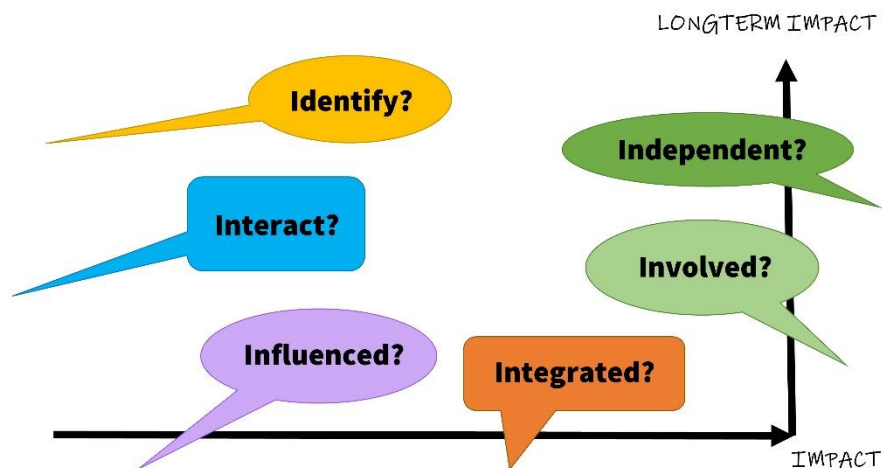


Ethical Scripture Engagement

Six Questions towards good Stewardship



BT Conference 2025

Andreas Ernst

Eyes for Impact

*Visualized, Participatory
Planning and Assessment
in Cross-cultural Ministry*

Learning to ask 6 questions
towards ethical engagement



© SIL Global, BT Conference 2025

© Photos & illustrations:
Andreas Ernst

All rights reserved.

Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. The process	6
3. The theory behind it.....	10
4. Understanding the six impact questions	15
4.1. Integrated into media habits?	15
4.2. Identify with content?	18
4.3. Interact?	20
4.4. Influence through tangible role models?.....	22
4.5. Involved?	25
4.6. Independent?	27
5. Additional Resources	30
6. References / Recommended Reading	31

1. Introduction

In this manual, you will discover the theoretical foundations and practical application of a planning and assessing tool called *Eyes for Impact*. This tool offers a process whereby ministry planners and decision makers are able to explore **six foundational questions** which affect the impact of their ministry activities. Asking these questions is not just about maximizing ministry impact. Exploring and answering these questions together with beneficiaries and partners allows us to assess whether we are acting as good stewards of the resources and opportunities presented to us in a given context:

Integration into media habits: Are you using the right media platforms the right way and at the right time?

Identification with content: Does your content appeal to your audience in terms of their interests and preferences?

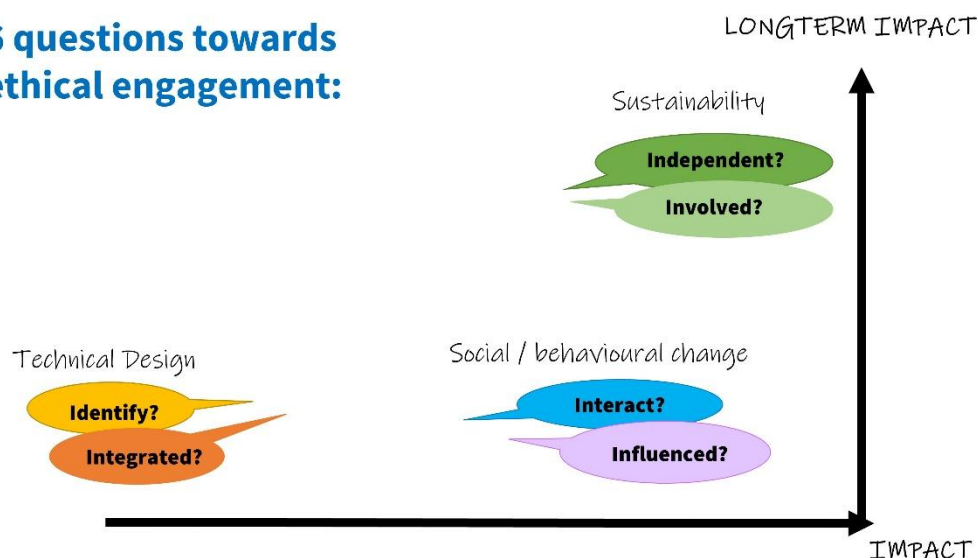
Interactivity: Can your audience interact with your content and with others in order to find purpose, identity and trusted role models?

Influence: Who influences your audience? What role-models will your audience identify with and learn from?

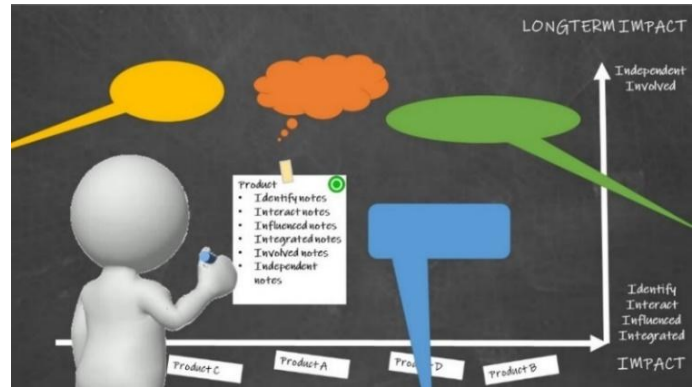
Involvement: Does your content or approach encourage beneficiaries to contribute towards and be involved in all steps of the process, to ensure relevance and buy-in?

Independence: Are you intentionally working towards ownership and sustainability?

6 questions towards ethical engagement:



Eyes for impact is a visualized, participatory planning and assessment tool which is based on six impact factors. This tool allows facilitators and participants to discuss these impact factors using **six impact questions** in order to develop effective media strategies for Scripture engagement and social change. The name of the tool finds its origin in that all six impact questions start with “i”, leading to a visualized plan of action.



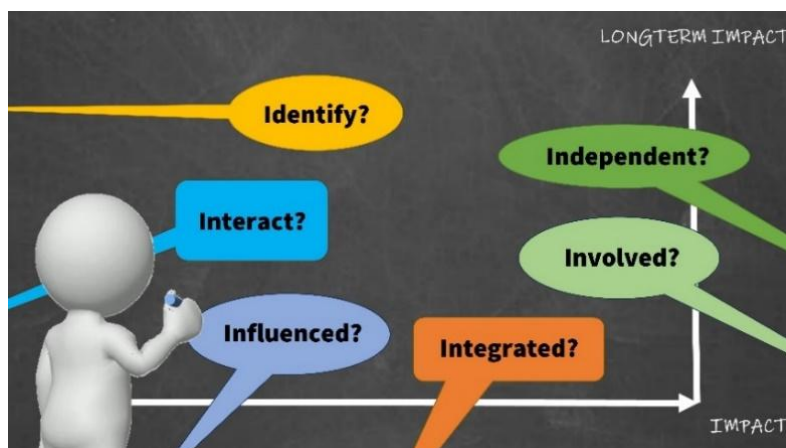
To fully understand the purpose of this tool as well as the six impact questions, let's first look at some of the challenges and barriers we frequently encounter in planning and assessing ministry activities:

- A lack of knowledge of the changing realities and needs of beneficiaries, their subgroups and their partners.
- Individuals such as managers or funding partners often have a disproportionally high level of influence over ministry activities and goals, in comparison to beneficiaries and other stakeholders, including field-based staff.
- The impact of ministry activities is often not assessed. Nevertheless, we continue to fund them because of assumed outcomes and established procedures. This leads to a breakdown of good stewardship in God's kingdom.
- We emphasize the transmission of information and knowledge, rather than wisdom. Or, to put it differently, we focus on technology and the creation of products (digital content), without also investing into dialogue about how truth is applied in context. As a result, we don't invest enough into people and collaboration (capacity building and partnerships) to ensure relevance, sustainability and conversations towards social change.
- An emphasis on measurable outcomes and indicators. This includes criteria such as the number of verses translated, publications completed, downloads or clicks harvested via social media, the amount of content created or activities implemented. This often leads to a loss in the quality of engagement.
- A lack of input and ownership by all stakeholders during planning and assessment.
- The use of linear, closed system planning models can lead to misleading expectations and reporting when it comes to short and long-term impact.
- Individual department leaders are expected to make strategic decisions and develop budgets on their own and under time pressure despite lacking the experience or information to make well informed decisions.

Considering the complexity of cross-cultural ministry, how we assess and plan in Christian ministry is foundational to engaging communities effectively.

Poor planning processes not only lead to unhelpful objectives and activities. They can also make it almost impossible to recognize, stop or amend ineffective ministry practices. This is because faulty or outdated presuppositions are not being recognized and reviewed during the planning process. This is where *Eyes for Impact* offers help.

There are plenty of planning or assessing tools out there. Surely you will have experienced at least one or two of them. In SIL for example, many will have encountered RBM (Results Based Management), SPAR (Strategic Planning and Review), or MAT (Multilingual Assessment



Tool). You may also be aware of other resources designed to assist planners such as the SIL digital strategy guides or Wayne Dye's 8 conditions for Scripture Engagement (2009). As you will see later in this document, in addition to these resources and tools, it is helpful to explore other planning frameworks developed by community development practitioners which are highly relevant in Christian ministry, in particular because of the holistic nature of our work and the need for sustainability and community ownership. All this to say that *Eyes for Impact* was developed by taking into account other tools that are already available, while bringing a new angle to planning which addresses some of the existing challenges encountered in ministry. *Eyes for Impact* does not promise to solve all your assessment and strategic planning problems, nor is it the only way to address them. However, here are some characteristics which I consider to be unique about *Eyes for Impact* and why you may want to give it a try:

- **It is simple:** Six questions provide a clear, easy to follow structure. Rather than expecting leaders to have all the answers, the tool provides strategic questions to ask in order to make well informed decisions.
- **It focuses on the people concerned:** Beneficiaries and stakeholders are included in the process by discussing their realities and assessing their expectations and needs.
- **It is conversation-based:** Rather than allowing or expecting an individual to make all the decisions by filling in activities in a project plan, the tool allows leaders to take a step back and share the responsibility of assessing and planning with others. This process empowers those who take part and leads to a shared vision.
- **It is flexible and neutral:** Using questions allows you to avoid the bias of organizational or departmental expectations, terminologies and processes which can marginalize or even manipulate stakeholders. In other words, rather than trying

to fit insights and decisions into pre-fixed categories, this tool allows you to openly explore the issues that affect your impact.

- It focuses on **behavioral and social change**, as opposed to technology or statistically measurable outcomes. As such, the tool takes into account the social factors that shape real change from within individuals and communities. This is crucial in non-profit work.
- It allows you to **assess and plan at the same time**: Insights from assessment feed into planning, and input during planning give you the basis for what to assess next.
- It gives opportunity to **explore and learn about issues that matter, together with those to whom it matters most**. This helps prevent investing into ineffective technologies, distribution channels or activities which falsely assume impact based on oversimplified linear cause-and effect models.

Having outlined the strengths of the *Eyes for Impact* tool, it's important to remember that its usefulness stands and falls with how well it is facilitated. This is different from other planning tools which assume a high level of prior knowledge, experience, or analytical thinking skills. The *Eyes for Impact* tool allows relatively inexperienced planners to make well informed decisions based on the experience and insights of others. Its six impact questions provide guidance throughout the process, as well as acting as a kind of safeguard, making sure the most important factors have been taken into account. However, while the *Eyes for Impact* tool does not expect a broad base of experiences or strong analytical skills, it does require good facilitation skills. As a result, decision makers may need to receive training to use the method to its full potential. This, however, is in my view an investment which has many advantages for anyone in a leadership role.

Assessment or planning tools are always just that, tools to be used by those who are willing to pick them up, understand what they are designed to do, and see what results they can achieve with them.

“Eyes for Impact is a powerful and robust tool for evaluating how we can improve the distribution of media projects our ministry produces. It is simple to learn and to teach, yet deep and wide in its application.

I recommend it to anyone who wants to be a good steward of the programs or resources God has entrusted your ministry with. We have added Eyes for Impact to our frontier media production trainings, and it has richly blessed our students as well. As we continue to teach and apply this training, I look forward to seeing the truths it contains challenge our assumptions and produce good fruit for God's glory.”

Sam Hakes, Media Trainer & Cinematographer, Create International

The facilitation of participatory decision-making has become very important in cross-cultural ministry. In fact, the successful facilitation of decision-making and implementation processes has perhaps become one of the most decisive skills in today's Christian ministry contexts. This is because these days a great variety of propositions and contributions by different organizations and individuals are brought to the table in any given project. This includes different ministry approaches and methods, funding models, technologies, relationships and networks, cultural knowledge, as well as differences in communication, planning and leadership styles. For most decision makers it has become impossible to have experience with,



or at least understand all of the current options that come together in a program. Nevertheless, we often run entire ministry programs on this very expectation, sometimes for years. We often burden individual decision makers with having to make decisions about ministry activities and priorities without adequate support or input, and often under time pressure. We also sometimes assume that all is going well, as long as we receive regular reports which confirm the predefined ministry outcomes, which were built into the project plan before budgets were approved. As a result, we continue for years with the same activities, without ever considering a change of approach which may be more effective given the limited resources God has entrusted us with.

“Eyes for Impact can help department coordinators make use of the expertise and experience of all the staff in their departments while being connected and connecting their team with representatives of the beneficiary community and its partners.”

In this context, how can we overcome the challenge of poor project planning and assessment? How can ministry leaders prioritize between different options and lead effective decision-making processes which result in realistic and well-informed plans? To address this challenge, *Eyes for Impact* helps department coordinators make use of the expertise and experience of all the staff in their departments while connecting their team with representatives of the beneficiary community and its partners. Giving voice to all stakeholders in this way builds cohesion and ownership around well-informed plans. It is also highly motivating for everyone involved.

It is easy to think that the end result of participatory planning processes should be improved practical collaboration or shared vision. While this is true, the conversational nature of the process has other important benefits: Firstly, using a conversational approach leads to developing and fine-tuning a common language for collaboration. Secondly, the problems we want to address become shared problems as they are defined and understood

more accurately through conversation. And finally, the process allows everyone to acquire new information and broaden their understanding of the project and their role in it through the inside knowledge and perspectives of others. These outcomes are precious goals in themselves which have great long-term value. They are also foundational to building a spiritual bond between one another as everyone finds themselves at the same level with others, under God's ultimate guidance and calling. For example, team leaders are able to appreciate their team members more through the process, as well as being able to connecting personally with some of the beneficiaries of ministry activities who they would otherwise never meet in person.



2. The Process

The Process: The Eyes for Impact assessment and planning process consists of a facilitator working with a group of participants representing all stakeholders. In discussion, the group will assess and look for ideas to improve the impact expected for existing ministry activities as well as for new approaches.

- 1) Optional introductory step:** Some groups may decide to first talk through all six impact questions with regards to a specific audience, taking notes on communication approaches which are integrated into media habits, create identification, promote interaction, influence, involve and facilitate independence. This approach will help everyone understand the six impact factors and think openly and generally about them, while also understanding their audience better. Once this discussion has been completed, the group will then move on to the following assessment and planning process:
- 2) In the beginning of the process, the group will brainstorm the ministry activities** they want to assess or consider using in their ministry. This includes publications or content ideas. All activities (publications, content ideas) are either represented on bits of paper or written down at the bottom of the Eyes for Impact framework. This framework may be drawn on a backboard, on a white board, in sand, on a large sheet of paper, or digitally. What is important is that all participants can see how their ideas are being visually represented.

- 3) After a time of brainstorming to collect existing activities (publications) as well as new ideas, the facilitator will invite the group to focus on one specific activity (or publication) at a time. At this stage, the participants are invited to provide insight into positive and negative points that increase or reduce the level of impact in relation to each of the six impact questions, taking notes as ideas come in. Ultimately, the group is encouraged to settle on a score between 0 and 2 points for every impact question (impact factor). This process can be used to assess an existing activity (publication), or to develop new content and activities. It is repeated for every activity (publication) the group wants to assess. Where teams decide to work through several content/activities, they are not only able to see how to improve their impact for a given content/activity, but they can also compare the various ministry activities with one another and assess which ones they want to prioritize given limited resources. Below are the six impact questions the facilitator will ask:

Identify with content?

Is the content relevant to the interests, realities, felt needs, religious attitudes and worldview of end users? What communication and learning forms do users prefer (written, oral, audiovisual, face-to-face, abstract versus narratives, individual versus communal, etc.)? Are illustrations, colours, graphic design and language choices appropriate and engaging for end users?

Integrated

into media habits?

Does the platform/ program make use of the media habits of the audience for maximum engagement on an ongoing basis? Is target audience using radio/TV/social media? How and when?

Interact with others?

Can the audience interact with others to express their views, suggest topics, comment or ask questions? Does the interaction provide identity & safety by belonging to a social group?

Influenced

by useful role models?

Does the product & program provide tangible role models/influencers (negative or positive)? Is the example of social role models embedded in authentic real-life experience? (testimonies, interviews, films, radio drama, debates, documentaries, etc.)

Involved?

Are target audience and key leaders and partners involved in making choices about the program & platform? Are they involved in creating content and in running the platform & program?

Independent?

Do local resources and training of users, key leaders & partners make it possible to continue running the program/platform and create content without external help?

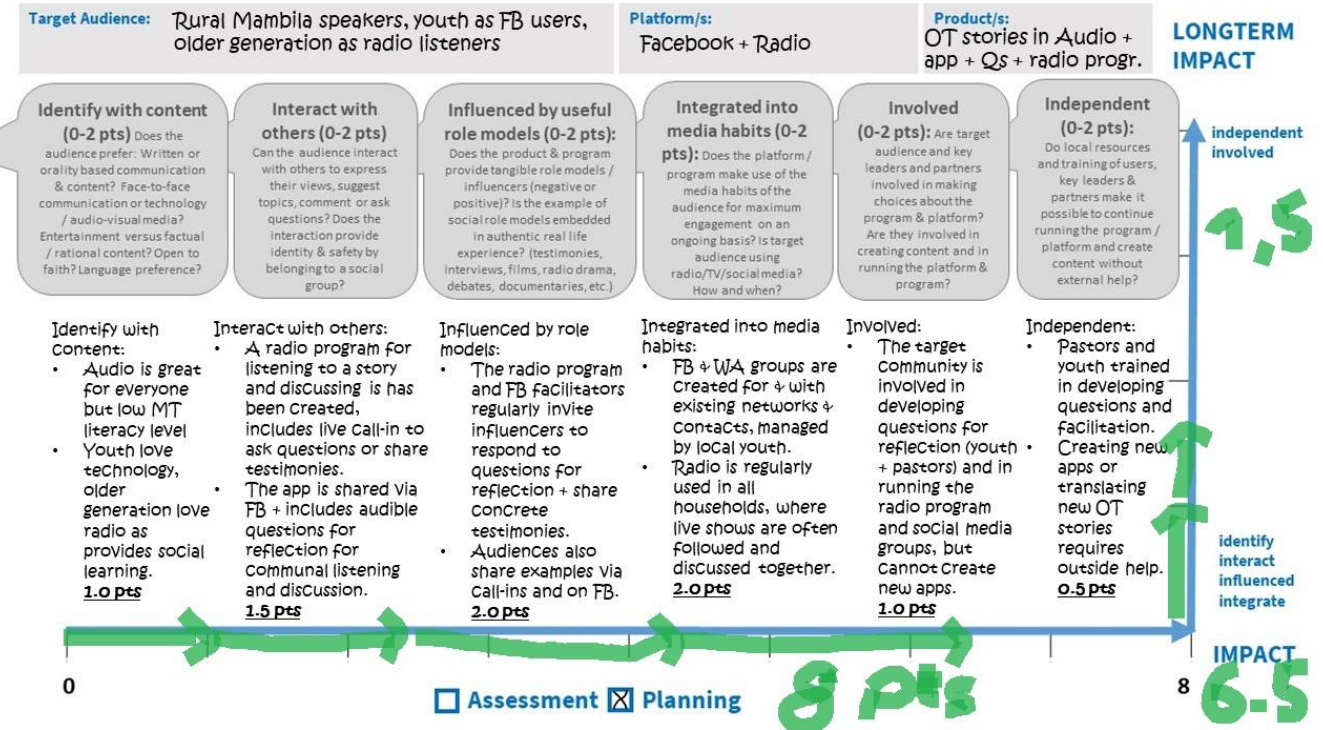
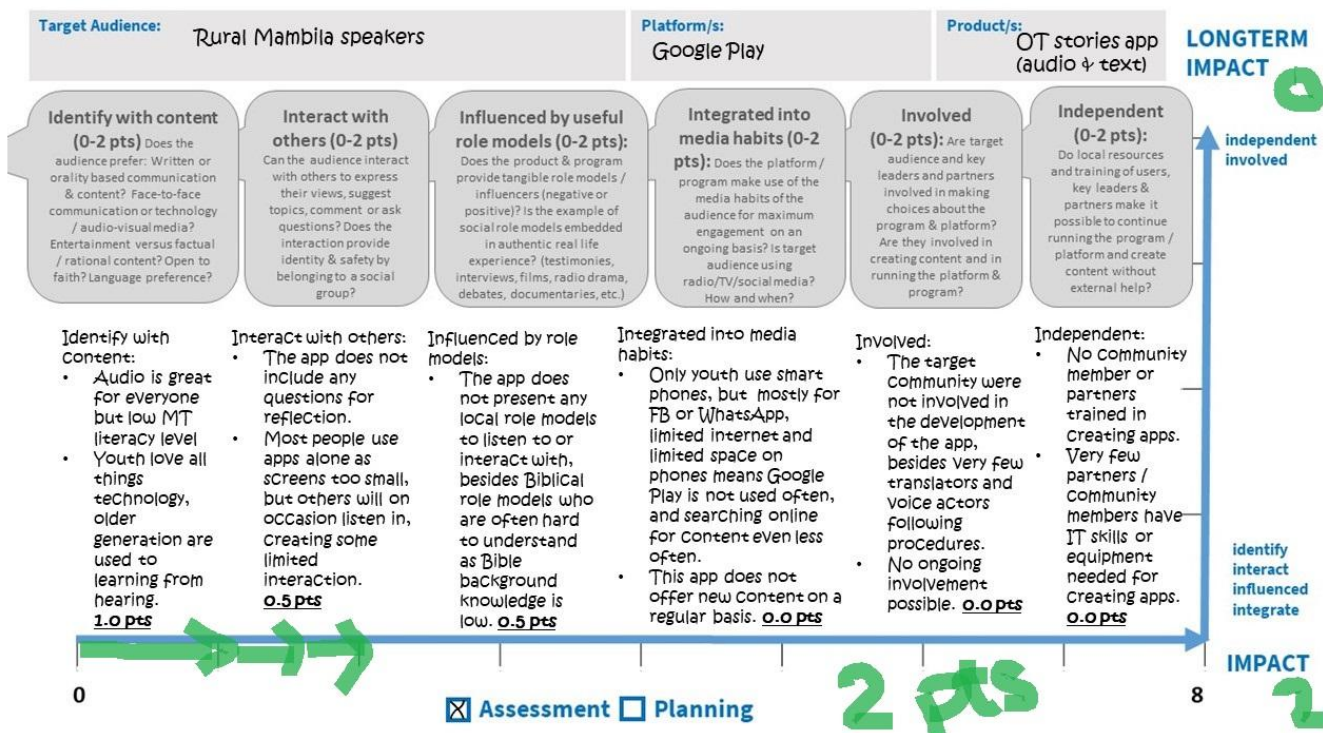
The six impact questions can be discussed in any order. In fact, often discussing one of the factors will lead to discussing and taking notes on another related factor. However, the most helpful order in most cases is to first deal with the two communication design questions *Integrated* and *Identify*, before moving to the social learning and inner change questions *Interact* and *Influenced*. Once these issues are understood, it is much easier to deal with the sustainability factors *Involved* and *Independent*. The target audience can either be defined in the beginning of the process or through the process. In any case, the *Eyes for Impact* process usually leads to a better understanding and appreciation of the subgroups of a given target community and how engaging them requires a variety of specific, tailor-made activities and content.

“The most helpful order in most cases is to deal with the two communication design questions *Integrated* and *Identify* first, before moving to the social learning and inner change questions *Interact* and *Influenced*. Once these issues are understood, it is much easier to deal with the sustainability factors *Involved* and *Independent*.”

It is important that the facilitator gives space and freedom to the participants to make the discussion their own and speak out freely, so that the discussion becomes lively and ideas can flow freely. However, it is equally important that the facilitator leads the discussion in a way that there is agreement and clarity on what the final score should be for each impact factor and why. Clarifying what has been decided leads to a sense of safety and motivation among the participants. Generally, if the group is assessing an existing content/activity, the discussion can start with talking about how the audience identifies with the existing content. If, however, the group is aiming to develop a new media program, the group could start with identifying the audience and then discuss how to integrate the program into its media habits, before moving on to other questions.



Next page: Below are notes taken from an Eyes for Impact assessment and planning session. The first part shows the assessment of an existing product and distribution approach, while the second part shows an improved media approach as a result of discussing the *Eyes for Impact* questions.



3. The theory behind it

As anyone who has been involved in Christian ministry knows, kingdom work can be slow and often discouraging. We often do no harvest, where we have sown. For instance, our work often depends on partnerships with financial donors, who are keen on hearing impact stories or expect reports on progress made specifically in the ministry they are giving towards. Particularly when it comes to partner organizations or individuals which provide significant financial support, the desire to justify continued giving and prayer support through measurable outcomes is a constant reality. This may be because of expected reporting procedures, or simply because we feel the need to validate our ministry. Measurable outcomes may take the form of statistical growth in the number of clicks, content downloads, churches planted, bible study groups created or with regards to the number of completed ministry activities. As missiologist Bessenecker points out, measuring our media impact in this way is problematic:

“When we succumb to measuring the mission of God solely by these metrics, we succumb to the principalities of profit and miss true signs of kingdom health.”

“The increase of Christ’s government and peace defy the easy metrics of the business world, which the church often translates into number of baptisms, congregants and churches, or the size of annual budgets, staff or the number of people served through various ministries. These numbers may provide some helpful information, but they are flimsy indicators of Christ’s reign. And when we succumb to measuring the mission of God solely by these metrics, we succumb to the principalities of profit and miss true signs of kingdom health” (2014).

The trend towards measurable impact affects how we plan activities and publications in Christian ministry. In fact, we can become so focused on creating polished media content for a given audience or boosting the statistical reach of this content, that we forget to collaborate with the beneficiaries of the content at every stage of the publication and communication process. Sadly, this leads to communication processes which are at best ineffective, and in some cases harmful. Servaes and Malikhaio provide the reason for this:

“Meaning is not something that is delivered to people, people create/interpret it themselves.”

“Meaning is not something that is delivered to people, people create/interpret it themselves. Knowledge in society is not objective or static, but is ever changing and infused with the values and realities faced by those who have it” (2007).

Publishing Christian content or running a number of educational activities for a given community does not automatically lead to change. In what follows, I hope to convince you that what leads to change is authentic and ongoing collaboration and dialogue with local partners and individuals. This ensures that our communication efforts and media content address real needs and offer realistic and practical advice given local realities and worldviews. Only in this way can God's truth reach and transform the lives of individuals and communities from within. This means that participatory methods need to become the foundation upon which all media ministry activities are built. Respect for the ability of local partners to not only participate in but also drive social change is therefore foundational to any cross-cultural ministry. In the 1970s top-down models of development began to be officially recognized by social scientists and development practitioners as not only ineffective but counterproductive. As a result, the involvement and ownership of social change by the beneficiaries themselves took center stage, and a number of participatory methods were developed to foster ownership.

“Now I don’t work anymore without Eyes for Impact! I first used the tool with a group of teenage mothers we have been ministering to for years. As they took part in the session, I discovered we completely missed the point with the book we produced for them and realized that they actually prefer get-togethers to debate various topics, learn from one another and receive information in the form of audiovisual content. Finally, I understood why our books were collecting dust in our cupboards.”

Jacqueline Zoutene, Director of Digital Communications, Bible Society Cameroon

Interestingly, there is a lot we can learn about participatory methods through how these methods evolved over the years. For instance, De Campos (2009) notes how historically participatory methods originated with Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), which saw communities as more passive information providers, in order to render development efforts more efficient. He then contrasts this approach with the emergence of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), which emphasized participatory methods as a way to empower communities as the main agents of change for themselves. We do not have time here to cover the many different forms and interpretations of different participatory methods and processes in detail. However, it is important to remember that what lies at the heart of participatory methods is ownership and contextualization, and that both of these goals are far more instrumental in creating lasting social change than efficiency in the planning process, or measurable outcomes. In his landmark book *Walking with the Poor*, development researcher Myers points out just how important it is for Christians to move away from a problem-solving mentality towards a participatory approach in ministry:

“Development practice traditionally began with identifying the community's needs or a needs analysis. Rooted in a problem-solving approach, the task is to identify what is not working or is absent and plan to remedy the problem. This

approach has some weaknesses. First, it sees the poor community as a place full of problems, a negative point of departure. While this is understandable for those of us who tend to be a little messianic and see ourselves as God's problem solvers, it tends to obscure the importance of looking for what works and what brings life. [...] A truly Christian approach to designing a transformational development program also needs to be open and attentive to what God has to say to us.

Even more important, the community needs to be invited to be open and attentive to what God has to say to it. Together we need to be quiet and listen in the midst of the all the information we have gathered and be open to God leading us to the information and conclusions that God deems most important” (2011).

“A truly Christian approach to designing a transformational development program also needs to be open and attentive to what God has to say to us. Even more important, the community needs to be invited to be open and attentive to what God has to say to it. Together we need to be quiet and listen in the midst of the all the information we have gathered.”

I In other words, Christian ministry has a lot to learn from the participatory approach to social change recommended by community development experts. Taking this approach not only makes sense from a pragmatic point of view. At an even deeper level, our faith commitment and identity define our relationship with the communities we serve as one of mutual accountability and united submission under God’s guidance. We must therefore learn to listen well, both to the people we serve and, together with them, also to God.

By participatory methods we should not expect participation to be a smooth process of harmonious collaboration and fair and egalitarian representation of a given community’s needs.



It is worth noting here that using participatory methods does not mean harmonious collaboration and fair and egalitarian representation of a given community's needs. In reality, most, if not all, communities we serve are made of a number of subgroups, individuals, and leadership levels with conflicting interests, different worldviews and education levels. Because of



such internal differences, most communities are at best loosely held together by rather dysfunctional decision-making processes. In addition, individuals and subgroups in a community often have very different levels of understanding of what social change is desirable or possible. In fact, many communities are characterized by power hierarchies which are often culturally acceptable, religiously founded or centered around influential people due to political, financial or spiritual power. Such people often have little genuine interest in communal development and wellbeing. Sadly, such realities are often found in church structures, mirroring more or less what happens in society. Keeping all this in mind, using participatory planning methods in Christian ministry is not about achieving perfect cohesion between all stakeholders. It is however about providing an opportunity for dialogue, and learning together with those who are willing and able to be part of the conversation. Again, as Christians we are called not only to use participatory methods to improve social structures and collaboration. Our faith also allows us to see and overcome some of the spiritual realities and barriers we face in a given context.

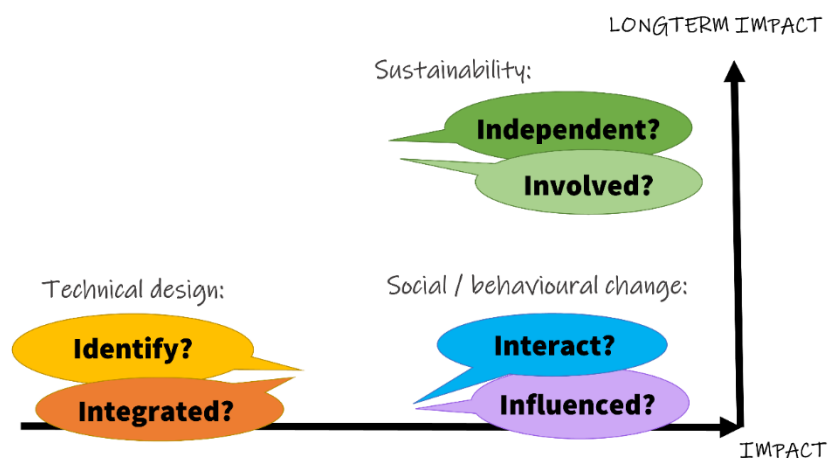
Practically speaking, here are some main take-aways from participatory methods which have been integrated into the Eyes for Impact planning tool:

- Participation means **inviting all stakeholders** to a planning session. This includes staff members associated with a given project or community, as well as representatives from the community themselves. You may not be able to represent every social level of a community, but where possible, it is helpful to find at least one or two representatives per gender and age group, as well as making sure both rural and urban community members are present. In some cases, you may want to start with a small group of participants to gain experience with the tool, or build some cohesion with your team, before inviting other stakeholders or holding separate sessions with subgroups that do not easily collaborate. You will also need to make sure the time and place of an *Eyes for Impact* planning session is as welcoming as possible to those who take part. Other factors to consider are travel costs, language choices, and even how participants are seated or placed with regards to one another can affect the participation of key stakeholders. In some cases, it may be

recommended to meet with subgroups for cultural reasons, or even with individuals, for social or safety reasons.

- Start the session by **explaining how the process works, but without tiring everyone out with abstract ideas**. Rather, you need to swiftly move into the actual concrete impact questions as applied to very specific activities and content, so that the participants discover that they are able to answer your questions and take part without yet understanding the tool fully.
- Make sure **decision-making is visualized**. As seen in many other models of participatory methods, making sure everyone sees the progress made and that their input has been reflected is important. Doing this visually makes sure everyone realizes that what is in the center is everyone's contribution, and not a single person's ideas or agenda, and that everyone is building on one another's input. When we use visualization, this participatory spirit becomes clear even to illiterate participants who may not be able to read the notes that have been taken.
- While planning is not an exact science, use the point system of the tool to **draw out some level of debate and argumentation** among the participants as to how many points to assign. Using the oversimplified numerical system can lead to qualitative insights as you ask the participants to present arguments which according to them increase or lower the amounts of points that should be assigned.

In what follows I explain the six impact questions, and why each is foundational in planning Christian ministry. Before we get there, however, it is important to note that the first four factors are linked to promoting direct impact, while the last two factors relate to the long-term impact of



your ministry. The reason why the long-term impact questions are situated on the vertical axis, as opposed to being on the same axis as your factors for direct impact, is that promoting long-term impact often requires investing into participation and capacity building in ways that use up of some of your limited resources for promoting direct impact. Another important observation to make is that while there is great overlap between all of the six impact questions, there is a particularly strong overlap between three pairs of questions: The two questions 'Identify?' and 'Integrate?' are both to do with the technical design of our communication. The pair of questions 'Interact?' and 'Influence?' are both centered on social and behavioral change. And finally, the two questions 'Involved?' and 'Independent?' work together in highlighting the long-term impact issues that need considering.

4. Understanding the 6 impact questions

4.1. Integrated into media habits?

Media research has shown that the overload of information due to the spread of information and communications technology (ICTs) increasingly leads people to limit their media intake to the kinds of media which satisfy their felt needs. This phenomenon has been described in the Uses and Gratifications Theory, or UGT in short (Ruggiero, 2000).

The same selective media behavior can be seen in how media technologies are adopted: **“Simply because a new media device or platform has become available is no guarantee that many people will go on to actually use it” (Vokes, 2018).**



In other words, we cannot assume that our content will automatically be accessed simply because technologically speaking it is now available. In fact, as we will see later, even if it is being liked, clicked on or shared, this is still no guarantee for impact. However, before we can begin to talk about how our content may or may not change lives, we must ask ourselves: How can we effectively reach our audiences despite their selective media habits? The answer lies in adapting to the communication habits of our audience:

“In the attention economy, no one owes you their attention, you have to earn it. Attention cannot be purchased the same way that it could five, 10, 20 years ago, when we had a handful of TV channels to entertain us. [...] It’s not the 1950s and you cannot Don Draper yourself to success by yelling at strangers via billboards, purchased email lists, random mailings, and the like. Manipulating people and tricking them into spending their most precious resource—attention—does not lead to trust, and won’t result in long-term marketing success” (Campbell, 2020).

As Picard puts it, “most people have media habits that are fairly stable as long as they meet the individual’s needs and wants. These habits save time” (2000). The big question therefore is how to become a part of the already existing media habits of our audience. What platforms does our audience already use, and for what purpose? What type of content is needed to gain and maintain the interest of our audience considering these media habits? We often create media content for our target audience first, and then look for ways to distribute this content. However, as we discover the communication channels and content preferences that are already in place, we realize that our audiences are not likely going to give up their existing habits, just because we have some new content to offer in their mother

tongue. Rather, our content needs to be tailor-made for the media habits of our audiences: Does my audience tend to listen to radio or learn and educate others through face-to-face conversations? Does it watch TV or is it more likely to be on social media? When during the day or week does my target audience use one or more of these platforms and who else is involved? Does my audience have access to the internet? How does it use cell phones (mobile phones) and what types of phones does it use? How frequently does it use such communication forms or technologies? By first understanding the media behavior and habits of our audience, we are in a better position to create the right content for the right platform. Doing so is not an optional, clever communication trick. It is quite simply the only way to reach our audience effectively. Sometimes we hear statements about the rapid spread of technology and how easy it has become to reach anyone anywhere. However, in reality quite the opposite is true. The more technology-saturated we get, the more our media filters kick in to protect ourselves from information overload. This is a challenge that is not about to go away.

Another reason why we can no longer be satisfied with simply ‘getting our content out there’ is to do with the difference between information and transformation. I think we can all agree that simply receiving information does not automatically change the way we think or act. From a ministry perspective, Jones puts it like this:

“Jesus didn’t tell us just to reach nations; he told us to teach nations. Reaching is passive and doesn’t require much effort beyond being seen. Teaching, however, requires capturing attention and fostering conversation” (2020).

In other words, understanding the media habits of the people we serve has to do with conversations. Conversations on the other hand have to do with regularity and continuity. As we come to understand the role of media habits in shaping the beliefs and behavior of our target audience, we will soon realize that creating one or two one-time products for our audience does not really allow us to sufficiently earn their attention, never mind having a conversation with them. There are many other media channels and platforms out there which put out content on a much more regular basis than we will ever be able to. Many of these channels are more engaging to our audience because of their regularity and conversational nature. Publishing an app in a given language, for example, will not suddenly lead to people regularly using apps or engaging with us about faith topics. Users may download it once and find it exciting. However, if their media habit consists in talking to others, listening to radio or chatting via WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger, you will need to use additional communication forms or content which will keep your audience interested and engaged.

“Jesus didn’t tell us just to reach nations; he told us to teach nations. Reaching is passive and doesn’t require much effort beyond being seen. Teaching, however, requires capturing attention and fostering conversation.”

Don't get me wrong. Tools such as audio Bibles and Bible apps have an important place in Christian media, but they need to be embedded in the media habits of users. To achieve this, Bible products need to be used in an environment of regular interaction, which includes regular content output, in order to earn the attention of your audience, grow your listenership/viewership over time as well as promote meaningful engagement. If for example your main audience for your Bible app listens to radio on a regular basis or uses Facebook, why not start a Facebook conversation based on the app or hold a weekly radio quiz show which encourages listeners to find answers in the app? Connecting to your audience in this way on their terms is likely going to be far more effective than assuming the app will change lives by mere download.

As we realize that keeping conversations going is key to becoming a part of the media habit of our audiences, this not only helps us create the right kind of new content. It also helps us improve our existing content. For example, say you want to use a Bible app alongside a Bible discussion group on radio or Facebook. This may inspire you to add the corresponding Bible study references and questions to your app, so that your audience can read the upcoming questions ahead of time in order to prepare their own personal responses, testimonies or follow-up questions. This may even encourage them to call the radio during the next live Bible study to share their views.

The more technology-saturated we get, the more selective our mental media filters get in order to protect ourselves from information overload. This is a challenge that is not about to go away.

One final observation: More than anything else, social belonging and learning are the most influential factors when it comes to shaping our media habits. As human beings we have a deeply rooted need to learn from and follow other people we trust. We also have a strong need to belong to social groups in which our own perspectives are also heard and appreciated. This is why, as we will see soon, interactivity is one of the main impact factors for effective media programs. However, let's first look at the impact factor *Identification with content*. This factor is closely related to *Integrated into media habits*. It looks at content design questions to ensure we are not only reaching our audiences, but doing so in a way that is appealing to them.

4.2. Identify with content?

Another factor that influences our media ministry impact has to do with the design of our content. The first point to consider when designing content is choosing topics which are of interest to your audience. This can be challenging, given the objectives of Christian ministry. Holistic development and spiritual growth are not always on



everyone's agenda, nor are they always a felt need. Quite the opposite: Narcissism and meaningless entertainment and distractions are increasingly numbing the minds of media consumers. Nevertheless, it is possible to let God's transformational principles come alive through the everyday needs and interests of our audiences. In fact, building rapport with audiences through their daily realities represents not only allows us to meaningfully capture their interest. It also forms the basis upon which God becomes truly tangible and personal in their lives. Myers warns us of the **"tendency of some Christians to assume that, since the Bible is about spiritual things, then the domain to which the Bible speaks is only the spiritual realm. [...] While this is good and proper, it unwittingly precludes the Bible from speaking to the material world of science and development"** (2011).

He goes on to explain:

"The effect of only witnessing to the spiritual truth of the gospel is a serious distortion of the gospel. In response to hearing the gospel only as words addressing spiritual needs, people may experience only a conversion at the level of formal religion and begin to go to church, read their Bible, and identify themselves as Christians. Yet, the other two dimensions of their worldview remain untouched by the gospel. In fact, people may not even realize that there is good news for these parts of their worldview. The consequences can be serious!" (2011).

What can we learn from this? Just as every aspect of life ultimately needs God's presence and transformation, the daily life experiences of our audiences can become mirrors or vehicles for reflecting and transmitting his nature and identity to them. Jesus drew his disciples' attention towards the birds and flowers by the roadside in order to teach them important life lessons. In the same way, we need to learn to talk about the things our audiences experience and care about, in order to start conversations with them about

God's presence in their lives. Regardless of whether our audience is interested in agriculture, learning languages, becoming familiar with their political rights, getting to know the Scriptures, how to use pesticides, how to protect themselves from AIDS, how to obtain safe drinking water or how to respond to corruption in the school system, we must



ask ourselves whether our ministry activities and content build on the interests of our audience. As we chose the topics to cover, we must take into account not only felt needs from daily life, but also the religious background and language preferences of our audience, their freedom to engage with a given topic and their worldview and educational background. All of these factors will help us assess what topics can be discussed and at what level.

Making sure our audiences identify with our content also has to do with their learning preferences. If your content is already informed by the '*Integrated into media habits*' factor, you will probably already know how to at least get your audience's attention. However, content choices such as language choices, communication genres and styles, as well as technical aspects or design aesthetics can further boost the appeal of your content. The choice of appropriate illustrations, font sizes and style, colors, print quality, music and sound effects, etc. are just as important as considering literacy or phone literacy levels. In addition, religious and cultural values may determine who can offer advice on what issue, which topics are taboo, or what languages or music styles are appropriate for what purpose. While some audiences like entertainment based audiovisual content, others may prefer written information presented in a factual way, at least when it comes to certain types of information.

Just as every aspect of life is ultimately in need of God's presence and transformation, in the same way all of our human experiences can become mirrors or vehicles for reflecting and transmitting his nature and identity.

It is important to note that the two questions '*Integrate into media habits?*' and '*Identify with content?*' are very closely interconnected. For instance, content design often needs to be adapted to the media habits of the end users. If for example you find that your content will mostly likely be listened to by small groups of people rather than individuals, or during rush

hour with lots of ambient noise, this has implications for the design of your content. Here's another example: Say you are planning to share Bible story videos via YouTube because you find out that your audience is regularly on YouTube. However, as you dig deeper into the '*Identification with content*' factor, you may realize your audience loves music videos and prefers low resolution videos because they listen to rather than watch these videos with others at work. The reason may be that only some audience members can afford to buy data, and no one has time to look at the screen anyway. However, as you ask '*Identification with content?*' questions, you may find out that this group watches these videos in this way for social identification purposes. You may find out that a particular kind of music video is preferred, because it reinforces the religious identity of the group, perhaps even to set itself apart from others at the workplace. How would you go about engaging this audience with this new information in mind? Whatever your approach may be, your '*Identification with content?*' questions will need to be complemented by insights from your '*Integrate into media habits?*' questions.

4.3. Interact?

If your content allows listeners and viewers to actively engage in conversations about topics of interest, they are far more likely to engage with it, share it with others and regularly engage with your media on a personal, transformational level. Interactivity creates trust and a sense of belonging to a social group. This in turn leads to real openness towards the views and advice of others, because humans are fundamentally social beings.



We do not simply adopt ideas on the basis of logic. And we certainly don't change our habits simply because we have received new information, no matter how convincing this information may be. Rather, new information or ideas are first checked against what others think and recommend. In their seminal work *Diffusion of Innovations*, Rogers and Everett describe the social learning process as follows:

“Communication is a process in which participants create and share information with one another in order to reach a mutual understanding. This definition implies that communication is a process of convergence (or divergence) as two or more individuals exchange information in order to move toward each other (or apart) in the meanings that they give to certain events. We think of communication as a two-way process of

convergence, rather than as a one-way, linear act in which one individual seeks to transfer a message to another in order to achieve certain effects” (2010).

One of the main questions to ask about your ministry activity or content is therefore: Does it invite, or at least allow, end users to express their views, ask questions or comment on the views of others? Does it allow you to engage with the end users and/or allow the end users to engage with one another through ongoing conversations?

Interactivity can be promoted either as an integral part of a content, or, preferably, in terms of how the content is being used in actual conversations. Integrated interactivity can for example be found in audio or text-based content which include written or recorded questions for reflection. Another example of integrated interactivity can be seen with apps that contain games or allow you to share a verse of the day via social media. However, one should explore whether such integrated interactivity actually leads to real dialogue with others, or simply offers a quirky feature which practically speaking doesn't create any authentic conversations. While building interactivity directly into your content can prove to be difficult, interactive content such as recorded bible study discussions, talk shows or debates can offer plenty of interactivity and social leaning, which may lead to more social interaction among listeners. However, remember that to promote truly meaningful social interaction which can lead to life changing conversations, your audience needs to be able to themselves join the conversation. This is why interactivity is best promoted in the way a media platform is being used, rather than building some level of interactivity into your content. For example, sharing a simple Bible story video in a WhatsApp group and launching a conversation about it promises to be far more effective, than including a few reflection questions in the video and then uploading it to YouTube.

“I learned about Eyes for Impact when I had just started cutting up Lumo Mark in the Nualu language and posting it on Facebook and YouTube one passage at a time. I realized what I was doing wasn't very interactive. In our translation team we decided to add three simple questions at the end of each clip. I also discussed our Scripture Facebook page, which promotes the translation, with two of the translators, and came up with a number of ideas for improving it. I realized I had been one of the ones doing most of the posting, but to make the page more sustainable, they came up with the idea of me leading a workshop about how to create content, which would mean they would be able to do more of the posting.”

Rosemary Bolton, Nualu Translation Facilitator, Indonesia

In addition to building interactivity into your content or promoting conversations around your content, some content allows you to encourage interactivity at a much earlier stage. Participatory radio drama, short film development, or interactive genres such as debates or talk shows not only offer the possibility for continued interactivity in the way they are broadcast or used. They also offer interactivity as part of the content development process itself, meaning participants are given a very authentic opportunity for interacting with others and expressing themselves about the issues they care about most.

To end this section, it is important to remember that the kind of fruitful social interactivity and learning we are seeking to promote is only possible if your audience finds a given topic of discussion interesting. When interaction occurs around topics which are relevant to their life experience and felt needs, particularly where these are shared with others, you have truly found a way of engaging your audience. This is why the previously discussed impact question ‘*Identify with content?*’ is so foundational. However, as we will see next, social learning is not only about interesting topics and interactivity. It also matters a lot, who we interact with.

4.4. Influence through tangible role models?

According to Albert Bandura’s social learning theory, **“All human beings learn new behaviors primarily through observing the actions of role models – and evaluating the consequences of those actions – and then trying to emulate those actions which they perceive to be the most successful ones”** (Vokes, 2018).



In other words, people primarily acquire attitudes and behavior from others, and any change of attitude and behavior usually results from the influence of others. Interestingly, Bandura’s research also showed that changes of behavior also occur when observing fictional media role models. Vokes observes that “messages encoded into dramatic entertainment genres were much more likely to bring about the desired behavioral changes” (2018), than messages presented in a matter-of-fact kind of way. What this tells us is that if we want to inspire real change, we need to offer our audiences role models that inspire them. Films and radio drama, but also interviews with respected personalities or testimonies, are formats, which allow our audiences to draw lessons for themselves based on the observed behavior of people they strongly identify with. Role models, whether fictional or non-fictional, can be integrated directly into your content such as is the case with debates, interviews, short films or radio drama. However, getting influential people involved in the activities around your content can be equally influential.

Social role models have one thing in common: They shed light on the long-term outcomes of positive or negative attitudes and behavior. Due to their proximity to real life their example or testimony is trusted by those who experience the same realities. One only needs to study the huge impact of the advertisement industry or of entertainment-education formats to realize that this is true. And if you are still unconvinced of the power of social role

models, think about the latest series you have been watching or listening to and how you and other family members talk about the various characters of the series as if they were real people with whom you are beginning to establish a relationship.

The role of influencers is perhaps best observed in today's social media culture. Many of us are following an influencer or other, and becoming an influencer is something many aspire to. It is important to note that the influence of such influencers over others is founded on their perceived authenticity. Most of us are saturated with information and endless and often contradicting views on what matters most. As a result of this, people are increasingly looking for who to trust, not what to trust. Cambell observes:



“Facts and truth are endangered. We live in an age where science, data, and research are persistently challenged and absurdly politicized by partisan hacks and self-proclaimed “experts”. Feeling true connection online is also rare. People who do manage to create authentic connections over social media report having a largely positive experience” (2020).

Because of the increasing distrust towards information, large enterprises with huge marketing budgets are also increasingly choosing to embed their advertisement in the content of strategic social media influencers. Why? Because social media influencers are able to gain the trust of their followers in a way companies can only dream of. Through ongoing social media conversations, social media influencers are able to build on the interests and preferences of followers, earning a reputation as authentic and safe role models who are worthy of trust and admiration. Ironically, research also shows that with some social media platforms, commercial algorithms greatly restrict and manipulate what information and values can be discussed. Nevertheless, influencers continue to be the first go-to place when it comes to finding not only trustful information but also purpose in life. The importance of social influencers can also be seen in non-profit organizations. Writing about effective communication for humanitarian aid and development, Vokes states that

“Media messages should be targeted not at the entire population, but instead at opinion leaders only, who would then communicate these same messages, face-to-face, to the population at large” (2018).

We learn from the above that offering trustworthy role models to our audiences has become vital in reaching people effectively. Using role models, be it real people or fictional persona integrated into narratives, to change hearts, is not just an advertisement or fund-raising trick. It is an approach we find in the Bible as well. From Old Testament prophets all the way to Jesus, the nature of God is most frequently communicated through parables and metaphors, as well as real-life accounts. The use of narratives allows us to discover God's

love, promises and presence in the concrete realities of our lives. How do we do so? It is by observing the role models within the biblical narratives. We observe their attitudes and choices, identify with many of them, and learn from their lives' outcomes. Rather than asking 'What is true?', we all tend to ask 'What works?' This is particularly true, when we receive conflicting answers and information to important questions as is the case in today's media landscape. It is therefore no coincidence that most of the content presented by social media influencers also comes in story form, presenting real life models and narratives to follow, allowing viewers to decide for themselves who to identify with and what values to pursue.

Just as the Scriptures themselves are essentially made up of personal stories transmediated into the biblical narrative (Merz, 2023), they can only really become fully accessible as they are translated back into the contemporary lives of our audiences. As we plan our activities, we must therefore ask ourselves: Do the people who are involved or presented in a given media conversation or content offer examples to follow which audiences will consider as relevant and trustworthy? Are we giving people both negative and positive role models to follow, allowing them to learn from the negative and positive outcomes of choices made by role models that are tangible to them? Do we offer different role models to different audience groups, taking into account factors such as gender, age, religious belonging, professional interests, education levels, language fluency and other social belonging factors?

To close this section, allow me to share a brief example to highlight the power of social role modeling. During my research on participatory radio drama, we created a drama on agricultural conflict in a small village. Since there was no radio in the area, we narrowcast the drama via loudspeakers in the market and in drinking places. I was surprised by the impact. Here is just one of several impact stories I discovered during my research (2016): A local cattle owner had heard our drama in which a young herder had neglected his duty, leading to a major conflict. This cattle owner called his own herder to his house and asked him if he was getting paid enough and if everything was well, which gave the young man a chance to get more support and appreciation from his boss. The young herder was so thankful for this change in his work conditions that he called one of the drama participants to thank him, who then shared this real-life impact story with me as follows:



Assan, over the phone on Dec 10th 2015: "Recently there was this guy who came to see me about..., it was a herder. He asked me whether I was among the actors who created this play, because he..., he had remembered my name. And he came to ask me and he was really very proud, because.... And he said it's something which really helped him, that he exchanged his biggest problems, him and his boss (*laughs happily*). He said that it (this play) really changed the attitude of his boss (the cattle owner) towards him a lot. His boss, when he heard this, he asked him 'Well, are you sure that you don't have any problems?' And when his boss asked him this, he profited to tell him about the problems he had (*laughs happily*). And..., really, this is what happened!"

4.5. Involved?

The two impact factors ‘Involved’ and ‘Independent’ are strongly connected with participatory methods and the importance of investing into ownership and sustainability. However, sustainability is far from the only reason for encouraging the participation of the beneficiaries of a given ministry. This is particularly true of the factor ‘Involved?’. When creating ministry content and



developing and implementing ministry activities, getting your audience and other key local partners involved is not just about building local capacity and ownership for the future. It is also the only way to becoming truly relevant, which is vital if you want to truly see the gospel take roots in a given context. Involving the beneficiaries and partners in a given ministry has the following advantages:

- Involving them guarantees that the **issues your media ministry addresses are relevant to your audience’s lives**, which in turn leads to your audience identifying with your content.
- Involving them makes sure that the **solutions you offer correspond to local reality**.
- Involving them leads to **effective distribution** because participants are more than ready to spread the outcome of their work among friends and family.
- Involving them allows you to **raise more support from your audience and partners**, both moral or financial, enabling you to pursue your work with increasing resources.
- Involving them ensures you are using the **right linguistic expression** for your communication. This will increase the quality of your content in many ways: First of all, using the right linguistic expression increases the emotional appeal of your content as well as ensuring good understanding, as the vocabulary used will be appropriate to your topics and context. Secondly, local linguistic expression promotes quality conversations with your audience, giving voice to members of the community with much life experience or important perspectives, but no formal education in foreign languages. As a result, your audience will grow, attracted by the views and advice offered in your program.

- Involving them allows you to **fight social injustice**: The freedom for everyone and anyone to take part and express their views makes sure that participation truly represents the whole community as opposed to deepening already existing social gaps.

Involvement is different from independence because it is possible to pay for the involvement of representatives of a community for the purposes of efficiency, linguistic accuracy or cultural relevance, or even to create a kind of local buy-in. Similarly, it is possible to agree on the involvement of community members in a given project with the support and authority of local leaders. At times this may be the only way to start working and build momentum in a community. Other times however, fast-tracked local involvement in this way can reduce your chances of long-term ownership. Wherever possible, involvement should not be limited to the distribution of predefined tasks among the beneficiaries or their key partners. Rather, inviting end users and partners to be involved at every stage of a project, from needs assessment

to conception to implementation to maintenance, leads to heart-felt involvement and ownership. This type of involvement can lead to material or financial contribution and the contribution of know-how and human resources by stakeholders out of a true sense of ownership. To make this type of involvement possible, content creation processes and technologies, as well as the implementation of ministry activities need to be in line with the resources available to partners. This approach is very different from approaches where content creation processes, technologies, financial power, external know-how, or imposed planning procedures create dependency on outside help.

Involvement should not be limited to the distribution of predefined tasks among the beneficiaries or their key partners.



However, before being too optimistic about local ownership, we must recognize that a high level of local independence is often difficult to achieve. There are times when outside ministry agencies are only able to offer content creation or technology services, but cannot really offer capacity building. An example of this may be creating tools such as Bible apps, websites, or literacy materials for communities and partners. In such cases, beneficiaries and their partners may only be able to contribute at the development stage through predefined tasks and limited input on design questions. As a result, local stakeholders are unable to

acquire the know-how and technology required to create more of the same type of content in the future. Sometimes the content created for them may turn out to be very useful to the community, but often its impact will be limited because media requires ongoing output of content to keep conversations going. This is why where possible, we must seek to promote as much local involvement as possible, even with technologies which cannot fully be transmitted to locals. In such cases, we can for example emphasize the involvement of locals in the way the content is being used, to create more buy-in and perhaps an integration of these tools into other local communication channels which are ongoing.

Despite the above, I do believe we need to be careful about our technology choices exactly because of the level of local involvement we want to see happening. Sometimes we assume too quickly, that our outside services are required because we want to see our favorite media content or technologies put to use in a given context. However, rather than assuming our content creation service or technology is needed by others who lack these resources and who often gladly accept what is freely given to them, we must ask ourselves this: Should we perhaps promote a different kind of technology or content which allows for more local involvement and ownership? For example, a number of formats such as debates, interviews, talk shows, radio drama or even music videos are especially effective when it comes to local involvement and contribution, and can be created using free software and mobile phones. Using these formats frequently not only fosters the participation of a variety of local stakeholders; it also allows them to create content for themselves on a regular basis without the need for time-consuming technical support or quality control mechanisms from the outside. This in turn allows them to create content for using as part of the media habits of audiences, which requires a regular output of content.

4.6. Independent?

As we've just seen, when your audience and other key partners are involved in a ministry, this can create a lot of buy-in and ownership, which can lead to long-term impact. However, involvement does not always lead to sustainability. It is possible that all of the involvement and buy-in of audiences and local partners in a program come to a halt when those initiating the program leave. This happens for example when the initiators keep some of the expertise for themselves, monopolize the decision-making of the program, fund most of the activities or use resources which are unavailable to the end users or their partners.





If you want a ministry to be sustainable in the long run, or perhaps even grow in momentum and width, you must intentionally build capacity in the beneficiaries and their partners in every aspect of the program. This includes building capacity in creating content but also in terms of understanding and developing media strategies. Local beneficiaries must be able to independently identify the right media formats, platforms and activities to reach their audiences as new needs arise in the future. As a ministry organization, how do you make sure your local partners and beneficiaries are involved in choosing appropriate communication platforms (such as radio, TV, social media, listening groups, etc.) for reaching their (not your) audiences, rather than only giving input on such matters? How can they begin to own such decision-making processes, so that they can take solve their communication needs of the future? In terms of managing communication technologies and activities, how can you make sure your beneficiaries and partners are able to run things without you in the long run?

To counteract the inherent tendency in cross-cultural ministry for artificially pushing kingdom work through money and activism, it is vital to ask yourself: Am I investing sufficiently into building capacity in beneficiaries and their partners? This requires asking yourself another equally important question: As I build capacity in others, what am I learning from others? What are we learning together? It is only when learning goes both ways and results from solving problems together that we can truly release others towards increased ownership and self-confidence. Learning together and from each other in this way however means that activities and content creation choices need to take into account the resources, technologies and know-how available to end users. Do we make

It is not possible to short-cut the kind of real momentum and collaboration across organizations and cultures, which honors God and demonstrates the power of his love and fellowship in overcoming man-made boundaries.

room for such resources, even if this means giving up control or letting go of our quality standards? If we want to see the involvement of partners lead to heart-felt ownership and self-motivation, their involvement and contribution cannot be limited to predefined processes, tasks and activities.

For example, when we plan activities, how to we decide on the places, buildings and staffing of a given activity? Who sets the dates, budgets and schedules? Such choices play a huge role in terms of whether a given activity is seen as owned by a ministry organization or by partners. They also affect the financial or material contributions made by different stakeholders. If we want to see ministry activities gain momentum and ownership among the beneficiaries, it is important to let go of control over the logistics and timing of ministry activities for the sake of long-term impact. It is important to remember that encouraging sustainability, that is long-term independence from external support, is first and foremost about an inner attitude of trust and servanthood towards the wider body of Christ, towards the people he has already positioned to build his kingdom in a given context and location.



This inner attitude must be nourished within all stakeholders. First and foremost, it must be nourished within those who tend to have the upper hand when it comes to financial power and what appears to some as being superior know-how. However, we

must be careful not to tip the balance too much in the other direction. Thinking that outside facilitators should have no influence, no say, or no long-term presence at all in a project can be just as unhelpful as expecting outside facilitation to take care of everything. The independence of local communities has at times become an idol for outside aid organizations, sometimes even to the point of attempting to fast-track an idealized level of local ownership. This can lead to a kind of pseudo independence which should perhaps rather be described as abandonment. Every situation is different, with some contexts or communities requiring more help from the outside than others, or more time to develop local ownership. Rather than pushing for complete project ownership in every instance and as soon as possible, perhaps the goal should be defined as working towards a mutual understanding of the ministry entrusted by God to his people in a given context. In the end, the things or processes we want to see take root may only play a role for a while, with other ministry activities or approaches taking their place. Discerning the one from the other is not easy. In fact, when our work does not take root, this can be very painful. It can even lead to a crisis in our faith and calling.

However, in such moments too, we will often find renewed motivation and the power to let go as we look back on how we have invested into local independence. As we look for ways in which our work continues, perhaps in ways we did not expect, we begin to appreciate the gifting and ministry of others which God in his wisdom called to the task long before we began to make plans for them. This reminds us that it is God who is building his kingdom! It is not possible to shortcut the kind of long-term momentum that results from collaboration across organizational and cultural barriers. It is, however, a goal well worth pursuing! In the process, God will receive the glory he deserves! The power of his love and fellowship in overcoming man-made boundaries can shine brightly, eclipsing the honors we so easily want to attribute to the work of humans and organizations.

5. Additional Resources

You can learn more about *Eyes for Impact* by watching the overview video or by working your way through a series of 4 lessons, designed to guide you through the various impact questions:

Overview Video + Eyes 4 Impact video lessons: https://youtu.be/sr0_rjvkJ5I

Eyes 4 Impact Lessons for self-study or processing as a team:

Lesson 1:
Understanding
your audience and
strategy paradigms



<https://youtu.be/OT2SAW26ZIQ>



Lesson 2:
Assessing
platforms
& products



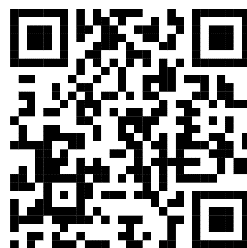
<https://youtu.be/i49cj0U25Qs>



Lesson 3:
Understanding
social learning
& change



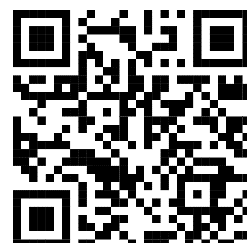
<https://youtu.be/UUo2sd7dJIs>



Lesson 4:
Understanding
ownership
& capacity
building



<https://youtu.be/mWcNICa8UMY>



6. References / Recommended Reading

Bessenecker, S.A. (2014) *Overturning Tables: Freeing Missions from the Christian-Industrial Complex*. Downers Grove, USA: IVP Books.

Campbell, J. (2020) *How to Build and Mobilize a Social Media Community for Your Nonprofit in 90 Days*. Lexington, NC: Bold & Bright Media.

De Campos Guimarães, J.P. (2009) 'Participatory Approaches to Rural Development and Rural Poverty Alleviation', in. *Emerging issues in rural poverty reduction: The role of participatory approaches*, De Hague, Netherlands: Institute of Social Studies. Available at: https://sergiorosendo.pbworks.com/f/Guimaraes+2010+participatory_rural.pdf (Accessed: 20 May 2024).

Dye, T. Wayne (2009) 'The Eight Conditions of Scripture Engagement Social and Cultural Factors Necessary for Vernacular Bible Translation to Achieve Maximum Effect.', *International Journal of Frontier Missiology*, 26(2), pp. 89–98.

Ernst, Andreas (2016) *Voices in Action: What is the potential of participatory radio drama for empowering rural communities in Cameroon?* Masters thesis. University of Gloucestershire. Available at: <https://www.sil.org/resources/archives/79775> (Accessed: 22 May 2024).

Jones, N. (2020) *From Social Media to Social Ministry: A Guide to Digital Discipleship*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Reflective.

Merz, J. (2023) 'Bible Transmediation in Theory and Practice', *The Bible Translator*, 74, pp. 213–230. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1177/20516770221150806>

Myers, B.L. (2011) *Walking with the Poor: Principles and Practices of Transformational Development*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books.

Rogers, E.M. (2010) *Diffusion of Innovations, 4th Edition*. Free Press. Available at: <https://books.google.hu/books?id=v1ii4QsB7jIC>.

Ruggiero, T. (2000) 'Uses and Gratifications Theory in the 21st Century', *Mass Communication & Society*, 3, pp. 3–37. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327825MCS0301_02.

Servaes, J. and Malikhao, P. (2007) 'Communication and Sustainable Development: Selected papers from the 9th UN roundtable on communication for development', in. Rome: FAO. Available at: <https://www.fao.org/3/a1476e/a1476e00.pdf> (Accessed: 9 April 2023).

Vokes, R. (2018) *Media and Development*. London and New York: Routledge.