

## **JOSEPH KIMELI-MANAGER, CHEPTEBO RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT**

### **Report #K02**

#### **SURVEY**

Our survey of 3964 Kenyans identified Joseph Kimeli as one of the top non-clergy Christian leaders in terms of impact (tied for 10<sup>th</sup> place in terms of frequency of mention). He was rated highly for training others as leaders (3.8 on a 4-point scale), tying for second on this measure.

#### **BACKGROUND**

##### ***Childhood Home***

Joseph Kimeli was born in Kerio Valley to non-Christian parents that depended entirely on small-scale subsistence farming. When growing up, getting food to eat was a challenge and many times “I assisted my parents in the farm, looking after animals and travelling on foot for very long distances looking for food for myself and the family. This put in me a sense that I must work to eat.”

##### ***Countries of Residence***

“I have mainly lived in Kenya but I have visited and lived in the UK for one month. I have visited other countries for periods of less than a month.”

##### ***Current Family***

Joseph Kimeli reports that he enjoyed a happy marriage for the last 14 years. The family do not have children of their own (biological children) but adopted a boy who is currently 6 years. The family supports another 7 children of relatives who stay with them. Some are in primary school, some in secondary and others in colleges and universities. Joseph and his wife work together in the same organisation and he reports that his wife has given him TOTAL support in their work.

##### ***Educational Background***

Regarding educational qualifications, Joseph has a high school certificate but has attended several short courses on leadership, community development, business management. He reports that the training that has impacted him the most is the leadership courses he received from Christian Community Services, a program run by the Anglican Church of Kenya. The course is known as IDEAL (Innovative Development for Active Leadership) which he attended for one year.

He has also attended several short Christian education courses offered by his church the Africa Inland Church, which have been of great help as far as his ministry and work are concerned. Most of his education financial support has come from well-wishers and friends, and he has not been educated abroad.

##### ***Personal Testimony and Calling***

He says that the scripture in Mathew 25:14-30 has really motivated him to know that he is serving God and that he should please God and not men. He has faced a lot of temptations from those with corrupt minds who have tried to corrupt him or to compromise him. Through him and

the work they have done so many people both young and old have been positively impacted which he praises the name of the Lord.

### ***Influences***

He was mentored and influenced by a missionary couple, Bill Rettie and Rosemary Bill. The other person that has had influence in his life is Samuel Teimuge who is running a ministry called Empowering Lives International as well as Ukweli Training Centre.

## **CURRENT MINISTRY OR VOCATION**

### ***Work/Ministry***

Joseph currently serves as the centre manager of A.I.C Cheptebo Rural Development Centre a position he has held since 2003 when the missionaries from USA and UK handed over the responsibility to him. He serves the people both by word and deed. The Centre he manages has 50 acres of agricultural demonstration land where a variety of agricultural activities are carried out. The Centre also runs a 100-bed capacity conference and accommodation facility. It is his responsibility to ensure that the centre runs well and to provide good services to people who come and learn from the Centre's activities so that many others can come/learn from what they do. He picked up the Centre from where the missionaries left and has expanded it and even made it better.

### ***Mission/Vision***

Joseph's personal vision/purpose is to ensure that many people as possible through his ministry and that of other Christian colleagues come to know Jesus Christ, gain skills and be economically empowered. He does this through his work on the demonstration farm as well as the conference facility.

### ***Organization***

The Centre has already mentioned above deals with farming and a conference facility. The Centre works with Africa Inland Mission, which sent missionaries' to come and start the Centre. From time to time the founding missionary has been visiting, sending teams/friends from the UK to come and encourage and offer support. In most cases they offer technical advice and sometimes some little funding for new projects, school fees for needy children. However regarding salary and other running expenses, the Centre generates all funds locally.

### ***Impact/Success/Assessment***

The Centre has significantly grown over time. The impact of our work is now felt directly/indirectly in the entire county of Elgeyo Marakwet, which has a population of about 500,000 people. The impact is also felt in surrounding counties as well as at the national level. The Centre hosted a national event in the month of June when they hosted the World Day to Combat Desertification. They received guests from all over Kenya and beyond. The centre works with over 20 community groups and about ten organisations as well as many Government departments. Recently the Centre hosted a one-week eye clinic exercise launched by the governor of the county and about 2000 people were treated. People who have been directly served by the Centre are approximately 200,000. He attributes his success and that of the Centre

as revolving around networking and relationship building as well as the Lord's favor that comes through faithfulness.

### ***Training/Leadership/Development***

He reports that most of the people mentored have been those that have worked under him using the on the job training model. Over 30 people have gained skills through what they do hence seen a positive impact in them. About 15 young people are now in tertiary colleges and university which have been motivated by Joseph to pursue their education and most of them have come back to help the Centre during their holidays.

### ***Professional Relationships***

Joseph has enjoyed a close relationship with ECHO a Christian organisation in America which has always invited himself and the Centre to attend symposiums and conferences with one recently in held Arusha, Tanzania where Joseph presented a paper on agriculture. During such forums, he and other staff within the Centre learn a lot. He is also invited by other organisations to help talk and motivate their staff. Other professional collaborations include the Ministry of Agriculture, Kenya Agricultural Research Institute among others.

### ***Partnerships/Links***

The manager enjoys very cordial relationship and partnership with local churches. Joseph and the Centre have been of great encouragement to the pastors and they have trained and motivated the pastors. Joseph has been instrumental in organising and coordinating fundraisings to assist churches to buy motorbikes for pastors. The distances that pastors have travel to see congregants is large with no public transport. The motorbikes come in handy in the pastors' work. The facilities at the centre have been of great help to many other churches who send their leaders to the conference facilities. Churches abroad have been of great support by sending missionaries, teams and financial support. Joseph reports that in future he seeks to strengthen the partnerships and especially in the area of technical support to the activities of the Centre.

### ***SWOT: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats***

The current strengths for the Centre includes sufficient land for expansions, conference facilities available, demonstration farm, motivated staff, goodwill from the community and networking. The weaknesses are personnel as most of them do not have professional qualifications and yet the centre is growing. The challenges are many among them finances for new projects, many expectations from the community, climate change, people encroaching in water catchment areas among others. The manager and the Centre have faced resistance from some individuals within the community but with the goodwill of the government, community and stakeholders have kept them moving on.

### ***Reading and Writing***

He has always been motivated when he reads books and learn from other Christian leaders. John Maxwell, in particular, has inspired him. The Centre intends to have a library in the future and it is his prayer that he get Christian books and developments books so as to help the community he works with. The Centre currently has a small library and he intends to write a book in the future about himself and his ministry.

### ***Electronic Media***

The cell phone has been so useful to him as far as electronic media is concerned, followed by email. All this has helped him in his ministry. The Centre also has a Facebook address as well as a website.

### ***Finances and Other Resources***

Joseph is actively involved in writing funding proposals for the Centre. Through this method, the Centre has received funding to assist community groups. Some of the proposals that have been written and funded include dairy goat rearing, HIV/AIDS and promotion of horticulture. A proposal written to Government has received technical support as well as funding for the promotion of tissue culture bananas.

### ***Political Arena***

Joseph is of the opinion that Christians should be involved in politics but should remember to glorify the Lord always and to be wise and not to speak like the world but to be the light and salt always. He says that if Christians shy away from politics, then bad leaders will be elected hence will ruin and corrupt the nation.

### ***Future***

The Centre has a well written 2012 to 2017 strategic plan and Joseph expects to oversee its implementation. He would like to see the start of a Dryland farming agricultural college in the Centre by 2015. He hopes that this will empower more people within the community. The other key strategic objective he expects to oversee is to start projects like this in other dry areas as well as spreading the good news and empowering people. He says that past successes motivate him to believe that the Centre will achieve its goals.

### ***Report Preparation Information***

Report prepared by; Michael Bowen

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