

## IcFEM Mission Profile

The Interchristian Fellowship Evangelical Mission is a legally registered Missionary Society founded in 1989, with its international Headquarters in Kimilili Town, Bungoma North District in Western Province of Kenya.

The Mission believes that for any community to achieve sustainable transformation, there is need to first build a strong foundation of a value system upon which all other aspects of development structures can be erected (*Probably this is one of the reasons why most poverty intervention strategies in play in the developing countries have and are not making as much impact as they intended*). The plague of corruption and other forms of injustices thriving at a high rate in the developing countries is itself a clear evidence of a missing strong community and national value system. The Mission in her approach uses an integral mission of Evangelism, Community development and Relief and Welfare as her model of doing mission.

IcFEM is represented in the UK through its sister organization, IcFEM Mission (Europe) which is a Charitable Trust (registered charity No. 1107038).

**Vision** - God with His people and their development.

**Mission Statement** - Accelerating total Community Transformation- through holy living and hard work.

### Core Values.

1. Reading/hearing, believing, memorizing and practicing the Bible is the way of positively transforming human life
2. Having a living relationship with God through Christ
3. Having inter-Christian fellowship (Koinonia)
4. Servanthood
5. Righteous hard work
6. Integrity and skilfulness
7. Wholistic (total) community transformation is God's Kingdom agenda
8. A family unit built on Christ's principles is vital cell for sustainable community and national development
9. Showing concern and care for the needy
10. Transparency and Accountability
11. Being committed to conscientisation, raising-awareness & empowerment
12. In Christ all are one people
13. Facilitation to stimulate Interchristian fellowships for community interaction and discussion
14. Working together for justice and development with those differing with the Mission's faith and beliefs respecting their stance through love while ensuring advance agreement is made between us to maintain sufficient safeguards against comprise.

## **IcFEM Mandate and Responsibilities**

IcFEM-Mission (Interchristian Fellowships' Evangelical Mission) is a Kenya founded inter-Christian Organization, which is aimed at accelerating community transformation by smoothly integrating Evangelism with Community Development and Relief/Welfare activities. The Interchristian Fellowships' Evangelical Mission through her Field Units of Interchristian fellowships acknowledges the following responsibilities:

- Re-organizing communities at village level (i.e. the provincial administrative villages) into Interchristian Fellowships- fostering the Christian identity.
- Training to provide Interchristian Fellowship members and Mission staff with essential skills to guide community transformation activities.
- Christianizing communities/ villages through knowledge and application of God's word thus the Bible.
- Commitment to and promotion of Biblical (wholistic) community transformation
- Empowering communities at household levels especially in rural areas to know how to respond appropriately with confidence to the challenges that confront them
- Being non political (i.e. unable to engage actively in partisan politics)
- Leadership development helping people develop their inner strengths to benefit the community and sustain the transformation process
- Providing enabling environment for everyone to contribute or take part in their community development process.
- Making the most of local skills and abilities
- Promoting role modelling and healthy competition for achievements in community transformation process
- Providing administrative back up for the coordination of all the Interchristian Fellowships' activities within and outside Kenya.
- Ensuring high-level accountability within the Interchristian Fellowships particularly with regard to ensuring objectives are properly accomplished.
- Stimulating communities towards solidarity for holding their future in their own hands.

## **Key Components of IcFEM Transformation**

- The mission must be seen as an integral between evangelism and social change i.e. Evangelism and social change are inseparable = Wholistic Mission.
- The Mission is a witness and a journey with the world and not a judgment made from the outside.
- The Mission in context is true Christianity i.e. the Christian faith is translatable to your situation hence Christianity is personal.

- The Mission is a commitment to changing the world in the direction of abundant life, equity and love (Principal of practice and theory).
- Christian theory and mission must always be based on the local understanding.
- Christian mission not about liberation and empowerment.
- Christian Mission is about reconciliation between God, humanity and creation and solidarity, in Christ all are one.
- Christian Mission and transformation is as all about community building. It is total commitment to social change i.e. discovering where God is already working, whom He is working with and immediately joining Him.

### **Merits of Interchristian Fellowships in Community Development**

The Interchristian Fellowships have a number of advantages over any other structure in terms of practical and realistic engagement and intervention in community development. These among others include the following:

- **Grassroots** — based (Community Based) infrastructure, which is acquainted with needs and priorities of the people.
- *Credible leadership* that is familiar with the needs of the poor
- Cultural awareness, histories and contexts of the people
- *Very strong positive*, moral and ethical value systems
- *Non-partisan* — ready to serve the whole community and even the government
- *No interest* of taking power and not in any power (political, economic or social) struggle
- The Interchristian and non-denominational (not aligned to any particular church)
- Believes in God, in Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit.
- *Stability*- her structure will be with the people for a long time, and have clearly known decision-making mechanism, which is largely people, centred.  
Cultures of volunteerism-people are willing to offer themselves to God readily in selfless services to others.
- Culture of giving in cash and in kind-skills, labour, financial and material contributions-even salaried staffs take their work as a calling and are ready to often go beyond normal duty.
- Capacity to instil hope to the poor which has become necessary to propel them towards improvement (Roman. 12:12, I Corinthians. 13:13, 15:19, Heb. 6: 18-19)  
*“God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure”*
- Structure and mechanisms for initiating new activities e.g. mothers fellowships, youth, children, retired people’s fellowships, women fellowships etc are put in place, which serves as effective contacts and vision careers in the community.

- A wider global linkage and institutional relationships — will provide extensive interpersonal linkages, possible resources sharing, and many opportunities for dialogue training etc. (Gal. 3:26-29)

### **Development Goal of Interchristian Fellowships**

The Mission defines development as a process of improving the total person's living conditions in a wholistic manner and for a longer period of time. Community development therefore is a skilled process of developing a broad network of interaction in order to increase the capacity of communities to help them achieve a locally sustainable healthy economy and an improved quality of life.

The **goal of development goal** of Interchristian Fellowships is to identify, create and develop strong norms, beliefs, networks and linkages that will facilitate coordination and co-operation in the community for mutual benefit. The reason for Interchristian fellowships' involvement in the development work is because it was and remains the mission of our Lord Jesus Christ. Luke. 4:18-19 "*Bringing Good news to the poor*". In this context, development work is not an optional matter for the Interchristian Fellowships. It is an imperative sphere of engagement for all fellowships at all times of their existence and operations.

### **Objectives for inter-Christian fellowships' movement**

The overall objective is to organize communities a long biblically tested values to provide individuals a democratic space to express their opinions and freely participate in key decision-making processes in issues affecting their day-to-day life.

#### **The specific objectives include:**

- Create grass root-cell structures for the establishment of Interchristian Fellowships.
- Promote community development as shared vision based on common values in all Fellowships.
- Provide critical linkages with other development agencies/stakeholders.
- Provide sustainable infrastructures for sharing of skills, knowledge, abilities and innovations.
- Promote coexistence and interdependence to foster unity and cross transfer of technologies and innovations.
- Improve governance through grass root participation at local, district, provincial and at national levels of government.

- Increase the permeating force of the biblical gospel to influence all corners of society for positive social transformation.
- Provide performance indicator for key areas of development activities in the community.
- In partnership with other agencies, create forums for the discussions and development of local, district and national policies and overcome barriers to development.
- Foster the creation of small business incubators through partnership and networking other local units and area centres in different administrative districts and provinces within Kenya and outside.
- Create channels for accessing easily the technical assistance to the development processes of the community.
- Create wide-open opportunities for participation in social economic research increasing faster use of the findings by the communities.
- Foster the creation, development and growth of an effective grass roots organization and movement.

## **FOOD SECURITY STRATEGY**

Food Security should be taken by the fellowships as one of the major agenda and subject to work on in their development mission. The primary objective and concern is to increase production. The people's ultimate goal in this respect is to influence people's dietary choices in line with global dietary patterns of consumption.

The role of the Fellowships in this particular intervention is to seek to contain globalization of dietary patterns, which will only lead to a financial drain on the scarce available foreign currency. The Mission calls upon communities in African countries to be worry about creating the unnecessary shift in food habits which may just lead to substitute imported foods for the traditional ones.

***Promotion of drought resistant crops:*** Where drought resistant crops are appropriate and viable, the Fellowships shall make significant impact by promoting them. Such crops as sorghum, millet and cassava are the traditional staple crops in many regions of Africa. The Interchristian Fellowships' should promote them and not just encourage tastes and consumption for *rice* and *spaghetti* with new varieties and production techniques. The fellowships may be in a position to revive such crops even where motivation for their cultivation has waned.

Diversification of crops: The need to diversify the staple crops shall be emphasized by the fellowships. For example cultivation of maize together with bananas, pumpkins, and millet offer better promise of food security for all families a year. The Kenyan soils can produce a much wider variety of food staffs than are cultivated at present. In this context, Fellowships shall adopt crops to different areas as may be possible to increase choices in the communities. This however shall be done with the help of agricultural experts to avoid spreading diseases and pests.

The Fellowships are in a position to see how to promote the adoption of appropriate small-scale irrigation technology on small household farms, but only as a marginal activity not as a vigorous exercise. Small and micro-scale irrigation and water harvesting technologies have only been used on a very small scale in Kenya. Their viability has already been felt in south Asia where they have been widely adopted. The development of agriculture at community level demands concerns for proper marketing. The Interchristian Fellowships shall spearhead the formation of Self-help groups, Cooperative Societies and Associations for marketing their produce and supply of farm inputs. These activities enhance the peoples' capacity for self-reliance and actualization.

The Interchristian Fellowships facilitated self-help groups; co-operative societies and associations shall become the main stay of **emerging local processing facilities, which add value to the primary products of each local economy within the local unit or area**. The Fellowships shall be encouraged to spearhead pre-processing for export and also promote linkages with already existing fair trade organizations that are promoting direct exports from small producers in the developing countries.

There is already a potentially competitive position of small scale Kenyan farmers in high value commodity trade as already shown in tea, coffee and horticultural products. Small farmers have kept the world supplied steadily by controversial crops such as tobacco. There is need for Fellowships to engage small-scale farmers to add value to commodities before export). The Fellowships shall facilitate the accumulation of large exportable volumes through rural cooperatives and marketing associations. These are effective organs for pulling the limited outputs of individual small farms into large exportable volumes. The basic requirement shall be to facilitate the production process to focus on a high-value crop and establish linkage with overseas non-exploitative buyers.

Other Fellowship members and contacts within the Interchristian regional/global Fellowships as well as Christian groups with like minds in the churches around the world and can facilitate the linkage with overseas buyers. The Fellowships shall be encouraged to hook up to some Christian owned commercial agencies. The Interchristian Fellowships shall play a great part in the promotion and diversification of export production.

Already the Church in developing world has been working extensively on household income generating activities but her efforts need to be more imaginative. The Interchristian Fellowships shall assist village groups in poultry, pig and bee keeping enterprises. The ultimate objective for such intervention is ensure that everyone in the village to adopt the idea. The village groups shall eventually realize that they cannot use every product and therefore resort to selling or exporting some to earn extra income for their households. This is also true with vocational skills training. Those who teach trades like carpentry or tailoring will soon realize that the services now available may not all be needed in the community.

The development mission here requires that the Fellowships attention is to be directed to achieving sustainable livelihood whatever option a particular Community may wish to undertake.

It is the conviction of IcFEM that the Fellowships socio- economic potential and ability of delivering Sustainable Community Development. The fellowships being rooted in the community, having the ability to know the people very well, and being regarded as a credible mission are an a very important asset in various ways:

***Enhancement of social cohesion:*** The Fellowships are capable of enhancing social cohesion in their respective local units or villages. This is one of the important ingredients for productive engagement. The Fellowships will prove themselves with much capacity of promoting unity among ethnic groups, different peers and gender (Galatians. 3:26-29 NIV) *“You are sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slaves nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Jesus Christ. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise”.*

**Resolution of Land disputes and ethnic clashes:** The fellowships shall also be charged with the responsibility of working with government agencies and other development partners in their respective areas to resolve conflicts and disputes within and between communities. The Fellowships will in their development concerns introduce and encourage to rapidly grow, a program for regular inter-community forums (interaction workshops) through which issues are discussed and steps taken towards joint planning and implementation of development and civic projects. Fellowships clearly understand the grounds of being non-partisan and because of their credibility with the people, they will normally be in a better position than any political angle to initiate and facilitate such discussions. In the same way, other groups such as the youths will be brought closer through carefully designed inter-ethnic cultural and vocational Fellowships' Youth activities.

Land remains a thorny matter in developing countries especially in Africa and currently in Mount Elgon and in parts of the Rift Valley in Kenya. This is the major cause of the ugly tribal clashes, which have rendered many homeless and left many innocent lives lost. Politicians prefer to keep off the land matters with results that more and more clashes between communities are now a common thing to happen. As many lives continue to be lost, the livelihood of those involved remain uncertain and deepening poverty ensues. The Interchristian Fellowships are to become reliable mediators to convene local forum(s) for addressing incessant communal land disputes and conflicts.

The Fellowships among the people living in arid, famine-prone regions. They may help negotiate the voluntary relocation of new farm households to underused areas and solve the plight of the people. Reclaiming the hard-land, as Israel has done may not be feasible in the near future yet the community remains perpetual receivers of relief handouts. This is a challenge both to the local people and national economies. A lasting solution needs to be found to guarantee livelihoods in arid and semi-arid areas, which covers about three quarters of the country land mass. Where voluntary relocation is successful, a development strategy to provide adequate production and infrastructure will pay a thousand fold much more than investing yearly on relief supplies. This should become a national policy issue and to be implemented by organized local groups like the Interchristian Fellowships.

### **Interchristian Fellowships'-based Community Organizing**

Christians Supporting community Organizing is in part based on a careful definition of "community", namely: "a group of individuals, sharing a common history and tradition, who

support and challenge each other to act powerfully, both individually and collectively, to affirm, celebrate, defend and advance their values and interests. “Acting on this understanding of “community,” many believers throughout the country will join together in local organizations, which strengthen the internal life of the body and bring the members of the body into action in the world guided by the values of the Reign of God.

Typically, these local organizations are hereby known as IcFEM *local units* or federations. They range from one to forty village fellowships or faith communities. Sometimes other groups may also be members of these federations, but in all cases, faith is at the heart of the local organization. By beginning with a careful listening process within each of the local fellowship members of the federation, concerns of families are learned. By visiting with neighbours, a broader group is involved — including both Christian members and non-Christian members. The latter, because of their experience with Christians engaging in serious, faith-guided, action often will become more interested in the Christian fellowship. By challenging the people with the concerns to act on them, responsibility for action is placed squarely on those with the concerns. Thus there is a major shift away from the fellowship that does programs for people (who mainly take the role of consumers) to a fellowship, which engages its own members and their neighbours in doing things for themselves as co-creators, thereby strengthening their bodies and neighbourhoods. By carefully thinking through what can be done about various concerns, a plan is developed in which people gain initial successes and build on these successes so that they can tackle more difficult problems. In each instance, a small full-time staff of professional community organizers assist local village fellowship leaders to engage in this process-and assist the fellowship to come together with one another so they can address those problems and issues which are too large for any one of them to tackle alone.

The concerns which are heard from the fellowship who are visited and who become involved include unemployment, crime, drugs, toxic waste, inadequate schools, lack of affordable housing, unavailability of loans/or insurance, health care and a host of others. Beneath these is the broader sense of powerlessness to do anything about these problems and accompanying this sense of powerlessness, expressions of distrust of our major institutions. Acting together on their own felt needs, people learn to do research, conduct effective meetings, meet with institutional decision makers, negotiate with these decision makers and hold them accountable for things that are God’s intent for the stewardship of their institutions. This kind of action is guided by process of reflection on

faith. Prior to becoming involved in a village fellowship-based organizing project, the Christian individuals engage in biblical reflection to determine what their faith says about being part of such a project.

Prior to meetings and action undertaken by the organization, reflection connects faith to the specifics of a local situation. Reflection also takes place after action is undertaken so that people discern the connection between their deeply (but often abstractly) held beliefs and daily life. While this process is imperfectly implemented, it is an intrinsic part of fellowship-based community organizing. The process of shifting people from “apathy” to participation involves continuous leadership development. The professional organizers working in this biblical model of transformation should view their cardinal role and responsibility as one of developing the gifts and talents of local people so that they can develop their own fellowships -- both their particular village fellowship and the Local Unit or Area Unit as a whole (Whole federation)

While the Area Unit and Local Unit fellowships will support community development projects undertaken by member village fellowships or, in some cases, may engage in major community development efforts themselves, the thing that will differentiate them from most other efforts to address social problems is that they train local leaders to engage directly with decision-makers in the major institutions from which most Kenyans are now so alienated. These organizations will seek good-faith negotiations with those decision-makers. When such negotiations take place, new relationships will emerge which can effectively address problems because the people with the problems and the institutions with the resources and competencies to address the problems will have entered into a relationship of mutual respect. When such negotiations do not take place, the fellowship units should carry out intensive lobbying and advocacy to bring decision-makers on the negotiating table.

## **IcFEM MISION’S PERSPECTIVE OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

Poverty is about lacking essentials: not just material things like clean water and a reliable food supply, but less tangible things too — such as education or spiritual hope. Christian community development — initiatives that address the whole person in the community where they live — takes account of these needs. And this perspective is at the heart of Inter-Christian Fellowships’ work with local communities and Christian agencies around the world. Currently, more than 800 million people in the world still don’t have enough to eat-many rely on what they can grow themselves. When their harvest is bad, there isn’t the

money to buy food to make up the shortfall. As if that is not enough, more than a quarter of the world population is threatened with food insecurity. This state of affairs can be reversed if Christians and all other agents of community development adopt both wholistic and holistic approaches. Thus tapping the innate potential of every individual and community to ensure maximum productivity as well as responsible consumption of food items as per the biblical guidelines and norms.

IcFEM Mission believes that while people might be economically poor, they still have the resourcefulness (potential) to find their own solutions. The Mission's Inter-Christian fellowships' support initiatives that build on local people's existing abilities, helping them take responsibility for their own life through their own initiated programmes. That is the essence of sustainable development and subsequently community transformation.