dedicates time each week to visit the primary and secondary schools in his village (personal communication, October 25, 2012).

Gaspard communicated that his congregation expects him to be doing the work of the church in the community, and no other work (personal communication, October 25, 2012). Although his primary concern is for the spiritual care of his community, he told us he values the training and programs World Relief aims to provide through churches. He expressed, “Some people are concerned about spiritual needs and forget about deeds, others are concerned about deeds and not prayer. World Relief does both” (K. Gaspard, personal communication, October 25, 2012). He said the interfaith committee he serves on, which is led by Salathiel and another World Relief local staff member and pastor, is looking beyond denominational differences to focus on issues affecting the whole Musanze district: poverty, AIDS, hunger, and education.

The greatest burden of success in this partnership is held by the pastors and leaders in their congregations in Musanze. They realize the need for change in their community and believe that the training and programs led by World Relief Rwanda to equip their communities and encourage collaboration, as a result of financial support received from BCC, will make a difference (J. Baptiste, personal communication, October 24, 2012; K. Gaspard, personal communication, October, 25, 2012). When the team from BCC met with pastors, they learned that community members tend to dwell on their physical needs for food, education, health care, and housing but often fail to recognize their own talents and opportunities for change. Hunger, illiteracy, HIV/AIDS and desperate poverty cannot be overlooked or be aided by salvation alone. And pastors in Musanze are taking on the challenge to find solutions for spiritual, physical, social, and psychological well-being from working with one another and engaging new leaders in their communities.

Key observations. Observing the partnership between World Relief headquarters, World Relief Rwanda, Bethany Community Church, and the Musanze community in Rwanda, the following key themes emerge: relationships, long-term vision, the role of the church and Christianity in development, and the influence of humble community leaders. These themes also align with key elements of transformational community development practices.

Partnerships and relationships. A broad range of mainstream viewpoints currently inform how partnerships between churches, organizations, and impoverished communities might be formed. Collaborative partnerships are used widely in the business world for efficiency and effectiveness, and are on the rise in this era of globalization (Adler, Heckscher, & Prusak, 2011; Groody, 2007). In relief and community development contexts, many non-governmental organizations opt-in to working together to steward resources, invite community participation,

and realize wider impact. Interfaith partnerships are increasing in number, as churches and other religious organizations recognize their collective purpose and potential for broader impact (Butler, 2005). Also, in countries with collectivist cultures, like Rwanda, community members are naturally inclined to work together and make decisions considering the well-being of their relatives and friends (Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). In each of these cases, the worldview and vision of the people group directs its commitment level and potential for collaboration.

In the book *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor ... and Yourself*, Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert (2009) build on scripture and the work of other development theorists to claim that poverty is a result of broken relationships and people's need for reconciliation to self, God, others, and community. They shared stories of how individuals and churches fail to recognize the materially poor as people who have talents and values and end up negatively affecting their self-worth and their own vision for their future (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009). Not only are impoverished people harmed by this perspective, but churches and service organizations can become unnecessarily financially and emotionally burdened by trying to help people who could be better served by participating in their own development.

BCC has utilized Corbett and Fikkert's book to train and prepare service-oriented small groups for working cross-culturally, namely the teams that have traveled to support the partnership with World Relief in Rwanda. As a result, the partnership between BCC, World Relief Rwanda, and the community leaders in Musanze has become more about building relationships and experiencing Christian community rather than financial support for community development work. Phill Butler affirmed the Biblical and relational foundations of partnership in his book *Well Connected: Releasing Power, Restoring Hope Through Kingdom Partnerships*. He

wrote, “Trusting, open relationships and the asset of synergy when all of the pieces of God’s design are working together can transform ministry” (2005, p. 12). People in Rwanda, in Seattle, and in World Relief offices in the United States are recognizing this process of transformation happening in their lives and their work as a result of their relationships and collaboration to help change other’s lives.

Long-term vision. Oswald of BCC holds strongly to the values of long-term partnerships and in not causing further harm to people already in need (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009; E. Oswald, personal communication, May 22, 2012; Lupton, 2008). This was one of her primary reasons for pursuing partnership with World Relief and being an advocate for development that empowers churches. Counter to the approach of many churches that still prioritize short-term mission trips and building projects that do not engage local community members, the partnership between BCC and World Relief Rwanda is an initial five-year commitment focused on building long-term relationships (Bethany Community Church, 2012).

“The church doesn’t have an exit strategy” is a valuable insight the BCC team learned while meeting with pastors in Rwanda. The pastors were invested in the future advancement of their community, and their churches were the center of community life. Beginning with the mindset transformation training, World Relief encourages pastors to claim their role in caring for the most vulnerable in their community and encouraging their congregations to do the same (World Relief Rwanda, 2010). Although support from BCC might end years down the road, and World Relief staff could prioritize another district, the churches in Musanze would still be there and pastors and communities leaders will still be able to implement and pass on to others what they had learned from World Relief and are still learning from one another.

Churches are not only Biblically called to help people in their community over time through relationships, compassion, and the example of God's love, but their make-up nearly demands it. In his research on partnerships between churches and faith-based organizations in Romania, Bill Prevette concluded:

Churches are communities where families are linked together over the long-term, they represent several generations located in one place, and they are embedded in community life. Unlike FBOs, churches do not exist by hiring personnel or organizational contracts; their social care is long-term and delivered through family networks. Where FBOs are bound by organizational parameters that limit their bonding with local communities, churches are not. (2012, p.190)

Church leaders can support and engage people in the work of NGOs in their communities in a sustainable manner that NGO staff and volunteers cannot initiate on their own. With this in mind, churches like those in Musanze can be valuable partners in connecting with community members, sharing messages about ongoing development efforts and education opportunities managed by NGOs, extending the lifetime of programs long after World Relief staff have left the area.

Christianity, churches, and development. BCC, World Relief headquarters, World Relief Rwanda, and the community leaders in Musanze, all believe that the church is uniquely equipped to build relationships with people in need and empower them physically, psychologically, socially, and spiritually. Myal Greene, country director of World Relief Rwanda, said, "I believe that God is calling churches around the world to greater unity and collaboration" (personal communication, August 17, 2012). And BCC's primary objective for its international

partnerships is to “Come together as a church and use our collective efforts and resources to make an impact for Christ in the world” (Appendix A).

In the Musanze community, churches are being challenged to think about their role in communities as servants, not solely evangelists and prayer warriors (World Relief Rwanda, 2012). Greene said World Relief’s training to empower churches and help them understand what human development can look like has already made a significant impact in the way pastors are ministering to and engaging their community members (personal communication, August 17, 2012). And at BCC, people are being challenged to grow in their faith by learning about poverty and reconciliation, as well as taking action in service in their local and global community.

Many other Christian development practitioners and organizations share the belief that churches are an essential part of the development process locally and globally (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009; Groody, 2007; Myers, 2011). The church can provide for the necessary spiritual and relational components of human development even in non-Christian contexts (Bornstein, 2005). And as the center of a community, it also can carry the responsibility of hosting trainings or facilitating development partnerships with other organizations. Churches may not be technically equipped to provide health care or financially equipped to disburse loans, but the people of the church are well-equipped to build relationships with people and meet spiritual needs, psychological needs, emotional needs. And they can combine human resources in their community to provide for people’s basic needs for food, shelter, and clothing (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009; Prevette, 2012).

In the midst of debate about the balance of a church’s role in spreading the word of God and caring for the poor, Corbett and Fikkert explained: “What is the task of the church? We are to embody Jesus Christ by doing what He did and what He continues to do through us: declare –

using both words and deeds – that Jesus is the King of kings and Lord of lords who is bringing a kingdom of righteousness, justice, and peace” (2009, p. 41).

Leadership and participation. World Relief Rwanda’s programs in Musanze incorporate asset-based community development and participatory development strategies, which help identify community capacity and engage community members throughout the development process (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009; Kretzman & McKnight, 1993). Because of the use of these models the partnership between BCC, World Relief Rwanda, and the Musanze community is sustained by committed local leaders and community members. Mark Avery of Inscit consultancy for strategic collaboration shared: “What actually happens in terms of sustainable development has very little to do with the efforts or intentions of the people from the outside. And it has a whole lot to do with the capacity of the community itself to absorb the responsibility for its own state. Many communities don’t have that” (personal communication, January 15, 2013). With this in mind, it is important to recognize and encourage the transformation happening not only in the Musanze community, but first in the lives of individual community leaders, pastors, and volunteers who drive the process forward (Da Cruz, 2011; Perkins, 1982; Prevette, 2012).

Rwandans are still recovering from the horror of war and genocide, but have a strong desire for change and development because they do not want to fall back into tribal conflict, oppression, and desperate poverty. They strive for education, advancement in health and livelihood, and a better future for their children. Rucyahana expressed the value of support from organizations like World Relief coming alongside crippled Rwandan communities and helping them fulfill their own vision for reconciliation and restoration (personal communication, October 22, 2012). However, John Perkins (1982) wrote that in order to bring about justice in a

community that has been oppressed, the people and institutions in that community must take responsibility and jumpstart the development process. Communities in Musanze are realizing change as a result of their own leadership, advocacy, responsibility, and commitments to a new future.

At BCC, pastors, small group leaders, and volunteers also are rising up to speak about the partnership with World Relief and the pastors in Musanze. The examples of reconciliation and collaboration in Rwanda, have challenged the BCC church leaders to think about how the congregation can better engage with people in their own church community area. BCC is located in between a well-to-do and a significantly impoverished neighborhood north of Seattle, and although it already runs a food bank and a homeless shelter and partners with a community center nearby, leaders know that more can be done to support the communities' physical, psychological, social, and spiritual needs by developing stronger relationships with neighbors. As a result of mutual participation in this partnership, lives in Seattle and Rwanda are being changed.

Lessons Learned.

Partnership requires intentionality and humility. The key elements that sustain this partnership include: shared values and vision, clearly defined program objectives, open communication, and understanding of partnership roles. All of these components require intentional investment of time and effort in addition to humility. The partnership with World Relief Rwanda serves a model partnership for BCC. It has influenced strategies, criteria, and evaluations for other local and global partnerships. World Relief Rwanda staff know BCC is committed to supporting their work in Musanze for at least five years, and thus feel validated in their work and can build more sustainable relationships with the communities they serve. This

partnership is not perfect, by any means, but it is unique and highly valuable to both organizations.

Both BCC and World Relief Rwanda believe in church empowerment and would like to see the people of Rwanda experience spiritual, physical, psychological, and social well-being. The organizations understand each other's missions and objectives, as identified in a signed MOU and they are regularly communicating. But above all, this partnership works because the BCC and World Relief Rwanda respect one another's roles and areas of expertise. BCC provides financial support as part of an annual commitment, as well as relational and informal technical support during a trip to Rwanda each year. The World Relief staff in the United States serve as a liaisons for donations, field high-level inquiries about the programs in Rwanda, and advise BCC on opportunities for education about global poverty, advocacy, and enhancing the relationship with the Musanze community leaders. World Relief Rwanda staff in Kigali and Musanze are respected as having the technical experience to equip community members in Musanze and inform program strategy with the funds received from BCC. Musanze CEZ community leaders and pastors carry the weight of implementing what they have learned in the best way for their congregations and communities and sharing their insights with others.

For World Relief Rwanda and BCC, the pilot project is making an impact, however there is still much to be learned about the capacity of churches and how pastors and community members can help themselves in the coming years. In order for all parties in this partnership to be validated in their roles, and to ensure stewardship of program funding, evaluation is required. Scott Todd, Compassion International's Senior Vice President of International Partner Development, encouraged measurement and celebration of results for validating partnerships. He wrote:

We can hang all the spiritual platitudes we want on the partnership, but if partners cannot point to outcomes in their mutually accomplished work, then the purpose of the partnership should rightly be questioned. Without results, motivation will die, but with defined goals and tangible outcomes, it's time to celebrate! Celebrating success strengthens motivations and partnerships. (2012, Produce – then celebrate section)

Use of a partnership evaluation framework (Appendix B), incorporating self-evaluation, program objectives, and surveys of BCC and Musanze community members could provide deeper insight into the impact of the partnerships and opportunities for growth. Taking time to assess the value and impact of each partner's contributions can inform the best stewardship of resources and also reaffirm partner's needs for one another in realizing change in communities (Butler, 2005; Prevette, 2012; Todd, 2012).

Lasting partnerships focus on people. The relationship elements of this partnership run deep. BCC, World Relief Rwanda, and Musanze community members pray for one another and want to learn more about one another. As a result of this partnership a new community spanning language barriers, time zones, and cultures is being built. The partnership between BCC and World Relief Rwanda reveals that transformational, long-term development requires a focus on people's lives being changed instead of simply achieving program objectives (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009). Although clearly defined objectives for partnerships are essential, especially when working in the global South, prioritizing qualitative objectives in seeing communities transformed should take precedence over rushing to achieve goals. (Butler, 2005; Todd, 2012). Both BCC and World Relief Rwanda are concerned about empowering people in Musanze to change their own communities and understand that takes time and significant relational effort.

Churches are essential partners. Both BCC and World Relief Rwanda believe and advocate for church involvement in community development. BCC believes in the Biblical call to the church to be an example of God's love to people in need, but understands that churches are not equipped to do this work all on their own (Bethany Community Church, 2012). And Myal Greene, country director of World Relief Rwanda, said, "I see partnership as a bridge and an opportunity, to help churches express themselves financially but also in love, and in compassion and in partnership with the churches in Rwanda" (personal communication, August, 17, 2012). World Relief is committed to empowering churches in service, advocacy, and justice (Ngoga, 2012; World Relief Rwanda, 2010). And this works well in the majority Christian context in Rwanda. If hurting and impoverished communities in Rwanda are striving for change, then the churches already existing in their midst, present for the long-term, and aware of their needs, are the best vehicles for service and follow-up.

Assertions. Even as a former employee of World Relief and volunteer for BCC, I had reservations about the roles churches should be playing in community development partnerships. My first concern was about the influence of power and money from BCC and World Relief in how churches in Musanze might feel expected to implement programs and report on lives being transformed. I am aware of the tensions that can exist between churches or donors and development organizations in partnership, and anticipated that the objectives of BCC could put pressure on World Relief Rwanda staff and Musanze community leaders (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009; Prevette, 2012; Todd, 2012). However, based upon observations and interviews with BCC, World Relief headquarters, World Relief Rwanda, and pastors in the Musanze community, the partnership is functioning well because of the mutual respect, long-term relationships, and shared expectations that form its foundation. The influence from the global North still needs to be kept

in check, yet communities across the world are strengthening one another rather than being polarized by their differences.

Although the perspective of Rwandan society is changing and churches have played a significant role in reconciling communities after the war and genocide, memories of church leader involvement in division, violence, and prejudice do not easily fade (Oomen, 2005). World Relief Rwanda still stands firm in its convictions that working with interfaith committees, encouraging collaboration between local churches, and empowering churches to recognize their role in caring for their communities is the answer to addressing the root causes of poverty. Regardless of their history, churches in Rwanda are still the center of community life and as such can also be a central source of community empowerment.

The goal of this research was to understand how churches can play a role in transformational development, as defined by Bryant Myers (2011). And I sought to determine if World Relief's model is just another example of participatory development that respects community values and structures, by equipping church leaders to bring about change, or if this is a new model of development fueled by empowering partnerships. Churches are already focused on the spiritual health of their communities. But many in Rwandan communities are not addressing the root causes of hunger, disease, and lack of education faced by the people in their congregations. World Relief's approach challenges churches with Biblical perspective to respond to all of the human and spiritual needs within and beyond their congregations, and to work together. The ultimate goals of the CEZ program are not outlined by World Relief Rwanda or BCC, but are defined by each community area and congregation (Ngoga, 2012; World Relief Rwanda, 2010). With this in mind, BCC's support for the pilot CEZ program in Musanze, in partnership with World Relief, is a unique approach to transformational development and

participatory development. Empowered pastors and churches already concerned about the spiritual well-being of their communities, are awakened to their responsibility to care for the whole person. The credit does not go to BCC or World Relief Rwanda, but to the community and church leaders. This model of community development is one that could be applied beyond the context of Rwanda, and even in the Seattle area where BCC is located.

Transforming lives with a new partnership framework. This is just one example of a partnership that is working well between a church, an organization, and a community with similar vision and shared objectives – but is an outstanding example of collaboration and restored relationships. It is a reminder of the example set for churches in the Bible:

All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.
(Acts 4:32-35, NIV)

This is a beautiful picture of Christians and churches working together in community, which is also a vision expressed by World Relief Rwanda Country Director Myal Greene. He said, "I think God wants the church around the world, not just in America to be part of the story of restoration and reconciliation and renewal that is happening in Rwanda" (personal communication, August 17, 2012). The partnership for the CEZ pilot project between World Relief Rwanda and BCC encompasses the vision of development work that is transformational, Biblical, community-led, and sustainable (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009; Myers, 2011). The long-term

commitment of churches to the well-being of their local and global communities is worth recognizing and harnessing in the development process. And this model could serve as an example of a new framework for development through partnerships, intentionally engaging churches in the global North and in the global South.

Recommendations

Improving partnership. The case study of partnership between BCC, World Relief Rwanda, and the Musanze community is a testament to how churches and NGOs can work together on more than financial grounds in the transformational development process, and rely upon one another to make a difference in a community. In this instance, U.S. and local churches are considered valuable assets and relational partners. Considering the common themes and lessons learned from this partnership, I recommend the following perspectives for churches and NGOs interested in replicating this model.

A new perspective and purpose for churches in the global South. In much of the global South, churches and religious institutions are still the center of communities, giving them unique insight into the assets and needs of the community as well as an ability to be involved in bringing about sustainable and culturally appropriate change for their people. However, many of them do not have the self-awareness or desire to recognize this responsibility and take appropriate action to help the poor and vulnerable in their villages. In Rwanda, specifically, church leaders have admitted fault in not standing for justice and peace before and during the 1994 genocide, even though the church should be the best example of justice and love (J. Rucyahana, personal communication, October 22, 2012). Churches are still a significant part of community life, and are regaining trust while prioritizing reconciliation. In Rwandan communities and beyond, churches and congregation members need to recognize their value and potential as community

leaders and mentors in bringing about change and standing for justice. This requires an understanding that God cares not only for our spiritual health but our physical, social, and psychological well-being, and calls Christians to be part of His work in bringing about peace and justice on earth (Guerrero, n.d.). Community leaders and churches in the global South need to take the lead in this movement in order to transform their communities as well as the traditional participatory development and mission work approaches.

Holistic development. If churches begin to grasp the concept of *imago dei*, which focuses on the belief that all people are created in the image of God, they also can be encouraged to recognize the worth and talents of every person in their community – Christian or non-Christian, elder or youth, rich or poor, healthy or sick (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009; Groody, 2007; Myers, 2011). For many people in the global South, religious beliefs already help them make meaning in the physical world. Yet, faith in God’s provision can be difficult to grasp when you’re hungry, severely ill, or without work. And provision of food alone cannot comfort someone in need of love and grace. Daniel Groody wrote, “While the social and economic progress of globalization has fed some of the needs of the human family, it has not remedied the undeniable spiritual hungers within people” (2007, p. 153). Churches and Christians need to view people not only as souls to be won, but as God’s creation to be part of His work here on earth. This change in perspective will transform how churches engage and support their communities, and seek technical support from local NGOs or institutions.

Collaboration. Churches in the same community area can make a significant impact in addressing the root causes of poverty if they work together, setting aside their denominational differences, to develop strategies for addressing health, hunger, education, and shelter concerns faced by the community as a whole. Churches are bodies of believers, not just gathering places –

and each church member has a responsibility in living out the mission of their church in bringing about justice and holistic transformation in their communities. Churches learning from one another also can be encouraged in their efforts and share lessons learned.

Being an asset. Church leaders need to be open to new perspectives on faith and community development, and their role in the process, without overhauling their belief systems and worldview. Government initiatives, NGO training sessions, and mission teams should be respected but not adopted in such a way that cultural beliefs are pushed aside. As center posts of community life, churches have a responsibility to stand up and advocate for their community members. And they can be a powerful asset to local and international institutions seeking to help their community by both standing their ground and extending a hand.

Finding balance for churches in the global North. Western churches also are called to be part of God's work in the world, but they are not ordained as the only party or the expert in serving the poor. Robert Guerrero (n.d.) shared, "I fear that many of our strategies for caring for the poor and seeking to alleviate poverty come from positions and attitudes of power rather than serving out of the weakness and vulnerability that characterizes the alternative community of faith (the kingdom way)" (p. 2). Many global North churches struggle to find the balance between their desires to serve others and their desires to make an impact. And as a result, many churches cause more harm than positive change in their own communities and communities in the global South (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009; Karlan & Appel, 2011). These churches do need to continue to help seek justice in the world, but they need to do so through mutual relationships or partnerships, which provide insight into a community's existing assets as well as cultural, emotional, physical, and psychological needs.

First, churches need to recognize that they can cause harm, whether as a result of receiving training from an NGO, hearing directly from beneficiary communities, or simply realizing that their efforts are not affecting communities as intended. Then, they need to humbly assess their desires and interests seek out better ways serve communities in need. This requires intentionality and commitment. Identifying the church values, talents, environment, and demographics and time in prayer can shed light on the purpose of engaging the congregation in local and international mission work. And from that foundation, churches can seek out relationships with local or international gatekeepers who can connect them with opportunities for service (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009; Myers, 2011).

Churches in the global North should be intentional about partnership and consider long-term commitments over short-term trips or single donations. “Like church rituals, global rituals without a sense of relationships and justice leave one feeling hollow and empty in the end” (Groody, 2007, p. 232). In order for partnerships between global North churches, NGOs, and vulnerable communities to be successful and sustainable, senior leaders within the church need to be invested in the projects and churches need to be intentional about the projects they decide to support and communicating their expectations out front. Relationships between churches and the communities they serve breed learning, mutual respect, and a reflection of God’s kingdom on earth (McKinley, 2012). Lives are changed not only in vulnerable communities, but in the supporting church, as a new community is created.

A call to action for NGOs, FBOs, government, and business. Churches in the global North and the global South should be recognized and prioritized as assets in the community development process. Daniel Groody wrote, “When people bring their spiritual ideals together with their practical decisions, then justice is truly possible” (2007, p. 140). Government,

businesses, and many NGOs shy away from working with churches for fear of spiritual demands on the partnership. Regardless of religious affinity, these institutions are missing out on the opportunity to connect with communities in a more sustainable manner, by not working to engage churches as early adopters and leaders in the community development process (M. Avery, personal communication, January 15, 2013). Churches need to be willing to partner with both Christian and non-Christian institutions, balance the desire for seeing spiritual and physical transformation and humbly accept the often necessary technical support.

The church is uniquely equipped to provide compassion, care, and reconciliation ministries within communities and advance community development to transformational development that changes systems and perspectives. Not only is the church called to be part of God's work in the world, but churches can support the need for holistic human development beyond physical provision (Corbett & Fikkert, 2012). Churches in the global North are much more likely to commit to long-term funding for a project or a community over individual donors, companies, or foundations. And churches located in vulnerable communities in the North and South can provide insight into the assets and needs of communities, supporting stewardship of resources and advocating for their people (Groody, 2007).

Objectives and evaluations. Many authors have written about the essential components for successful partnerships, recommending humility, open communication, shared objectives, clarified roles based upon strengths, and formal evaluation (Butler, 2005; Corbett & Fikkert, 2009; Todd, 2012). But this advice has not been formalized into cross-agency standards or tools for observation and evaluation in development programs, which could reveal strengths of organizations, efficiencies, and opportunities for growth. Every partnership for community development involves different values, objectives, and cross-cultural considerations, but impact

or issues could be recognized and monitored more readily if objectives and evaluations were more clearly defined. An MOU between partners is not enough (C. Pixley, personal communication, August 23, 2012). NGOs, and especially faith-based organizations, should have clear standards for how they work with U.S. partner churches and churches in the impoverished communities they aim to help. And churches also should have outlined objectives for engagement in partnership with an NGO or FBO. In his book, Phill Butler (2005) provides a tool colleagues can use to assess an organization's "Partnership Readiness Index," by answering questions about mission and vision, openness to change, confidence in identity, and ministry growth (p. 312). Each partner also should have a forum for sharing feedback and evaluating one another. For example, Compassion International developed a Partnership Accountability and Collaboration Tool (PACT), which is a 360-degree assessment of its work in partnering with churches (Todd, 2012). Successful long-term partnerships require commitment and accountability of all parties, and without standards for entering into and evaluating partnerships, both impact and potential harm cannot be measured. Expanded use of assessment tools and development of partnership best practices in cross-cultural community development contexts could result in less harm to and greater success for all partners.

Future research. Extensions of this research on partnerships involving churches in transformational community development could help formalize replicable models and standards for collaboration in working with local churches in the global South or facilitating cross-cultural church partnerships. Many development practitioners have recommended best practices for partnerships with other agencies and involving churches, but few are informed by those most affected in development partnerships: people in the global South (Butler, 2005; Lederleitner, 2012; Todd, 2012). Further observation of how community leaders and all members of a

community are affected by partnerships with external churches and organizations could inform better cross-cultural community development practices. Opinions of global South community leaders on partnership effectiveness and evaluation also are necessary to inform future community development strategies. Participatory development and partnership approaches have been criticized because of their often powerful influence on community decision-making, cultural values, and expectations (Cooke & Kothari, 2001). Recommendations for improved partnerships between communities, global North churches, and NGOs need to come from the global South, not just from development practitioners or donors from the global North. Partnerships initiated by communities in the global South also could lead to a new framework for sustainable development projects. World Relief Rwanda local staff, pastors, and volunteers in Musanze should be contributing to this dialogue and conducting research and evaluations as part of their ongoing work.

Most research about the effectiveness of collaborative partnerships in community development is qualitative (M. Avery, personal communication, January 15, 2013). A combination of qualitative and quantitative evaluations of partnerships with communities and churches can build the case for more NGOs, U.S. churches, and churches in the global South to engage in collaborative work. Qualitative analysis might still include interviews or feedback from community development workers, beneficiary communities, and donors, but could be supplemented by inviting external observation by another development agency or comparison of a beneficiary community and a nearby community. And quantitative analysis could supplement standard beneficiary well-being assessments, required by donors or grantors, with metrics defined by the community members and partners for measurement of progress on a quarterly basis.

NGOs— faith-based and non-faith based – and Christian development networks should be researching and recognizing the value of churches in the communities where they work to inform advanced development approaches. Often churches in the United States are viewed primarily as funding sources for development and churches rather than relational and prayerful partners. And churches in the global South are viewed only as one of many community institutions to participate in the development process rather than partners that have a long-term presence in the community, know the needs of people in their village, and can be equipped to carry out transformational work. Fear of Christian evangelical perspectives clouding program outcomes or swaying the focus of partnerships, often prevents NGOs, government agencies, and companies from working with churches or faith-based organizations in community development. Yet, churches, when properly equipped, can be effective and influential agents of change in multiple aspects of the development process, not just in Christian contexts. Further research by larger NGOs, such as World Vision and The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; existing collaboration networks like Micah Network, Integral, and Interaction; and even global agencies such as UNDP could help reduce the fear of working with churches and faith-based organizations and inform standards for partnerships between agencies in order to best serve the communities they work with.

Conclusion

Partnerships are transforming the way we work together in the globalization era (Butler, 2005; Groody, 2007). Many churches and non-governmental organizations have jumped on the bandwagon of building cross-cultural partnerships with communities abroad with little understanding of their commitment and the potential consequences of their actions (Corbett & Fikkert, 2009; Todd, 2012). The body of research in this paper, including opinions for and

against partnerships and a case study of a global North-global South partnership, has revealed that partnerships can add value in community development process and churches can play an essential role in the process of transforming lives, not just spiritually, but physically, psychologically, and socially. Partnerships might not be the best investment for organizations, churches, or communities with small-scale objectives. However, they are the best model for churches and organizations aiming to address the root causes of poverty through a broad, transformational response in coordination with the community. This finding calls for a new look at transformational development models and partnership best practices, as well as recognition of the value of global North and global South churches as assets, investors, and collaborators in the community development process.

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- Bwende Salathiel. World Relief Musanze and pastor in Musanze community. October 23, 2012.

Appendix A

Purpose of international partnerships and related criteria for selecting and evaluating ministry partners developed for Bethany Community Church

1. Come together as a church and use our collective efforts and resources to make an impact for Christ in the world.

- a. Does the organization meet BCC's standards of reliability and responsibility?
 - i. Does the organization have financial and personnel stability?
 - ii. Does the organization have a clear vision and realistic objectives?
 - iii. Does the organization uphold quality development and intercultural standards (i.e. sustainability, empowering locals, indigenous leaderships, etc.)?
 - iv. Does the partner organization have an existing plan for working with churches?
 1. If so, what does this look like?
 - a. Short-term or long-term partnership plan?
 - b. Does this plan align with BCC's vision for partnership?
 - c. Does BCC know any other churches in the area already partnering with this organization that they can consult with/learn from?
 2. If no, are they open to BCC's vision for partnership?
- b. Does the organization address the holistic brokenness of our world (physical, social, spiritual)?
 - i. How?
 - ii. How is the message of the Gospel represented?
- c. How can BCC impact the organization and support their mission?
 - i. Where/how does the organization want BCC to be involved?
 - ii. Do the needs of the organization fit the assets within BCC?
 - iii. What can BCC offer to partner organization and community?
 1. Financial support
 2. Technical support
 3. Relationship building
 4. Prayer
 5. Short-term visits

2. To teach Bethany Community Church congregants about what God is doing in the world, quality cross-cultural ministry, and/or poverty and development standards.

- a. What can BCC leaders, small groups, and congregants learn from this partnership?

- b. How can BCC communicate with the partner organization and the community being served?
 - c. What communication resources does the partner organization have to offer BCC congregants?
 - i. Program reports
 - 1. Photos
 - 2. Stories
 - 3. Videos
 - ii. Prayer Guides
 - iii. Small group resources
 - iv. Vision trip/mission trip opportunities
 - d. How often could BCC visit the partner organization and the community being served?
 - e. Does the partner organization have an office in the local area or the desire to travel to BCC for a service or event?
- 3. To motivate and inspire the congregation to act in the local community**
- a. Is the mission of the partner organization or the programs BCC would support in alignment with any of BCC's local ministry priorities?
 - b. Does the partner organization have a local office or U.S. presence that BCC congregants can engage with?
 - i. Volunteer programs
 - ii. Advocacy efforts
 - iii. Learning events or conferences
 - c. How could volunteering with, learning about, or visiting the projects managed by this global partner prepare church attendees for support of BCC's local ministries?

Appendix B

Annual Evaluation Tools for Bethany Community Church and Partner Organization

Recommended Annual Review of Bethany Community Church role in partnership, based on defined partnership objectives

1. Come together as a church and use our collective efforts and resources to make an impact for Christ in the world.

Quantitative:

- Commitment to partnership for sustainable impact in communities
 - How much funding has been committed to the project?
 - How many of the pastoral staff aid in supporting or communicating about this this partnership?
 - How often are BCC leaders seeking input from the partner organization to improve upon communication, understanding of program strategies, opportunities for prayer, and advice on sharing the partnership with the congregation?
- Number of volunteers in support of partnership (local or international service leaders, missionaries, community group leaders, prayer team, etc.)
- Survey of volunteers supporting this partnership through attendance at events and participation on vision trip teams

Qualitative:

- How is BCC, as a church, showing its commitment to building relationships/serving people through this partnership?
- How have church leaders and pastors invested time and energy in this partnership?
- Has there been increased dialogue about this partnership within the congregation?
- Has there been increased dialogue about this partnership within BCC's community area?
- What opportunities to support this partnership have been offered to the church community?
- Are the following components of this partnership at BCC sustainable or part of a long-term commitment?
 - Financial support
 - Relationship building
 - Prayer support
 - Communication

2. To teach Bethany Community Church congregants about what God is doing in the world, quality cross-cultural ministry, and/or poverty and development standards.

Quantitative:

- How many educational opportunities were offered in correlation with this partnership?
 - Events
 - Community Groups
 - Vision or follow up trip
- How often were reports on the partnership progress provided to the congregation?
 - Bulletin and newsletter
 - Videos
 - Announcements during a church service
 - Mentioned during a sermon
 - Prayer requests shared
 - Survey of event participants about understanding and interest in partnership

Qualitative:

- How were updates about the communities supported through this partnership put to use?
 - Reports
 - Prayer Requests
 - Small group resources
 - Bulletin updates
 - Newsletter
- What details were shared about this partnership? And how often were they shared?
- What feedback has the congregation, mission team, pastors, etc. had about this partner?
- How has Bethany Community Church coordinated with this partner in support of the primary communication and teaching objectives?
 - Make the invisible God visible in our community and around the world
 - Simplify
 - Learn
 - Give
- How has Bethany Community church coordinated with this partner organization in support of its program objectives and metrics?

3. To motivate and inspire the congregation to act in the local community***Quantitative:***

- Number of volunteers in Bethany's local Tabitha Ministries?
- Number of vision trip or Spilling Hope 365 small group participants volunteering locally?

Qualitative:

- If the partner organization has a local ministry, how has Bethany Community Church sought to coordinate with this ministry?
 - Volunteer opportunities
 - Financial support
 - Referrals
- Are there ties between the international programs being supported and current needs or ministries at BCC (e.g. homelessness, orphan care, etc.)?
- How are these ties communicated to the congregation throughout the year?
 - Bulletin
 - Newsletter
 - Events
 - Sermons
- How Bethany Community Church encouraged and promoted opportunities for local engagement and service in support of this partnership?
- Were any community groups or service groups started as a result of this partnership? If so, what is the role of the community group/service group in inspiring others in the congregation, planning partnership-related events, assisting in evaluation of partnership?
- Has there been a general increase in integration of hospitality, generosity, and relationship building between the material “poor” and “non-poor” in the Bethany community?

Recommended Annual Review Evaluation of partner organization based on partnership objectives defined by Bethany Community Church

1. Come together as a church and use our collective efforts and resources to make an impact for Christ in the world.

Quantitative:

- Reference monthly or quarterly reports provided to share impact of church’s collective resources based on organization’s program metrics
 - Beneficiary numbers
 - Churches
 - Families
 - Children

Qualitative:

- Are the following components of this partnership sustainable for <organization> to continue making an impact in the world with BCC’s support?
 - Financial stability and stewardship

- Commitment to <organization and BCC> mission/vision/values
- Communication/Open Dialogue (Annual check-in per MOU for evaluation and more often for specific ministry needs)
- Adhering to MOU guidelines or partnership objectives (list below for each partnership)
- Practicing long-term planning and exit strategy from community and empowering local leaderships
- How is this organization portraying Christian values and sharing the love of Christ in its partnership with Bethany Community Church and its service alongside impoverished communities?

2. To teach Bethany Community Church congregants about what God is doing in the world, quality cross-cultural ministry, and/or poverty and development standards.

Quantitative:

- How many visits has <organization> had with BCC staff and with congregation?
- How often did <organization> communicate with staff and congregation about poverty, cross-cultural ministries, and international development?
- How many times did <organization> provide prayer requests or other resources for church community education?

Qualitative:

- What updates has BCC received about the communities supported through this partnership? What was the quality of these updates?
 - Reports
 - Photos
 - Videos
 - Teaching curriculum
 - Prayer Requests
 - Event resources/props
- How has the partner organization sought to educate Bethany Community Church about its approach to help impoverished communities?
- What feedback has this partner organization shared about how Bethany Community Church can improve community education about this partnership and poverty issues?
- How has this partner been supportive of Bethany Community Church's objectives?
 - Make the invisible God visible in our community and around the world
 - Simplify
 - Learn
 - Give

3. To motivate and inspire the congregation to act in the local community*Qualitative:*

- Has the organization acknowledged or asked about connections between international programs being supported and current needs or ministries in the Bethany Community Church community area (e.g. homelessness, orphan care, etc.)?
 - If so, what comments or suggestions were made?
 - Were they in alignment with the church's local ministry priorities?
- Does the organization have a local office or partner? Have they encouraged coordination between Bethany Community Church and this local partner?
- Has the organization encouraged opportunities for local engagement, service, and learning opportunities? If so, how?
- Has the organization provided resources or prayer requests for small groups to learn about and support their programs?