



Community Ministry Ideas, Projects and Resources



Abolish Poverty, End Suffering

We are poised to be Christ's hands and feet, reaching out through compassionate ministries that serve the poor and hungry and stop conditions that diminish the worth of persons.

We fulfil God's ultimate vision as we...

- Help those who hurt
- Feed the hungry
- Support compassionate ministries
- Respond in time of crisis

Introduction

The purpose of this resource is to match skills and available time to community ministries that could help to abolish poverty and end suffering in our communities. I hope it will be an ever expanding store of ideas that will help and encourage congregations, groups and individuals to take on community responsibility.

It is usual for us to think of what we can do or what we can put on to help people to come to church. I would like us to look at reaching people from another angle. When William Booth of the Salvation Army was asked “What is to be done?” he replied by saying “See a need and meet it.” I would like us to think about our communities, the people around our churches, where we worship, live, work, study and play and ask the question “What poverty is there in our community and how can we meet it?”

On the face of it this is a tall order, a mountain if you like, and I want to tackle it a step at a time.

Six steps:

Step 1 = Establish the needs of your community

Step 2 = Assess your commitment, available time and skills

Step 3 = Choose a need to meet

Step 4 = Are there other Christians meeting this need?

(If not go to Step 6)

Step 5 = Volunteer to help those meeting this need

Step 6 = Make a plan to meet this need independently

At the end of this pack there is a list of ideas and websites to help find what we can do, organisations we can work with, resources we can access and funding we can apply for. It would, however, be best to work out your own community's needs, your own skills, your own volunteering time and how you, yourself, will meet this need.

Step 1 - Establish the needs of your community

It is not unusual to get the impression from media and gossip that there is no real poverty in this country.

Those who claim they are poor are condemned as scroungers and benefit cheats or lazy freeloaders taking advantage of our generous welfare state.

Perhaps that's why, according to the latest research from Church Urban Fund, only one in five of us think poverty is a result of social injustice.

Faced with constant news stories about rising debt, unemployment, homelessness and child poverty, the problems in this country may seem insurmountable, even unavoidable. What is the truth? Is social inequality eroding social well-being and if so, what's the solution?

I would encourage you as a group or individual to discern for yourself if and where there is a need and spend time talking to those people who are marginalised, on the edge of society and/or in crisis.

Please take this excellent five week course provided by the Church Urban Fund. Get together with a few friends for an hour and a half or so each week over the five weeks so you can work together. This resource was originally intended as classwork through Lent however I think it works at any time of the year. I hope that this will help to bring some enlightenment.

<http://www.cuf.org.uk/lent-course-2013-0>

A hard copy of this course is included in the pack however for the videos you will need internet access.

If you have completed the course or only watched some of the videos I hope you feel like you need to do something. I know there is much we can do. Spend some time discussing how this process makes you feel and pray for each other as well as those featured in this course.

How can we establish the needs in our community?

If you think you know the needs of your community then write them down now.

Here is a list to help you think about your community, the people in it and some of the issues you or they face – feel free to add to it. Tick the issues that are relevant to your community

Issues facing my area/people in my area	√
Rural Isolation	
Urban/Inner city	
Areas of poverty and deprivation	
Poor public transport	
Lack of affordable housing	
Low wages	
High unemployment	
High number of second homes	
High number of older people	
People who are lonely and isolated	
People living in poor/inadequate housing	
Disengaged young people	
People's whose first language is not English	
Migrant workers	
Offenders	
Gypsies and travellers	
Substance misusers	
Binge drinking	
People with mental health issues	
Homelessness	
Domestic violence	
Obesity	
People with physical disabilities	
People with learning disabilities	
Single parents	
Lack of community spirit	
Debt/door stop lending/loan sharks	
Families where children receive free school meals	
Lack of community facilities	
Lack of church activities	

Spend time discussing your findings and pray about them.

Official statistics

Now let's see what the statistics say about your community. There are statistics held by local government in order that local care professional organisations can target local deprivation. Search on Google for the 'health profile' for your community. Here is the Derby 2007 profile for your interest. I have chosen this 2007 version rather than the 2010 version because the facts are easier to understand. Follow this link or use the attached hard copy at the end of this step.

<http://www.apho.org.uk/resource/view.aspx?RID=51897>

Note: not all communities display their facts in the same way.

I would suggest you look at the latest facts as well as those for 2007/8. There are also deprivation tables for England, Scotland and Wales independently that list the counties and wards, highlighting those in the worst 20% and 10%. I have found that most of our congregations are well placed to find poverty on their doorsteps.

How to analyse the facts as presented

If you open this profile for Derby, where I live you, will see there is a lot of information including maps where the darkest areas are the most deprived. I find the last chart the most revealing as it compares Derby with the rest of England and highlights with red dots the areas of highest deprivation and therefore the greatest need.

You will notice red dots for: homelessness, children in poverty, violent crime, teenage pregnancy, death from smoking, death from heart disease and stroke, days in hospital due to alcohol, drug misuse and diabetes.

The summary concludes:

- Overall, the indicators of health for people living in Derby City are worse than average when compared with England and the East Midlands.
- The percentage of residents dependent on means-tested benefits and the percentage of children living in households dependent on those benefits are above average.
- The level of statutorily homeless households are higher than average.
- The rate of reported violent crime is higher than average.
- Teenage pregnancy rates are high compared to the England average.
- It is estimated that more than 1 in 4 adults smoke and more than 1 in 5 are obese, which are similar to the average.
- The death rate from smoking and early death rates from heart disease and stroke are higher than average.
- The rate of people claiming sickness benefit because of mental health problems and the rate of admissions to hospital for alcohol specific conditions are higher than average.
- More than 1 in every 25 people have recorded diabetes, which is above average.

I would conclude that there is a need for education around health, alcohol and drugs. There is a need for health activities including exercise and healthy eating. Child poverty will be addressed partly by free school meals but there will be a need for social activities, family workshops, breakfast clubs and holiday meals. There is also a need to provide facilities for the homeless.

All this makes pretty depressing reading but the hope is that we can contribute positively to our communities. You may now be thinking “If that was my community, what could I do?”

As an example, since this report local churches have:

- Set up a street pastor programme looking after drinkers as they leave pubs in the evenings and weekends. This has reduced the level of violent crime and helped people to get home safely.
- Churches Against Poverty have opened, helping people on low incomes access free debt management.
- A foodbank has opened helping those on benefits and low income with emergency food.
- Churches support emergency accommodation for the homeless and housing for prison leavers.

When Christians work together for community good things happen!

Another quick and simple way is to use the Church Urban Fund tool:

<http://www.cuf.org.uk/povertyinengland>

Just enter your postcode to find out how your community fares against the best and worst in England. Try it now! (This tool only works with postcodes in England.)

Step 2 - Assess your commitment, available time and skills

I am reminded of the story of Dennis.

Dennis belonged to an African village that had not seen rain for a long time and the church leaders decided that there was to be a day of prayer for rain so the harvest would not fail. On the day of the prayer Dennis set out for church and on the way met other villagers making their way to church to pray for rain. A few of them looked at Dennis and pointed to the thing he was carrying and said “Why have you brought that?” to which Dennis replied, “If we are going to pray for rain then I thought it best to bring my umbrella!”

There is very little point going through this process of finding a need and preparing to meet that need if you are not whole-heartedly behind it. There is no point in thinking someone else will do something when the best person is you. Work out early on how much time and how often you can give.

Spend time considering what you are good at. It is often hard to recognise what looks good in yourself so ask a few friends to tell you what they feel your skills are and which areas you excel in.

Remember that all are called according to their gifts and we all have gifts.

Even the smallest help for the shortest amount of time is still a help.

Step 3 - Choose a need to meet

Now you have established the needs in your community and know the skills and time you can give, you can start to match them. It is probable that as you talk about the needs that something will hit you and stand out as something worth doing. Despite establishing your skills and abilities, sometimes it is even more rewarding to take on a new challenge that will teach you new skills. If it is something you feel led to take on and you have the time then why not start something bigger?

If you are an individual or have individuals in your group who may not want to work as part of a group then the table of ideas on the next page and the list of ideas and websites at the back may help.

This table, “**What can I do?**”, shows how to match amounts of volunteer time to skills and has ideas on what can be easily done to support community projects. It might be an idea to use this table for your community project to show how the individuals in your group can help.

What can I do?

Here are some ideas of what can be done.

Your Skills 	Spirituality I put time aside to pray and understand worship.	Technology I know how to send emails and click on websites.	Leadership I like to organize, plan, promote and influence.	Availability I am willing to be lead in anything that will help.
Your Time 				
I have 5 minutes or less.	Register, print and display posters and pray for missing people. http://www.missingpeople.org.uk/	Microvolunteer: Make an impact by a mouse click. www.helpfromhome.org	Call a volunteer for a chat and listen to their concerns and frustrations. Offer help and advice if necessary.	Increase the well being of yourself and others. www.actionforhappiness.org
I have the occasional free hour.	Plan a worship service, school assembly, class or discussion group.	Create PowerPoint presentations and slide shows for busy volunteers.	Offer to run an evening or 1+hour event to give a volunteers leader some time off. www.onlinevolunteering.org	Buy a 'Big Issue' paper from a homeless vendor, take time to talk and listen to them. Offer to buy them a sandwich.
I want to make a regular commitment.	Visit the sick and/or elderly. Use your home as emergency accommodation. www.depaulnightstopuk.org/	Communicate the good news via social networking and news updates. Email pastors and congregations.	Raise funds for Community projects. www.awardsforall.org.uk www.trusthousecharitablefoundation.org.uk	Volunteer for a community or social project in your area that aims to abolish poverty and end suffering.
I have a chunk of free time.	Volunteer to plan and/or take worships to free others time to take on new roles.	Plan a campaign to improve society and lobby MPs. www.theyworkforyou.com	Offer your specialist skills to a charity or community project. Connect a skilled person to your community project or charity. www.pimpmycause.org	Research a need in your community and start a project to meet that need. www.thebigsociety.co.uk

Step 4 - Are there other Christians meeting this need?

There are a lot of good things happening in churches of all denominations up and down the country and probably a lot happening where you are. It is worth talking to local churches about what they are doing. I always find a call to the local Church Urban Fund regional contact useful to establish needs and projects in action. A full list is attached

<http://www.cuf.org.uk/about/contact/regional-contacts>

At the back of this guide is a list of 'ready-to-go' projects that other churches may already have started.

Step 5 - Volunteer to help those meeting this need

If you find a project run by another church or Christian organization that meets the needs of your idea please consider volunteering or taking a leading role.

Volunteering to help another church or Christian group is a good way to provide support without long-term commitment, so if you are not sure what to do and not sure how much time you could give, then volunteer. Other churches are struggling to find volunteers with morals such as ours and would welcome you. I have been overwhelmed by the way Community of Christ in Clay Cross and I have been accepted by other churches and Christians. Remember *"If you will call upon my name my Spirit will go before you into whatever place you are sent"*.

Step 6 - Make a plan to meet this need independently

I would suggest you talk to your pastor and congregation about your idea. Organise a meeting of all those who could be interested in your project and invite me if you like. Do some research beforehand on exactly what the need is, who this affects, what your goal might be and prepare a simple budget for the first year. Draw up a list of job roles that you will need, such as:

- Project leader
- Treasurer
- Someone to look at funding, if needed
- Someone to organise volunteers
- Volunteers

Present your idea to the group and, if they are in agreement, share out the roles. Sometimes, however, you may need to compromise to ensure you remain true to your calling and your Christian project.

I would suggest you talk to your congregations and Mission Centre about funding opportunities.

And then make a start...

List of ideas and websites

Here is a list of ideas and websites for you to consider. They are ready to go, already tested and successful projects, just waiting for you to start. Some even have start-up funding and all will make a difference.

www.missingpeople.org.uk

Missing People are a lifeline when someone disappears. Caring, highly trained staff and volunteers work in collaboration with partners across the UK. For those left behind, they provide specialised support to end the heartache and confusion and search for their missing loved ones. Missing People is an independent charity funded by donations. You can make a real difference by joining the search in your area. Register, print and display posters and pray for missing people.

www.helpfromhome.org

Volunteer your time in bite-sized chunks, from your own home and when you want to. Benefit worthy causes to suit your lifestyle at your own convenience. Dip in, dip out with absolutely no commitment. No specialised skills required. It's all free!

www.onlinevolunteering.org

The UNV Online Volunteering service connects volunteers with organizations working for sustainable human development. Volunteers contribute their skills online to help organisations address development challenges. Organisations collaborate with online volunteers over the internet to strengthen the impact of their development work.

www.actionforhappiness.org

Action for Happiness is a movement for positive social change. We're bringing together people from all walks of life who want to play a part in creating a happier society for everyone.

www.depaulnightstopuk.org

The Nightstop concept is simple. It is the provision of emergency accommodation for 16 to 25 year old young people in the homes of approved volunteers.

www.theyworkforyou.com

Write or email your MP to stand up for injustice. TheyWorkForYou lets you find out what your MP, MSP or MLA is doing in your name, read debates, written answers, see what's coming up in Parliament, and sign up for email alerts when there's past or future activity on someone or something you're interested in.

www.pimpmycause.org

Pimp My Cause brings together worthwhile causes with talented marketers including innovators, strategists, advertisers, graphic designers, web developers, PR specialists and researchers who can provide transformational input pro bono.

www.awardsforall.org.uk

Help raise funds for other community projects around the mission. Challenge yourself and be sponsored or write letters asking for funds. Collect old clothes and mobile phones to be recycled for cash.

www.facebook.com and www.twitter.com

Communicate the good news via social networking, news updates, or emailing pastors, friends and congregations. Plan a worship service, school assembly, class or discussion group to talk about poverty.

www.bigissue.com/about-us

Buy a 'Big Issue' paper from a homeless vendor, take time to talk and listen to them. Offer to buy them a sandwich.

www.cinnamonnetwork.co.uk/projects

The Cinnamon Network is passionate about strengthening the muscles of local churches for community transformation. It aims to make it as easy as possible for local churches to develop community engagement by promoting 'off the shelf' community franchise projects and granting seed funding. The follow are examples and descriptions of current projects supported by the Cinnamon Network.

The Link is a befriending service primarily for isolated older people. Their main focus is on arranging home visits once a week for around one hour. They also run other activities and events which encourage social interaction including 'Understanding Computers' courses, bowls clubs, and singing groups. All visitors are vetted for suitability and supported and trained in their roles. This simple approach can often be a lifeline for those in the community who rarely have contact with the outside world.

Romance Academy is a unique 14-week, relationships education initiative aimed at 14–18 year olds and is designed to address the underlying causes of risky youth behavior, such as poor self-esteem, low aspirations and lack of positive family or community life, by promoting the value of stable relationships. Through a comprehensive and youth-centered approach that focuses on character development and good information, the project gives young people access to good role models and a positive peer community.

Prospects: When a church invests thought, prayer, effort and resources into making itself a better place for people with learning disabilities, it becomes a better place for everybody. That's what they tell us – people who have tried it. Clearer teaching, engaging worship, interactive communication; everything accessible, everyone included, full of joy and life. Overcome the barriers to understanding and release the potential of people so often marginalised in society.

TLG Early Intervention Centres are created with partner churches to support primary aged children who are struggling with social, emotional or behavioral difficulties. We train volunteers from a church community in the TLG Early Intervention Program called 'timeout'. The volunteers spend one hour a week, in school on a one to one basis with a struggling child, for up to three terms. As well as working closely with the school, the volunteers will be able to support the home life of the child, by meeting with the parent/carer and staying in touch weekly throughout the intervention.

The Job Club is hosted by a local church and led by volunteers from the church. It provides a warm welcoming environment for job seekers. A Job Club aims to build the confidence, self-esteem and optimism which are essential in the job search process. Jobseekers are strengthened by the sense of belonging to a group and with mutual support and job searches tend to be shorter.

CAP (Christians Against Poverty) is a national charity providing a sustainable and comprehensive solution to anyone dealing with unmanageable debt. Working in partnership with churches, their service is tailored to meet the needs of the poorest and most marginalised in society. They offer a combination of professional debt management, financial education and face-to-face support and encouragement. By working in partnership with CAP, churches have the opportunity to meet local people in their homes and show God's love to them in a practical way.

Community Money Advice (CMA) enables local churches, who have a vision to help people in debt, to establish local money advice centres. Driven by the desire to help people whose lives are being blighted by debt and money problems, CMA is able to offer a wide range of support services whilst training each adviser to work alongside clients, to help end their indebtedness and - crucially - teaching them how to manage their money and stay out of debt in the future.

Street Angels a CNI Network encourages churches to work in partnership to think creatively around how needs of the night time economy can be met, including, patrol projects such as Street Angels, Town Pastors, NightLight, Club Angels meeting people within night-clubs and pubs, club

and lap-dancing bar chaplains, Church for the Night initiatives, caravans offering tea, coffee and hope to young people, detached youth work challenging around alcohol and safety and work with homeless people and within red-light districts.

Night Shelter is a well-established way of meeting the challenge of helping the homeless poor. In collaboration with other churches, a 'Rolling Shelter' system is set up where Christian hospitality is offered nightly to vulnerable rough sleepers during the winter period. A different Church acts as host each night, offering a place of safety, a hot meal, a dry place to sleep and breakfast in the morning. After training, help and support can be given to guests to assist them in getting their lives back together. It is a very practical way of 'being Jesus' to the marginalised.

Lunch: At school more than 1.2 million pupils who may otherwise go without are eligible to receive free school meals. Outside of term time though, free school meals are not available and many pupils are left without regular hot food. This is where Lunch comes in. During school holidays, church groups can offer healthy, cooked food to all pupils who usually receive free school meals. At Lunch we believe that every child deserves to eat a cooked meal every day. If you agree, we need your help.

Foodbanks work with local churches and communities to provide emergency food and support to people in crisis. For people on low incomes, a sudden crisis such as redundancy, benefit delay or an unexpected bill can mean going hungry. Non-perishable food is donated by the public and then volunteers sort and pack food into emergency food parcels. Frontline care professionals such as doctors and social workers give foodbank vouchers to people in crisis which can then be exchanged for at least three days' worth of food at a foodbank. Foodbanks also take time to listen and signpost clients to further support.

Church Urban Fund

www.cuf.org.uk/act/resources-projects

Working in deprived communities is no easy task. Whether you are a volunteer or it is part of your job the work is demanding and can be stressful. Many people feel isolated and not fully supported.

You are not alone - Church Urban Fund is there to help you work together with Christians and churches tackling poverty in England. Follow the link above for list of resources, case studies, events and funding to support you in your work. There are too many to print!

Summary and notes

My hope and prayer is that this resource will be of use and stimulate you into action. Please add to it, alter it, loan it, copy it but please use it.

If I can help then please use me, my contact details are on the last page.

God bless.



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Your notes

