

Monitoring Evangelistic Intent in Community Development Projects

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Note 2014. Some general material about monitoring in the guide has been deleted to focus it more sharply on evangelistic intent.

The purpose of this guide is to encourage those who practice holistic community development to think more systematically and deeply about monitoring evangelistic intent.

Caution: this work is preliminary. We have much more to learn about holistic practice as we reflect more systematically and deeply. I encourage you to change the tools in this guide to reflect your best experience and reflection on that experience, use them, and share them with others.

Caution: the moving of the Holy Spirit is not constrained by anyone's monitoring system. But our ability to be sensitive to how the Spirit is moving may be constrained, unless we work hard at being open to revelations outside the monitoring system.

Several colleagues have influenced by thinking about evangelistic intent, although they may not necessarily agree with what I think. I gratefully acknowledge the conversations I have had with Jayakumar Christian, Tom McAlpine, Bryant Myers, John Steward and Graeme Swincer.

I also acknowledge the influence of comments made by participants in a workshop on monitoring in El Salvador in December 1993, where some concentrated attention was given to monitoring evangelistic intent in holistic development work.

Who I am influences the way I view evangelistic intent. I share something about me to help you interpret the material in this guide. I am a Caucasian male over fifty years old who has lived in the United States all of my life. I have been a member of church congregations in four denominations, but most of my church experience has been in United Methodist congregations. I have no seminary training nor have I done any formal theological studies. As of 1994 I have been visiting World Vision projects as an evaluator for about eight years, primarily in the Africa and Asia regions.

Who you are influences the way you view evangelistic intent. I encourage you to reflect often on your views, and to pray without ceasing for guidance in being holistic as you work developmentally alongside the poor.

Evangelistic Intent

This section is excerpts from Bryant Myers' (1992) article, "Provoking the Question." His view is based on extensive conversations with community development workers, numerous visits to development project communities, and ongoing dialogues with Christian mission leaders. It provides a helpful context within which to discuss standards and indicators for evangelistic intent within holistic community development projects.

Exhibit 1. Provoking the question

Provoking the Question
Bryant Myers

"What is the relationship between development work done by Christians and our call as Christians to be witnesses to the good news of Jesus Christ? This is a question with which World Vision has struggled for many years.

Some say it is enough to empower the poor for their own development. After all, God expects us to do good for its own sake. Doing development work in order to get a chance to do evangelism is proselytism.

That's true, say others, but is doing good enough? Do the presence of Christian staff members and the facilitation of good development constitute a witness to the whole gospel?

These are not easy questions to answer. But they cannot be ignored. Let me share some reflections which help me a little. They are borrowed from Lesslie Newbigin.

Sharing the gospel in Acts

What prompted Peter to give his first evangelistic sermon in Acts 2? ... Peter's sermon was an explanation of the powerful act of God's Spirit. His message was in response to a question asked by nonbelievers. As a result of his message, 'three thousand were added to their number that day.'

We see the same sequence in Peter's second evangelistic sermon in Acts 3. ... Once again Peter's speech is in response to a question provoked by evidence of the power of God.

Steven's sermon recorded in Acts 7 had a similar origin. He made his passionate defense of the gospel before the Sanhedrin in response to the question, 'Are these charges true?' The charges were that Stephen had done 'great wonders and miraculous signs among the people.'

In each of these instances, the gospel is proclaimed, not by plan or intent, but in response to a question provoked by activity of God in the midst of the community of believers. Evangelism or proclamation was the second act.

This insight led me to wonder if we could think about evangelism as the work the Christian community does, or better, which God does through us, that provokes questions among the people to whom the good news of Jesus Christ is the answer?

...

What does this mean?

If we begin to think about development work done by Christians in terms of provoking the questions to which the gospel is the answer, then the way we think about designing and implementing development projects takes on a new light.

We will begin to ask ourselves what actions and methods of facilitating development projects are most likely to provoke questions among those we serve to which the gospel is the answer. We will recognize the importance of interpreting the technology we bring to people so they have a chance to attribute its power for change to God and not to witchcraft or to the technology itself.

Our Christian staff members will ask themselves what kind of lives they must live that might provoke questions to which the transforming work of Jesus Christ is the answer.

And, trusting that people will eventually be prompted by God to ask questions to which the gospel is the answer, we will ask ourselves, 'Who will provide the answer?'

We will begin to see that every activity, every mannerism, every expression of who we are has the potential to point beyond ourselves to the God who saved and sent us."

end Myers' article

Appendix A shows a framework for categories related to evangelistic intent, along with examples of standards for each category. Exhibit 2 below gives a brief description of each category. Note that some categories are primarily for development agency staff, while others are for both staff and residents of project communities.

Exhibit 2. Evangelistic intent categories

Category	Description
Incarnational Living	Standards to guide World Vision staff in living and in doing development in ways which reflect the message of the gospel, and which, by the work of the Holy Spirit, may provoke questions to which the gospel of Jesus Christ is the answer.
Sacramental Living	Standards related to interpreting development work and development technology in terms of the character and activity of God.
Values Formation	Standards to guide the development of Kingdom values in all areas of project work (economics, health care, agriculture, education, etc.).
Biblical Integration	Standards to guide staff in using the Scriptures as the ultimate basis of their work and ministry.
Sustaining Spirituality	Standards to guide World Vision staff in developing their own spirituality as individuals and in teams.
Staff Witness	Standards to guide staff in effectively, yet sensitively, proclaiming the gospel as the Holy Spirit creates opportunities to do so.
Church Relations	Standards to guide staff in supporting churches and inviting and equipping them as partners in holistic ministry.

Note. Bryant Myers developed the descriptions for the categories.

Indicators for Evangelistic Intent

To illustrate how a variety of indicators can be developed, consider a standard from the church relations category. This standard has been selected because in much of World Vision's work church relations has played a strategic role, but monitoring was done implicitly rather than explicitly. This discussion demonstrates how principles of monitoring can be applied explicitly to this important area.

Selection of this standard is not meant to imply that evangelistic intent must involve church relations. World Vision also works in settings where church relations is an irrelevant category at the time. Monitoring evangelistic intent is just as important in such settings. The same principles for developing indicators can be applied to create an explicit monitoring system which helps staff work more holistically.

Standard:

World Vision's strategy takes into account the Christian work of other individuals, groups and agencies. In particular, the strategy describes who will provide the gospel answer to the questions evoked by World Vision's work in the communities.

Suppose that there are three denominations which have activities in the area where project communities are located. One indicator for this standard is a senior manager's knowledge of those activities (see Exhibit 3). The description of the indicator includes the standard, the information about the situation to be compared with the standard, and a procedure for collecting the information.

Another indicator for the same standard is the knowledge the leadership of each denomination has about World Vision's work, and their perceptions about conflicts between the two agencies (see Exhibit 4).

For both indicators, the responses to the interview questions would be analyzed to determine knowledge and understanding of the work of others, and adjustments made in program strategy based on that knowledge and understanding.

Exhibit 3. Description for indicator #1, church relations

Standard: World Vision's strategy takes into account the Christian work of other individuals, groups and agencies. In particular, it describes who will provide the gospel answer to the questions evoked by World Vision's work in the communities.

Information: consistency between the World Vision program strategy and activities of other Christian agencies, as perceived by a World Vision manager.

Procedure: The monitor should be an experienced interviewer who is familiar with the general purpose and activities of World Vision and the three denominations. The monitor shall interview the Operations Director, using items similar to the following examples.

1. Describe the process for creating the program strategy. (Probe statements which refer to cooperation with other agencies, or knowledge of other agencies working in the program area.)
2. What are the activities of denomination X in the area where World Vision projects are located? Denomination Y? Denomination Z?
3. Describe interactions World Vision has had with the three denominations. How well

- does each denomination understand what World Vision is doing?
4. Describe the relationship between the program strategy and the work of the three denominations. How well are the efforts of the four agencies integrated?
 5. Within reason, what could you do to integrate World Vision's strategy better with the work of the three denominations?

Exhibit 4. Description for indicator #2, church relations

Standard: World Vision's strategy takes into account the Christian work of other individuals, groups and agencies. In particular, it describes who will provide the gospel answer to the questions evoked by World Vision's work in the communities.

Information: conflicts between World Vision's work and the work of other Christian agencies, as perceived by the other agencies.

Procedure: The monitor should be an experienced interviewer who is familiar with the general purpose and activities of World Vision and the three denominations. The person in each organization responsible for operations in the program area will be interviewed, using items similar to the following examples.

1. Describe the work your organization is doing in this area of the country.
2. Describe how your work is similar and different from the work of other agencies working in the same area.
3. Describe how the work of other agencies affects the work of your organization.
4. Describe any conflicts between your work and the work of other organizations in this area. What suggestions can you make for resolving those conflicts?

Two more indicators for this same standard are shown in Exhibits 4 and 6.

Exhibit 5. Description for indicator #3, church relations

Standard: World Vision's strategy takes into account the Christian work of other individuals, groups and agencies. In particular, it describes who will provide the gospel answer to the questions evoked by World Vision's work in the communities.

Information and procedure: A set of anecdotes of cooperation or conflicts with each of the denominations that is culled from the monthly reports of the project coordinator.

Exhibit 6. Description for indicator #4, church relations

Standard: World Vision's strategy takes into account the Christian work of other individuals, groups and agencies. In particular, it describes who will provide the gospel answer to the questions evoked by World Vision's work in the communities.

Information: evidence that the World Vision program strategy is related to work being done by other Christian agencies.

Procedure: The monitor should be familiar with the relationships among World Vision and other Christian agencies working in the same area. The monitor shall examine the written strategy, identify elements such as the following, and assess compliance with the standard.

- * Description of activities to be carried out in cooperation with specific Christian agencies or individuals.
- * Description of interactions or meetings that have been held with other individuals and agencies.
- * Description of a process to be followed for networking with other agencies.

These four indicators for one standard are the beginning of a hypothetical monitoring system for evangelistic intent shown in Exhibit B1 in Appendix B. The three exhibits in the appendix show the evolution of the hypothetical system.

The simple monitoring system for evangelistic intent in Exhibit B1 can be expanded by including adjustment procedures as shown in Exhibit B2.

The simple monitoring system now contains four indicators for the one standard, and adjustment procedures for two of the indicators. Additional indicators and adjustment procedures can be created until this component of the system meets the most common information needs related to the standard.

Exhibit B3 shows a simple monitoring system that includes one standard from each of the seven categories in the framework for evangelistic intent (Appendix A). It is anticipated that a complete system in a particular country may have 40 or more standards in its system, while a complete system for across countries may have hundreds of standards.

Examples of Simple Systems

Appendix C contains examples of simple monitoring systems for Biblical Integration and Staff Witness. These examples are intended to stimulate you to creatively design appropriate systems. They are not intended to be applied in any situation without critical consideration of their relevance and usefulness.

References

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Newbigin, Lesslie, The Gospel in a Pluralist Society, Eerdmans & World Council of Churches, 1989.

Swincer, Graeme, "Outsider Change Agents in Mission and Development," World Vision Australia, March 1991.

Appendix A Examples of Evangelistic Intent Standards

Category	Examples of Standards
Incarnational Living	<p>Staff live as close to the people as possible, participating in all major aspects of their lives.</p> <p>Staff continually answer the question: What messages are the people actually hearing as we do our work?</p> <p>Staff continually answer the question: What power encounters are taking place in this community?</p> <p>Staff learn the local language and customs where they are assigned.</p>
Sacramental Living	<p>Development technology (digging wells, immunizing children, using fertilizer, etc.) is accompanied by an explanation which points to the activity and character of God.</p> <p>Staff pray publicly as appropriate in any situation.</p> <p>Staff pay close attention to symbols present in their homes and offices.</p> <p>People view feasts, festivals, and holidays as opportunities to call attention to the nature of God.</p>
Values Formation	<p>Day-to-day activities in the community are used to celebrate and call attention to the activity and character of God.</p> <p>Staff can describe changes in their own values as a consequence of project work.</p> <p>Later in the project, people's attitudes toward the gospel are more positive.</p> <p>Later in the project, primary values in the community are more consistent with primary values expressed in the gospel. Examples: love your enemy, care for your neighbor before you care for yourself, respect the environment as divine creation for all generations.</p>
Biblical Integration	<p>The Bible is used in appropriate ways with people in communities as they plan activities, make decisions, solve problems.</p> <p>A Biblical world view influences program planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation in project communities.</p> <p>Staff seek to relate ministry, marketing and management to holistic scriptural principles.</p>
Sustaining Spirituality	<p>Staff pray without ceasing, seeking God's will for every decision and activity.</p> <p>Staff worship activities are designed to empower mission.</p>

Category	Examples of Standards
	Staff are encouraged to use spiritual disciplines.
Staff Witness	<p>Staff are capable of enhancing the people's view of the gospel.</p> <p>Staff live in ways which make Christianity attractive to people in project communities.</p> <p>When opportunities arise, staff sensitively share the good news of Jesus Christ.</p> <p>Staff receive training regularly to enhance the quality of their witness in their work.</p> <p>Staff regularly critique management and systems practices against values which build up a community.</p>
Church Relations	<p>Staff work collaboratively in a network of Christian churches and agencies working among the people in project communities.</p> <p>Churches related to project communities view World Vision as a supportive partner for their activities which are consistent with World Vision policy.</p> <p>Later in the project people's attitudes toward the church are more positive.</p> <p>World Vision's strategy takes into account the Christian work of other individuals, groups and agencies. In particular, it describes who will provide the gospel answer to the questions evoked by World Vision's work in the communities.</p> <p>Staff actively participate in some local manifestation of the body of Christ.</p>

Source. Adapted from material presented at the World Vision West Africa Directors Conference by Bryant Myers, March 1991, and a framework developed as Myers consulted with World Vision's Indochina office in 1992.

Appendix B Development of a Simple Monitoring System for Evangelistic Intent

Exhibit B1 Monitoring System for Evangelistic Intent, Part I

Standard	Indicator Information ^a	Adjustment Procedure
Incarnational Living		
Sacramental Living		
Values Formation		
Biblical Integration		
Sustaining Spirituality		
Staff Witness		
<p>Church Relations</p> <p>7.0 World Vision's strategy takes into account the Christian work of other individuals, groups and agencies. In particular, it describes who will provide the gospel answer to the questions evoked by World Vision's work in the communities.</p>	<p>7.1 The Operations Director's knowledge of the activities of the three denominations in the area where project communities are located.</p> <p>7.2 The knowledge the leadership of each denomination has about World Vision's work in the project areas.</p> <p>7.3 Anecdotes about cooperation or conflicts with each of the denominations.</p> <p>7.4 Content of the document containing the written strategy.</p>	

^a A complete description of an indicator includes two items: (1) the information to be obtained, and (2) the procedure for obtaining the information. This table includes only the information to be obtained.

Exhibit B2 Monitoring System for Evangelistic Intent, Part II

Standard	Indicator Information ^a	Adjustment Procedure
Incarnational Living		
Sacramental Living		
Values Formation		
Biblical Integration		
Sustaining Spirituality		
Staff Witness		
<p>Church Relations</p> <p>7.0 World Vision's strategy takes into account the Christian work of other individuals, groups and agencies. In particular, it describes who will provide the gospel answer to the questions evoked by World Vision's work in the communities.</p>	<p>7.1 The Operations Director's knowledge of the activities of the three denominations in the area where project communities are located.</p> <p>7.2 The knowledge the leadership of each denomination has about World Vision's work.</p> <p>7.3 Anecdotes about cooperation or conflicts with each of the denominations which are culled from the monthly reports of the project coordinator.</p> <p>7.4 Content of the document containing the written strategy.</p>	<p>7.1.1</p> <p>7.2.1</p> <p>7.3.1 If there is no information, the Operations Director will meet with project coordinators within three months to create a monitoring plan.</p> <p>7.4.1 If there is no information in the document, the monitor will meet with the Operations Director to devise a plan for learning about denomination activities.</p>

^a A complete description of an indicator includes two items: (1) the information to be obtained, and (2) the procedure for obtaining the information. This table present only the information to be obtained.

Exhibit B3 Monitoring System for Evangelistic Intent, Part III

Standard	Indicator Information ^a	Adjustment Procedure
<p style="text-align: center;">Incarnational Living</p> <p>1.0 Staff continually answer the question: What messages are the people actually hearing as we do our work?</p>	<p>1.1 Staff group discussion of entries in their journals regarding comments made by community people about World Vision's work.</p>	<p>1.1.1 If there are few entries in journals, the project coordinator should work with the staff to develop a plan for increasing awareness of what people are hearing.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Sacramental Living</p> <p>2.0 Staff pray publicly as appropriate in any situation.</p>	<p>2.1 Group interview with project committee regarding their recollections of occasions when staff did not pray.</p>	<p>2.1.1 If there are occasions when prayers are not given, the project coordinator should meet with staff to discuss appropriate ways of praying in public.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Values Formation</p> <p>3.0 As World Vision works with the community, values that guide community members are more consistent with primary values expressed in the gospel. Examples: love your enemy, care for your neighbor before you care for yourself, respect the environment as divine creation for all generations.</p>	<p>3.1 Group interview with project committee regarding instances of people caring for their neighbor.</p>	<p>3.1.1 If there are few instances, the project coordinator shall consult with local pastors and the project committee regarding ways to encourage more caring behaviors.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Biblical Integration</p> <p>4.0 At least one scripture reference is discussed in relation to some agenda item at each project committee meeting.</p>	<p>4.1 Scripture passages cited in committee meeting minutes.</p> <p>4.2 Record of comments made about the scripture passages by committee members, and how they are related to business conducted.</p>	<p>4.2.1 If committee members express negative attitudes, the project coordinator should seek counsel from local church leaders before the next committee meeting.</p>

Exhibit B3 Monitoring System for Evangelistic Intent, Part III

Standard	Indicator Information ^a	Adjustment Procedure
<p>Sustaining Spirituality</p> <p>5.0 Staff worship activities are designed to empower mission.</p>	<p>5.1 Survey of a representative sample of national office staff regarding their reactions to staff worship activities in the past year.</p>	<p>5.1.1 If less than 75% of the sample judge the worship activities to be inspirational for mission, a committee should be formed to create an action plan for improving worship experiences.</p>
<p>Staff Witness</p> <p>6.0 Project staff give comfort to the sick in the village.</p>	<p>6.1 Interview with project committee regarding community perceptions of visiting the sick.</p>	<p>6.1.1 If there are negative perceptions of the visitation in the community, the project coordinator should seek counsel through the project committee.</p>
<p>Church Relations</p> <p>7.0 World Vision's strategy takes into account the Christian work of other individuals, groups and agencies. In particular, it describes who will provide the gospel answer to the questions evoked by World Vision's work in the communities.</p>	<p>7.3 Anecdotes about cooperation or conflicts with each of the denominations which are culled from the monthly reports of the project coordinator.</p> <p>1.4 Content of the document containing the written strategy.</p>	<p>7.3.1 If there is no information, the Operations Director will meet with project coordinators within three months to create a monitoring plan.</p> <p>1.4.1 If there is no information in the document, the monitor will meet with the Operations Director to devise a plan for learning about denomination activities.</p>

^a A complete description of an indicator includes two items: (1) the information to be obtained, and (2) the procedure for obtaining the information. This table includes inadequate information about data collection procedures.

Appendix C Examples of Simple Monitoring Systems

Exhibit C1 Monitoring System for Biblical Integration

Standard	Indicator Information	Adjustment Procedure
1.0 The Bible is used by staff and community members to provide input to planning, decision making, problem solving.	1.1 Bible passages discussed as project decisions were made. ^a	If no passages were discussed, the project coordinator will help the project manager create an action plan for relating Bible passages to a major decision anticipated in the next few months.
2.0 Project staff study scripture together on a regular basis and discuss applications for their work.	2.1 Information in staff meeting notes about discussions of scripture. 2.2 Interviews of project staff regarding applications of scripture study.	If no passages were discussed, the project coordinator will create an action plan with staff for regular scripture study; continue monitoring standard monthly.
3.0 Relevant Bible stories are discussed in community planning meetings.	3.1 Information in community meeting minutes. 3.2 Interviews of two community residents who attended the last community meeting, regarding what they remember about the discussions during the meeting.	If no relevant Bible material was discussed, the Operations Manager will meet with the project coordinator within three months to prepare an action plan.

^a Procedure: The monitor will ask the project manager to describe three project decisions made since the last visit. For each decision, the manager will be asked to cite Bible passages that were referenced as the decision was being made, and to describe interpretations of the verses that influenced the decision.

Exhibit C2 Monitoring System for Staff Witness

Standard	Indicator Information	Adjustment Procedure
<p>1.0 Staff are hired who can enhance the people's view of the gospel.</p>	<p>1.1 Employment application includes applicant's statement about Christian witness.</p> <p>1.2 Responses to simulation exercise. ^a</p>	<p>1.1.1 If statement is missing, the monitor recommends that the employment manager take appropriate action.</p> <p>1.2.1 If simulation results are not satisfactory, the monitor recommends that the Operations Manager initiate a process for reviewing hiring practices and staff training.</p>
<p>2.0 Project staff live in ways that make the gospel and Christianity attractive.</p>	<p>2.1 Staff attendance at local church services.</p> <p>2.2 Staff visits to those who are ill.</p> <p>2.3 Staff membership in communities of believers.</p>	<p>If church attendance is irregular, or if no visits were made to the ill, the monitor recommends that the supervisor create an action plan with staff.</p>
<p>3.0 Training is given to staff to enhance the quality of their witness.</p>	<p>3.1 List of training events with a description of objectives and activities for each, along with a list of participants for each.</p> <p>3.2 Interview responses of staff regarding changes in their work that they believe are related to witnessing which were due to training events.</p>	<p>3.1.1 If training attendance is not satisfactory, the monitor recommends that the supervisor discuss acceptable training plans with staff.</p> <p>3.1.2, 3.2.1 If training events are not appropriate, the monitor recommends that the Operations Manager work with trainers to develop remedial action plan.</p>

Note. Rosemarie Sabouchian contributed helpful suggestions for this system.

^a In this exercise experienced project coordinators role play project committee members from a typical project. In the role the committee members are not Christian and are resistant to listening to scripture. The staff person engages in discussion with them as if in a committee meeting, and then individually with them as if in their homes. The monitor documents attitudes and responses made by the staff person throughout the exercise.