



Interchristian Fellowships' Evangelical Mission IcFEM-Mission (Europe)

Accelerating Community Transformation

Holy Living & Hard Work

Newsletter – Autumn 2007

Community Fellowships are Growing!

Interchristian Community Fellowships have been formed in Misikhu, Kamukuywa, Kibingei, Naitri and Mbakalo. The total number is now 237, increasing daily. Each Village Fellowship has about 35 members. Local Units (formed from 40 Fellowships) have already been launched in Misikhu and Kamukuywa, with Kibingei due to be launched early in September.

The co-ordination of the new fellowships follows the pattern of the Spider Plant. Working from the off-shoots inwards, it looks like this:



The starting point is the **Interchristian (Village) Fellowship**, with a minimum of 25 members from the same place. Each member contributes a monthly subscription fee.

Next, 40 Fellowships from the same administrative location form an **IcFEM Local (Home) Unit**.

Next, 20 Local (Home) Units form an **IcFEM Transformation Area**. The mission's activities will mainly be organised, guided and co-ordinated from the Area Transformation Units.

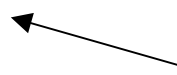
Next, a minimum of 50 area units will form a **Divisional Coordination Unit**. This will be administered by the Mission Headquarters.

Next, *all* Divisional Units within any country will form a **National Transformation Unit**, and any 5-10 National Units sharing geographical or political interests may join as **Regional Coordinating Units** for sharing ideas and experiences and for mutual support.



Have you kept up with the maths? The Local Unit involves at least 1000 members, though existing units are already larger than this. The Transformation area, of 40 units, has a membership of 20,000; the Divisional Unit, 1,000,000.

This is the vision



And this is the answer!

Now, how is this to be administered and organised?

The Key to the scheme is the **Village Fellowship**, which, like all seedlings, has all the characteristics of the parent plant. So to oversee and coordinate the various sectors of the wholistic development at village level, each Fellowship will have ministry representatives for each sector – Evangelism, Agriculture, Education, Health, Family, Youth, Elderly (Relief and Welfare), Disabled (“Bethesda Pool”) and COREL. In addition they will have three committee members who will be the Secretary, the Resource Steward (Treasurer) and the Fellowship Representative.

The Fellowship Representatives from the 40 Villages will then form the **Local (Home) Unit** Committee. One of these will be elected to become the Line Ministry Coordinator – and his or her place at Fellowship level will then be replaced by another volunteer.

This Committee will nominate three people to the Mission who will, after prayer and consultation, appoint one of them as Chair of the Local Transformation Committee.

The **Mission** will appoint one staff member to each Local Unit, who will work as the **General Coordinator** at the Local Unit to coordinate all the Line ministry volunteers. He or she will act as mediator between the General Programme coordinators at IcFEM (who will be the full time ministry staff) and the volunteers selected by the Fellowships, and will act as Secretary/Executive to the committee.

This will achieve a true participatory management of the transformation process which will be rooted in the people themselves.

165 Children attended the Holiday Club. Now it's back to work for the last term of the year, with exams in November.

John Adams, a teacher and volunteer who helped with the Holiday Club, has written these impressions which first appeared in the **Gap Volunteers Blog**. (www.gap-volunteers.icfem-mission.org).

“The scope of the IcFEM is huge. One of the many projects undertaken, and perhaps one of the most successful as well, is the Dreamland Education Centre. I spent the whole day there last Tuesday. DEC is private primary school with classes all the way up to standard 8, which means that, since educational progression is determined only by merit, the age range of students spans a good 20 years. The building is impressive by Kenyan standards: on two floors, built using high-quality stone and a green painted corrugated iron roof. Admittedly, there is still no electricity - the digital age is prevented from arriving here - but then again this is true of almost all the primary schools we have seen.



DEC – second phase building completed

However, far more significant than its outward appearance is what is going on inside, both inside the buildings and inside the pupils' hearts and minds. I was briefed by the Chaplain, Pamela, who accompanied me with each class that I taught. DEC has only Christian staff, but has also decided to employ a Chaplain with overall responsibility for the spiritual development of the children. She does

a quite remarkable job, and is clearly the main mover and shaker in the institution after the Headmaster, Cornelius.



Holiday Club members enjoying IT lightly. They are taught not to confront any issues, nor to report them, only to pray, and especially to pray for any who are absent, sick or unhappy. Each week they meet together with the Chaplain to pray for an hour for their respective classes. This is a school truly built on the rock of the word of God.

The vast majority of the children have made a public, personal commitment to following Jesus, and from the little I saw of them, they, like many of their contemporaries across the schools here demonstrate a maturity far beyond their years. Take little Billy Wafula for example. Knee-high to a grass-hopper at the age of about 8; he goes home every evening and insists that he pray for his family before going to sleep. His mother contacted the school not quite knowing what to do about this, and the Chaplain reassured her that she could just listen. So every evening tiny little Billy insists that everyone listens while he prays.

What is more, the children's' behaviour in class is impeccable: they are always polite, work hard and have a capacity for concentration 3 times that of their British peers. I sang some songs and taught the bible to a group of 100 or so 4-7 year-olds for about an hour and all heads were up and concentrating throughout. What is more, in all the time I have spent here I have not heard a little child cry. No fighting with their neighbours, no obvious shaming of other pupils, no great complications as to who sits with whom. I cannot see how this country can fail to change and progress in the hands of this new generation of God-fearing, hard-working children.



Banana Craft at the Holiday Club

Having learnt that Primary education is now free, we questioned the value of DEC. The first point to note is that IcfEM runs a student sponsorship programme which allows those who cannot afford education, the chance to have it. A number of those students sponsored, who often come from far away out in the rural communities are taught at Dreamland, and are thereby offered a wonderful learning environment as well as the stability of a loving Christian community within which to grow up. Secondly as further school visits testified, the government's commitment to free primary school education is a nice idea but has not been followed up by anything like the amount of funding required. Indeed it had *always* been the case that the government paid the teachers in the schools, and so its commitment to make education free was only a promise to cover the maintenance, teaching materials and consumables (exercise books, pencils etc). Uniforms are still the responsibility of the families. What is more, this funding is insufficient, irregular and fantastically poorly administrated. In some years the government gave three lump sums, in some years two. The totals for each year varied drastically and were in no way related to the number of students. They were also quite unpredictable, sometimes two months apart, sometimes nine. In addition the government specified the exact amount that should be spent on all the components covered - textbooks, maintenance, etc. Should the school be found to have spent the money in different proportion the head would lose their job and be disciplined. In one school that we visited we saw in the corner of the office an enormous stack of unused textbooks which

the school was obliged to buy as proscribed. The pupils had quite sufficient learning materials anyway, so these books would just remain where they were, still in the boxes in which they came. *Whilst these brand new text books gathered dust in the corner, not three metres from where we were sitting, a teacher was standing in front of 135 pupils with barely sufficient room to stand up next to the blackboard.*

The government has decreed that each parent has the right to choose which school their children are to attend, and therefore that the clause 'no room' does not exist as a reason for a turning away a child, yet the government has given hardly any funding for the construction of new buildings. This is where the Harambee Foundation from Holland, and the Kimilili Trust from England have helped enormously by providing funds for new school buildings as part of the community building”.



Jane Morgan reports on her visit to Kenya, 13th June – 4th July

It was exactly 2 years since I was last in Kimilili – then I was on a fact-finding expedition for the Trustees and witnessed the completion and official opening of the Guesthouse.



The Guest House Dining Room

This was different – firstly staying in the Guesthouse creates a fresh dynamic – I found a more manageable daily rhythm, with regular mealtimes and opportunity to spend time with other guests and age groups, all of whom are having different experiences and input into the Mission. It creates a wider understanding of the huge variety of things that are going on all the time and opportunity for mutual support, without feeling one is putting pressure on the Mission team, and in particular the Nabie family.

Different too, because I overlapped with Simon, fellow Trustee, for a week, so we were able to do some things together. I also had my 19 year-old grandson with me for a few days to find out what Granny is so involved in, before he went on to another group project in Kenya for which he had previously booked. Matthew Ryding planned his 6 days very well and fitted in a lot of information and experience in so short a time and, with Paul Robinson, the 3 boys had a very good time together. He was particularly impressed by a week-end evangelism "Challenge" in a local secondary school and the worship and prayers of the students.

Simon and I had a day out visiting three of the local Fellowships in the Misikhu Unit, where we received a great welcome and heard many stories of local help being given and were able to share a little of our wider experience. *We went* first to the Unit compound and the new office they have been given. The day before Tatwa had collected and delivered 12,000 eucalyptus tree seedlings. These were being sold at minimal cost to the Fellowship members, each being allowed to buy 40 to take home and plant. This is a way to reward and encourage the new Fellowships, and to give real help towards reforestation and provision of a useful cash crop for firewood and building timber. These specially developed trees take only 5 years to maturity! Like Jack's beanstalk, you can practically see them growing...

Although I was able to spend time renewing friendships and visiting and catching up, much of the rest of my time was taken up by 6 long days of staff Strategic Planning, involving about 30 of all the HQ senior staff. With the devolvement of much of the Mission's work and objectives to the developing village IcfEM Fellowships, the time had come, after 12 years, to rethink the structures and operation of the greatly enlarged Mission, how to help and guide the local teams and maintain the integrity and vision of IcfEM. All aspects of the work were looked at systematically with the team breaking into small groups and then pooling ideas and decisions. Although leading the discussions, Solomon took a back seat, encouraging the team to think for themselves and produce their own ideas, with some surprising results and modification of some preconceived ideas. I found it a fascinating and most worthwhile exercise, though very exhausting! The following week Solomon went off to the peace and quiet of the Nairobi office to collate the ideas and hopefully produce the Strategic Plan for the next few years' work.



Nine very different volunteers have been sharing time in the Guesthouse this summer and all have found the experience most rewarding. The Gap Programme is really opening up IcfEM to a wider group of people, being enjoyable as well as very worthwhile. Matthew has arranged for them all to write a "Blog" – a diary on the internet of their visit, and these make fascinating reading – go to the IcfEM website – Gap Programme – Gap blogs.

Other News



Ann Lipson will be visiting England from September 18th until October 24th and hopes to visit friends and supporters. She will be in Beckenham from September 21st – 28th and then will be in Withington (29th) and in Manchester on 30th and October 8th; at the AFCU Annual Gathering from 19th -21st and then back to Farnham. **Ann has been made a Lay Canon** by her Bishop, the Rt Rev Eliud Wabukala, in recognition of all she has done over the past 30+ years, and her position as a role model for so many girls. The service was held in St Matthew's Cathedral, Webuye, on September 9th.

The Four Volunteers from Holland are using the orthopaedic workshop built by their fellow countrymen two years ago, and making orthoses for disabled people. They have got the generator working and are developing ingenious methods of heating plastic. They have also bought two bicycles to re-use the parts in making "hand bikes" (wheelchairs). Read Eelke Scharper's blog on (www.gap-volunteers.icfem-mission.org).



An Agricultural Seminar was held at HQ from 10th – 16th August attended by about 270 Fellowship leaders and Agricultural representatives. It was led by **John Wibberley**, who then, accompanied by Tatwa, ran 3 two-day Agricultural workshops at Misikhu, Kibingei and Naitiri, and Kamukuywa, These covered the Biblical basis of community development and integral

mission; sustainable agriculture principles and practices; processing and marketing, and farmers' study groups. The workshops ended with "buzz" groups discussing the questions "What did you learn or what were you reminded of by God? With whom will you share this (be specific)? What will you DO with the resources you control or influence within the next 6 months?" Responses included such things as "I will build a fuel efficient stove" "I will start to make proper compost" "I want to start a Farmers' Study Group".



This is in conjunction with the forming of an Agricultural wing of the IcFEM Local Fellowships, each of which will have 2 "FARM" Reps. (Farmers' Asset Resource Management representatives), who will advise on care for the environment by planting trees, soil conservation, animal husbandry, superior genotypes for crops, and indigenous knowledge.

Some generous donations have enabled us to start regular grants for the work of Agricultural development in Kimilili;

to send funds to purchase a Field Ambulance (shown in this picture);

and to finish two rooms in DMCC designated for eye assessments and operations.



Make a Donation

Look for this button on the IcFEM website. You can give securely on-line with a credit or debit card by simply clicking on the button.

All gifts received are sent *in their entirety* to Kenya, with no deductions. In the UK we have no staff costs, but there are expenses for printing, postage and other office costs. These are met exclusively from a special fund for the purpose, and contributions to this fund are always appreciated.

Might your church be willing to include IcFEM in their Christmas offering this year, or perhaps support IcFEM during the next year? As you know, people and communities in Western Kenya are being transformed by the Gospel through IcFEM. If your church is not already involved with IcFEM, and even if they are this might be of interest to them, would you please give a copy of the enclosed Christmas appeal to your Minister or Mission Leader. If you need more copies, please contact the office.

The IcFEM-Mission (Europe) annual report and financial statements for the year to 31st March, 2007 have been published. If you would like a copy please contact the office.

Meet the team. Unfortunately there is not enough space to include this feature this month, but it will be continued in our next.

IcFEM Gap/Volunteer Programme – Why not tell someone about it or apply yourself? It is a fantastic experience!

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