

AFRICA INLAND CHURCH'S (AIC) CHEPTEBO RURAL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

Report #K14

BACKGROUND

The concept to start a holistic centre dates back to 1980. At that time, the A.I.C Keiyo Church leadership was concerned about the spiritual and economic development of its members. They envisaged that expansion for the Kingdom of God needed strengthening of the believers in these areas who had been converted through missionary efforts in earlier years.

The Kerio Valley, which is an arid and semi-arid region, faced unique challenges then as it was seen as a low economic potential area fit only for nomadic livestock keepers. The Kerio Valley receives an average annual rainfall of 800mm with temperatures ranging between 30–37 degrees centigrade. The altitude is 900-1200m above sea level. Given the low productivity in the region, many people migrated to the highlands believers included. This meant that Churches were not self-supporting and it became very difficult to propagate and grow the churches in this region.

The church leadership approached the local community who agreed to donate approximately 50 acres of land with the understanding that the Church would initiate activities that will help the community both spiritually and economically. The A.I.C Church approached Africa Inland Mission (A.I.M) for a missionary expatriate specialised in agriculture with a calling to reach to the unreached with the gospel and development. Mr Bill Rettie from Scotland was sent. He came first in 1985 to assess the site and then came fully to start the work in 1986. Initial funding for the Centre came from Tear Fund (The evangelical alliance relief fund). The funds from this organisation were used to set up a 4Km pipeline to bring water by gravity to the site to set up irrigation demonstrations and construction of manager's house.

The overall goal of the Centre is to promote the Gospel, both by word and deed and assist the local communities to improve their living conditions by encouraging appropriate and sustainable development. The vision of the Centre is to be a Christian Centre of excellence that effectively contributes to the spiritual, physical, social and economic empowerment of the communities surrounding the Centre. Its mission is to follow the example of the Lord Jesus Christ in enhancing the Kerio Valley communities' spiritual, physical and economic well-being by empowering people with knowledge and skills to utilise sustainably available resources efficiently and equitably. The core values of the Centre are; obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ; committed to serving people; preservation of human dignity; transparency and accountability; environmental conservation; participatory and people based; committed to excellence in all conduct and activities.

As much the Centre focuses on Kerio Valley, it has impacted people far and wide with quality seedlings from the Centre being brought from as far as far as southern Sudan.

As the Centre grew the church was concerned about the sustainability of the Centre upon the departure of expatriate missionaries and cessation of funding from abroad. To address this, the Centre put up a conference facility in 1997 to generate funds to run the facility. The Centre has

since been put up and currently the facility has the capacity of 100 beds and two (2) conference halls.

To meet the objective of the spiritual growth of the community and the guests, there's a church sanctuary within the compound that can seat 500 people and a full-time chaplain. It is also a requirement that all guests holding conferences, seminars, retreats and all the staff attend daily devotions every morning.

Significant Milestones of the Centre

1. Sustainability of the Centre after cessation of donor funding
2. Prudent and sustainable management of the Centre by the Nationals after the departure of expatriate missionaries in 2003. The Centre has been growing even at a faster rate after the missionaries left.
3. Legal ownership of the 50-acre piece of land
4. Has established demonstration of the following agricultural activities:
 - ✓ Dairy cows and goat units
 - ✓ Dry land farming technologies – drip irrigation
 - ✓ Tree nursery with certified fruit seedlings
 - ✓ Bee Keeping
 - ✓ Orchard management
 - ✓ Poultry unit
 - ✓ Conservation agriculture
 - ✓ Greenhouse technology

The demonstration units mentioned above have had a significant impact in the community as they come to learn from the model farm. Consequently, a good number of households have planted mangoes and other fruit trees with significant earnings from the same. Other households now keep dairy cows and milk goats that significantly helped the community out of poverty. The churches have also grown in number and giving as a result of the activities of the Centre.

5. Active involvement of the Centre in social community development e.g. education, health (HIV/Aids), agriculture and livestock. There is a health Centre that has been put up within the Centre in conjunction with the government.
6. Consistent Integration of Evangelism in all the daily activities - There is a daily devotion for the staff and guests every day.
7. Active collaboration with evangelical Churches and mission agencies to witness Christ to the community.
8. Successful established Christian conference facility available for church groups, NGO's, farmers, Government of Kenya departments and schools at fair rates.

The Centre does not serve alcoholic drinks nor cigarettes. The Centre also does not practice syncretism nor engage in politics.

ORGANISATIONS WITH SIMILAR FOCUS AS THE CENTRE

- Keiyo Soy Ministries (KSM)-This organisation seeks to preach the gospel as well as help economically help the people of the entire Keiyo district. The organisation has sponsored water projects among other projects. Their projects are seasonal.
- Christian community service (CCS) (*Anglican-based community programmes*)
- World Vision International (WVI)
- Child Fund
- Empowering Lives International (ELI)

We are Different with many organisations mainly

- Propagation of evangelical view of salvation is integrated into all activities done at the Centre actively seeking to bring people to a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
- The Centre generates income through the farm and the conference centre to run and support its programmes. Donor support is currently minimal.

BOARD STRUCTURE AND COMPOSITION

The Board that runs the Centre consists of 11 members appointed by the A.I.C Regional Church Council for three-year term. The area Bishop and the Chief of the location are Ex-official members. The eleven (11) comprises the chaplain, centre manager, special interest (professionals in the centre's core activities), community representative and church representative.

The educational qualifications of the board are as follows:

Masters degree	-	1
Degree holders	-	3
Diploma	-	4
Certificate	-	3

Within the board, there are two (2) ladies and nine (9) men showing a skewed representation of men within the Board. In the case of any vacancy on the Board, the Regional Church Council (RCC) in conjunction with the board will fill the position. The Centre Manager has a deputy who would take over the responsibilities of the Centre if the manager were to leave for one reason or another. All Board members must be born again and are appointed by A.I.C Keiyo region.

SWOT: STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND THREATS

Board Management SWOT Analysis

Strengths/Achievements	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Devoted Christians• Good Time Management• Unity• Faithfulness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inadequate training• Limited funding• Low representation of women	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Goodwill from community and the government• Devolved government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relatively low education levels

Staff SWOT Analysis

Strengths/Achievements	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Devoted and knowledgeable• United• Gender balance• Goodwill from clients, partners, customers• Communication network• Quality of work recognised and appreciated by the community, church, GoK	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inadequate training• Low salaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support from partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff leaving due to low salaries• Competition from newly established Hotels that have better-trained staff

The number of employees currently stands at 32 with 14 men and 18 women showing a fair representation of both genders.

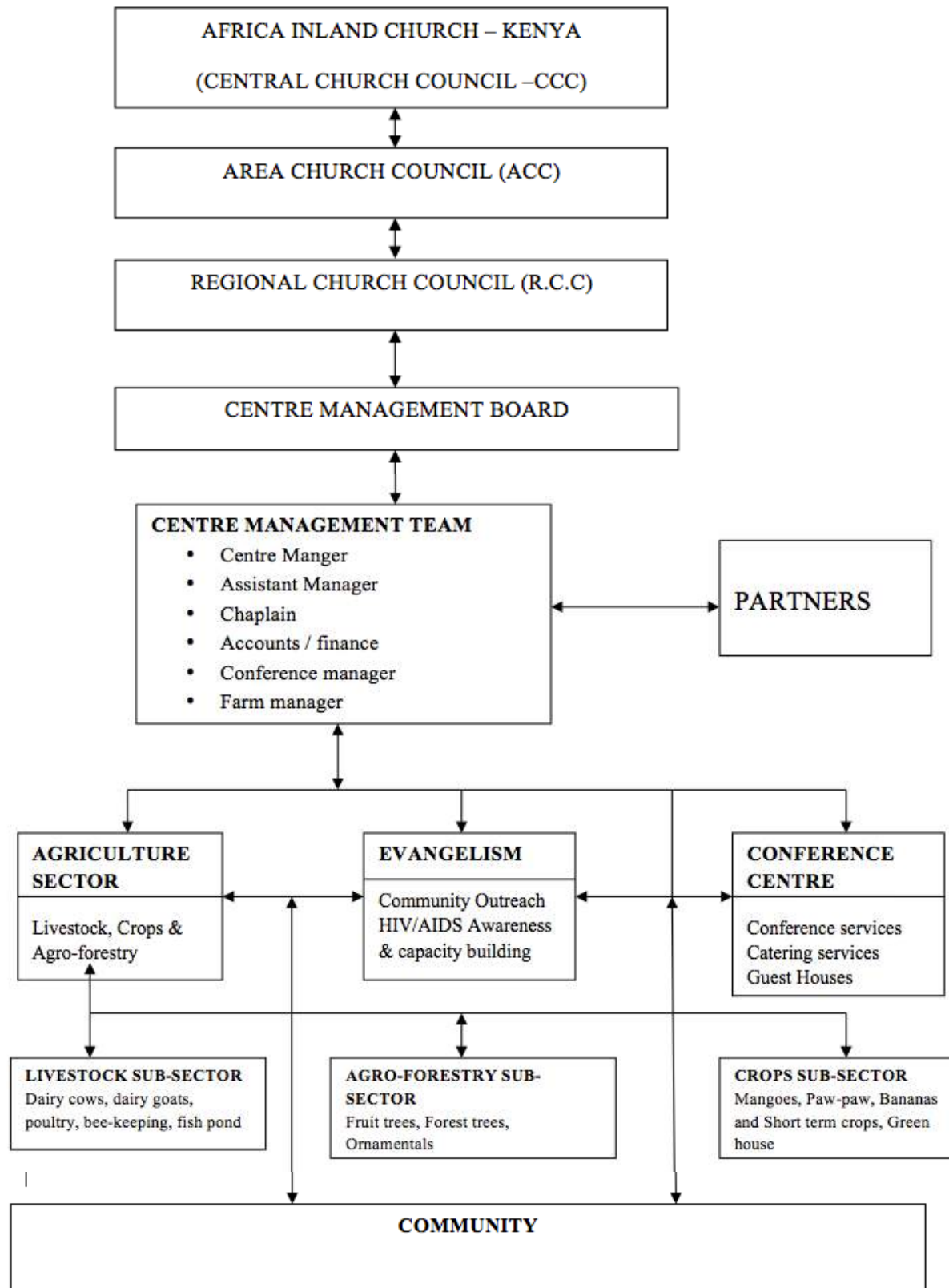
Educational Qualifications of Employees

The educational qualification of employees is shown below

Degree	2
Diploma	3
Certificates	7
O 'level certificate	4
Primary certificate	16

Clearly the education levels of most of the staff are low. This could be explained by the fact that most of these employees carry out manual work on the farm or are cleaners within the Conference Centre. Almost all the staff come from the locality and this indicates the extent to which the Centre has provided employment within the Kerio Valley. Most of those employed have managed to educate their children through high school and college using the salaries received. Some these employees have replicated the projects in the Centre within their homes and have benefitted economically from this.

ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE



Agriculture and Livestock has provided expert advice on agriculture and livestock through its extension services. In conjunction with the Ministry of Education, the Centre has sponsored annual motivation talks to Standard 8 and Form 4 candidates. This has seen the improvement in academic performance of the region. Together with the Ministry of Special Programmes, the Centre has supported the needy and most recently supported people that were affected by landslides.

The Centre has also partnered with NGOs and other private organisations. For example, the Centre has partnered with World Vision, Child Fund, Uwezo Kenya in several community support programmes.

The Africa Inland Mission has sent missionaries and has partnered with the Centre in the spread of the word of God. As volunteers, some have brought in very useful professional advice in construction, agriculture among other areas. Some of the missionaries come for orientation on missions.

In conjunction with some churches from abroad, the Centre has assisted in paying school fees needy students within the community. Such partnerships have also helped greatly in the construction of churches, sponsoring of pastor's conferences and theological training. The Keiyo Ministries in partnership with the Centre have provided clean water, health facilities, as well as pastor's training, conferences and sponsorship of needy students. Keiyo Soy Ministries is based in the USA–Philadelphia

In conjunction with AMPATH and the National AIDS Control Council, the Centre provided fruit tree seedlings to be given to people living with HIV and AIDS. NACC has provided the Centre with the funding to carry out educational programmes towards reducing HIV infections. The Centre has also provided University students with internship opportunities in the area of dryland agriculture.

Overall Swot For The Centre

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats (Challenges)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Active and knowledgeable✓ Unity within management✓ Gender balance (staff)✓ Commitment among members✓ Faithfulness✓ Devoted Christians✓ Time management✓ Goodwill from clients, partners, customers✓ Reports and Audited accounts are made available in a timely manner✓ The centre supports itself to a large degree	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Inadequate trained personnel➤ Low salaries➤ Sourcing of external funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Support from partners➤ Goodwill from the community and the GOK➤ Land for expansion➤ Devolved government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Erratic climate changes➤ Economical instability➤ Political instability➤ Competition from hotels➤ Pests and diseases

FINANCES AND OTHER RESOURCES

The Centre currently generates most of its resources mainly through the conference facility. The Centre also writes proposals for funding to various funding agencies to help it. Donations from various agencies were very instrumental in the start up of the Centre. The money helped to build infrastructure such as buildings, water, etc

The Centre has a fully fledged accounts office with a qualified accountant. The Centre uses a computerised accounts system (Quickbooks). The books of accounts are audited every year with the report presented to the Board.

IMPACT OF THE CENTRE/SUCCESS OF THE CENTRE

The Centre has adopted appropriate farming technologies and practices for drylands such as drip irrigation, conservation agriculture. These have further been adopted by the community surrounding the Centre after visits to the demonstration Centre. The Centre has also availed knowledge and skills at low cost to the neediest in the community. The centre has further adopted the Biblical based approach to HIV and AIDS prevention.

The Centre has also been a catalyst for Church growth. There is an increase in the number of churches in the region; converts have increased over the years and in-depth understanding of the word of God.

The Centre has helped to improve academic standards and the overall has helped to improve the living standards of the people. Regarding leadership development, the Centre has ensured that its staff are trained in their various areas of specialisation. This has improved the performance of their various job. Some of the training has been carried within the Centre by bringing experts in various areas while others have been sent out to be training for specific periods of time. However more training is required for the staff, given the competition from private hotels.

The Centre has internet access with printers, photocopier and accessibility to mobile phone networks. The Centre also has a website and more information on the Centre may be accessed through www.cheptebo.org

The Centre will continue to preach the gospel both in word and deed. The centre seeks to replicate itself in various locations. The Centre has started another demonstration farm 12km away and a pastor's house has already been put up. This community lags behind in terms of development and the gospel and the Centre thought the model used can enable the people and the church to develop. The new centre will start a tree nursery and do extension services to the community there to adopt fruit farming and hence improve their living standards. There are plans for other centres as well.

REPORT PREPARATION INFORMATION

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