

Transform's potential impact on church growth

Three analytical strategies were used to explore and triangulate *Transform's* impact on the growth of its partner churches

Abstract

Building on ICM's previous research on church growth patterns in the Philippines' rural and urban poor communities, ICM sought to explore whether *Transform*, the organization's primary program, plays a role in growing the reach and size of its partner churches. To understand ICM's impact on church growth, ICM collects church attendance metrics from two different streams of data - participant survey data collected before and after the *Transform* program, and church attendance cards collected from ICM's *Thrive* network of pastors.

Three separate analytical approaches were used to explore *Transform's* impact. The alignment of findings across the three methods creates confidence that through *Transform*, the average partner pastor experiences an addition of 2 to 3 more people to their church.

Overview

Topic(s): Church Growth Patterns, Empowering Local Churches, Transform's Program Impact
Location: Philippines
Date: 2015 - 2019

Evaluation Context

ICM believes in the local church's potential to alleviate all extents of poverty in unreached communities of the world, through their widespread and unique reach. ICM seeks to empower the local church, through partnering with their pastors, to bring *Transform* - a 16-week program helping the poorest families experience values, livelihood, health, and education transformation - to their communities.

Every year, *Transform* runs in approximately 1,500 Philippine communities, reaching 30 of each community's poorest households. Such vital work can only be sustained if the local churches are growing and empowered to serve beyond their current reach, and ICM's hope is that through *Transform*, these churches may experience growth as more individuals are brought to church

through the program. Given this, ICM conducted a three-pronged analysis to explore Transform's impact in empowering local churches through church growth.

Evaluation Design and Results

ICM monitors church attendance through: (1) *Baseline and Endline Transform Participant Survey Data*, where participants are asked before and after the Transform program whether they attended church and if these churches were led by ICM's partner pastors, and (2) *Monthly Thrive Pastor Data Cards*, where pastors are asked about the number of people who attended their church in the past week. This study makes use of data collected between October 2015 to November 2019 from both data streams.

Three different analyses were conducted to explore *Transform's* impact on church growth. The description and results of each method are summarised below:

First Method: Using *Transform* survey data, ICM explored the participant-level impact of the program by generating a Sankey diagram to track the movement and to measure the volume of participants who were either unchurched or affiliated with other denominations or non-ICM network churches prior to Transform but started attending the church of their *Transform* (ICM partner) pastor after the program. The diagram revealed that the number of participants attending ICM-affiliated churches increased by 8% after Transform (n=10,455), suggesting 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.

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. Panel regression analysis was employed to estimate the impact of implementing *Transform* on church attendance. The attendance data reported by *Transform* pastors in their *Thrive* data cards were used for this analysis. 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.

Third Method: ICM also explored the church-level impact of the program on current church attendance. Ordinary Least Squares regression analysis was used to estimate *Transform's* impact on the most recent church size. To do this, 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).

Though each method looked at church growth through different lenses, all three sets of analyses led to the same conclusion: Through Transform, the average pastor saw an increase of 2 to 3 more people attend their church. As ICM continues to reach over 1,500 communities each year, this encouraging

conclusion suggests that the program empowers the local church to see an additional 2,000 to 3,000 people join the global church every year.

Additional Documents/Publications

[Hope of the World](#) Article

[Church Pathways](#) Presentation