

Hope of the World

“I felt like a foreigner,” Analyn said, thinking back to when she moved with her husband to his Blaang community. “I couldn’t understand the local dialect and had trouble socializing with people.”

Their financial problems also piled up. Trying to survive off what her husband made farming was brutal; the US 26 cents a day was not enough. Their electricity was shut off, and sometimes they went without food, especially worrying since they had a one-year-old daughter.

A neighbor pastor invited Analyn to join the *Transform* program in his small church. As the weeks progressed, Analyn slowly made friends and learned the basics of good health and hygiene. She even gained the skills to start a micro business selling kutsinta, a local snack. More importantly, Analyn heard about Jesus.

“I grew up in a Catholic family, always praying to the saints in front of images. In *Transform*, Pastor Marites taught me that Jesus alone answered prayers, not the saints or my good works. I am saved by Jesus.”

Toward the end of *Transform*, Analyn and her family began attending Pastor Marites’ church. Analyn experienced the joy, peace and freedom of knowing Jesus as her savior. And she learned that she had a new family.

Analyn’s story exemplifies the beauty and importance of the local church. Local churches have an immense potential to reach the marginalized and unreached communities around the world.

HOPE as a program?

International Care Ministries, a faith-based, non-governmental organization (NGO) in the Philippines, believes in the local church’s potential to holistically alleviate poverty in all corners of the world. It partners with local pastors to release families living in extreme poverty from physical, emotional, and spiritual bondage.

The local church’s vast reach and deep roots effectively encourage people beyond the reach of organizations to participate in a community-led program where they feel genuinely valued and cared for. Through its network of over 10,000 local pastors, ICM aims to bring HOPE to the poorest of the poor via *Transform*, a 15-week program that targets the transformation of **H**earts (spiritual and values education), **O**pportunities (livelihood skills training), **P**hysical health (health and sanitation training), and **E**ducation (parent-involved, preschool programs) – **HOPE**.

Every year, ICM conducts *Transform* in approximately 1,500 communities across the Visayan and Mindanaoan regions of the Philippines, reaching around 30 of each of the community's poorest households. Local churches sustain this vital work, as they're empowered to expand their ministry reach beyond the confines of their church.

Recently, we developed a study to look at *Transform's* impact on empowering local churches to expand this reach. The study measured the program's impact using three different methods.

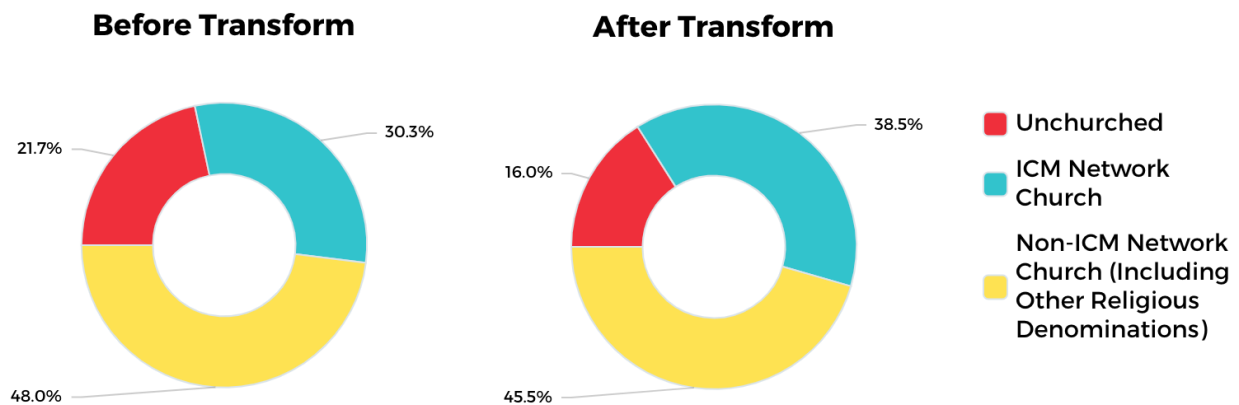
First Method:

We administered a survey before and after the 15-week program for *Transform* participants. We focused on the questions: whether or not participants attended church and if these churches were led by the ICM partner pastors implementing *Transform*. We evaluated 10,455 surveys.

The surveys revealed that before *Transform*, 21.7% of the participants were unchurched, 30.3% attended churches in the ICM pastor network, and 48.0% came from other churches (of various denominations and affiliations outside of ICM's network).

However, after the program, the number of participants who were unchurched or belonged to other religious denominations decreased by 5.7% (16.0%) and 2.5% (45.5%), respectively.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE



Meanwhile, we found that for every 100 people (or for every 3 to 4 churches), 8 more people (8%) attended ICM network churches after completing the program. In other words, through *Transform*, 2 to 3 additional people were drawn to the local church in the span of 4 months.

AFTER TRANSFORM



For every 100 people,
8 **more people**
attend ICM churches.



There are **3-4 churches**
for every 100 people.



2-3 more people
attend each
ICM church.

To confirm this, ICM explored two other methods of analysis to triangulate *Transform's* impact on church growth using data from the network pastors' self-reported weekly church attendance rates from the past 3 years.

Second Method:

ICM explored the church-level impact of the program over time, focusing only on the network pastors who had implemented *Transform* in their communities. These calculations revealed that *Transform* increased the participating church's size by 0.5 people per month (n = 2,321). This means that over the course of the 4-month program, *Transform* increased church attendance by approximately 2 people, in close agreement with the previous findings.

TRANSFORM'S CHURCH LEVEL IMPACT



Transform increases each church's size by 0.51 people per month or

TWO

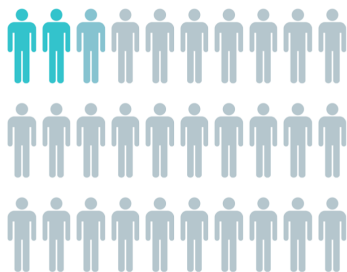
people after the 4-month program.*

*based on a panel data regression analysis

Third Method:

Next, ICM compared the attendance rates of *Transform* participating and non-participating churches. The study found that churches that implemented *Transform* had approximately 2 to 3 more attendees compared to churches that have not implemented the program (n=14,236).

ICM VS. NON-ICM CHURCH ATTENDANCE STATISTICS



Transform churches have

TWO TO
THREE

(2.7) more attendees compared to non-ICM churches.*

*based on a comparative ordinary least squares regression analysis

Though each study looked at church growth through different lenses, all three sets of analyses led to similar estimates. Through *Transform*, each pastor was able to lead 2 to 3 more people to church. These numbers are neither small nor insignificant, because every number represents a new soul redeemed in Christ, a big win for God's Kingdom.

Hope for HOPE

Analyn no longer feels like a foreigner in her community. She's been welcomed into her neighborhood church where she thrives. ICM continues to reach over 1,500 communities each year, which means that the program empowers the local church to lead an additional 2,000 to 3,000 people to Christ every year. Yet, even as we celebrate these victories, we see how many more communities and lives can be reached. ICM aspires to partner with the local church to reach every community in the Visayan and Mindanaoan regions, encompassing approximately seven million ultrapoor.