

**International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs**

**Mouvement International des Intellectuels Catholiques**

**ICMICA- MIIC PAX ROMANA AFRICA**



**MOVEMENT SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS REPORT**

**AFRICA REGION COORDINATION OFFICE**

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## **1.INTRODUCTION**

Vis-à-vis the changes experienced in the world over the last decade, ICMICA feels the need to reposition and reorient the mission of the Catholic Professionals' Movement across the world. This reorientation goes together with the reform of the Church proposed by Pope Francis to build a Synodal Church. In the face of this big contextual turn, intellectuals are invited to rethink their commitments and find practical solutions to the growing threats to well-being. The thinking process was initiated by the international council of ICMICA, triggered by the need to refresh the movement in the context of a changing world, the context of a global identity crisis, and the church reformation.

In line with this, the African region of ICMICA conducted a survey consultation on the state of the movement in each country. The results of the consultation will contribute as a basis for ICMICA upcoming global study session. This work gives a brief report on the state of the movement in Africa and a few recommendations on the way forward.

## **2.METHODOLOGY**

In the process of developing this report, the following consultation process was adopted:

Africa used two stages. The first stage was the survey of the national movements. Questionnaires were given to them and they responded according to their local realities. The responses were sent to the regional office of ICMICA. In all, 12 movements participated in the process. The synthesis of the data collected enabled the regional office to organize a virtual study session to discuss the information collected and came up with some recommendations as a region.

In the second stage, members were trying to respond to the deep fundamental questions that are related to the identity and operation of the movement through a webinar. Some of the key questions that guided the study session were:

- How do we intend to make a difference in this world that is changing rapidly? How do we remain Pax Romana without being affected by that reality in the way we behave, in the way we contribute to the community, in the way we associate ourselves with the process professionally and individually, and spiritually?
- How do we relate in this world and remain as Catholic Professionals the way we are?

- How do we, as Pax Romana, respond to those needs in the context of daily declining identity? In the context of the daily challenges of membership? and from our role in the community?
- Who are we and how are we? Do we have the necessary framework for engaging as Pax Romana? Do we have a strategic framework for membership development?
- Do we have the basics that are required to be called an association? What is our relationship with the Church, and with those outside the Church? How do we understand our identity and our role/place within the physical Church?
- What are we doing on a daily basis to fulfill our role?
- How do we relate to issues that are affecting our society?
- How do we transform the movement into a social-oriented platform with a political view and that political view is totally embedded in the essence of our faith, and how do we constitute ourselves into that social incarnation in order to influence change?

### **3.OVERVIEW OF ICMICA MIIC PAX ROMANA AFRICA**

ICMICA is present in around 20 countries in Africa, with 12 constituent members and 08 corresponding members. Some national movements are dynamic and active, such as Gabon (MCC), Madagascar (MCCP), Zimbabwe (CNPZ), Tanzania (CPT), DR Congo (MIIC), Benin (MCC), Togo (MIIC), and Kenya (KMCP) while other movements have difficulties like Rwanda, Cameroun, Nigeria, Burundi, Malawi. The countries that have difficulties are war affected and new countries that joined ICMICA recently. ICMICA Africa has a good relationship with the Bishops ‘Conference of Southern Africa and Eastern Africa. Unfortunately, the regional office lost the touch with the Regional African conference of Bishops (SECAM); it is in the process of re-establishing it. At a regional level, there is a progress in terms of membership development. For the last two years, ICMICA Africa has managed to reach out to a few countries like Burundi, Nigeria, Malawi, Botswana, South Africa, and Senegal. The plan is to try to reach out to countries that have IMCS first. The region is yet to reach out to Mauritius, Mali, Brazzaville, and Ethiopia. Then afterward, to get other new countries like Djibouti, Mozambique, Sierra Leon, Angola, Seychelles, etc. on board.

In terms of structure, ICMICA Africa has elected officials formed by 04 people (Vice President, Deputy Vice President, Secretary General, and Deputy Secretary General), a chaplain, and a Coordinator. It also has a finance committee and a Board of Trustees. The members of the Board are appointed by the national movements and the executive team.

In terms of decision arrangement, the elected officials decide on administrative matters while national movement members decide on the strategic orientation of the movement. The Board of trustees holds an advisory role and ensures legal compliance. The finance committee oversees the management of the funds of the movement.

Pax Romana ICMICA Africa is a legal entity. It is registered as a TRUST in Kenya where the African regional coordination headquarters is. It has an office, which is located in Athi River Kenya. It has two official emails ([paxmiicafrika@gmail.com](mailto:paxmiicafrika@gmail.com) and [office@icmica-miic-africa.org](mailto:office@icmica-miic-africa.org)), a website ([www.icmica-miic-africa.org](http://www.icmica-miic-africa.org)), social media platform (Facebook, Twitter, Youtube). Africa has one full-time paid volunteer (Coordinator) that runs the office activities. The main source of income of ICMICA Africa are subscriptions from national movements (not very consistent though - 25%), individual contributions (50%), and contribution from project grants (25%). The latter is still not very sustainable since the regional office is in the process of re-establishing the relationship with the funding agencies.

#### **4.RELATIONSHIP OF THE MOVEMENT WITH THE CHURCH**

Concerning the relationship with the Church, a few movements (Gabon, Madagascar, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Tanzania, DR Congo, and Uganda) mentioned having a recognition and consultation status with the Bishops' conference. They participate in the meetings of the National Commission for the Apostolate of the Laity (CAL), although sometimes in a limited way. Some movements (Togo, Zambia, and Cote d'Ivoire) affirmed working together with the Diocesan Council of the Laity while others (Burundi) have a relationship with the local dioceses. There are also new movements like Nigeria and Malawi that are still in the process of initiating communication with their episcopal conferences.

## **5.ACTIVITIES AND MISSION OF THE MOVEMENTS**

The majority of the national movements mentioned that they still conduct training and capacity building for members and for the people with responsibilities. They continue helping members to grow spiritually through recollections, retreats, masses, and Synodal animation. Some do occasional or regular charitable community activities in line with the motto preferential option for the poor such as donations to the needy, visits to orphanages, hospitals, etc. while others organize talks, conference debates, workshops, or study sessions on current topics. Mainly, they organize activities for the members but they are not consistent.

There are also movements that have gone the extra mile to bring meaningful contributions to the society. Tanzania (CPT) has been doing civic education, offering Legal Aid services, Counseling services, Free Health services, and Public forums on various issues. Gabon (MCC) has been offering school support for children from low-income families and has been supporting people with mental disabilities. DRC (MIIC) has been carrying out a radio and television program: “*Pour Voir Clair* (to see clearly)” to contribute to the civic awareness of the population on issues of governance, leadership, and ownership of the electoral process. Zambia (ZACP) has been offering free medical checkups and supported the bishops’ councils on audit.

There are also national movements that have maintained the practice of having a regular Assembly or congress to change leadership and set the orientation for the movement, such as Madagascar, Kenya, Gabon, RDC, etc. In short, movements do activities; the challenges rely on quality and consistency.

At a regional level, the organization coordinates community projects in collaboration with the target countries. The purpose in future is to reach out to all country members. For the last two years, the regional office has implemented food security projects for Ivory Coast and Burundi, targeting 60 smallholder farmers. The regional office also organizes bi-monthly webinars based on the current themes and needs to ignite reflections and discussions among professionals. The youth ambassadors also came up with the monthly retreat to enhance spirituality and help members on life daily challenges (marriage, work, family, education, etc.).

## **6.THEMATIC AREAS**

For the last four years, national movements have been working on the following thematic areas:

- Pastoral thematic: Evangelization of the intellectual milieu, Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church, Papal encyclicals.

- Social and community development thematic: SDGs (Education, Health, reduction of inequalities and poverty, Peacebuilding and Conflict Resolution, Food security, Climate change, migration), civic and electoral education, family, Human Rights, Culture, and Development.
- Advocacy thematic: advocacy for the promotion of human rights, management of natural resources, gender equality, education system, and employability of young people.

At a regional level, ICMICA Africa undertakes community projects and social activities that revolve around the following areas:

1. Protecting the Family and households
2. Pursuing Economic and Ecological justice
3. Politics as Social Charity
4. Migration and human trafficking
5. Ethics, leadership, and missionary discipleship
6. Education and health

## **7. CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED**

It has been observed that there is a decline in membership within many faith-based organizations that pursue social missions. Members of the social movements are decreasing in numbers while the contemplative groups (charismatic, prayer groups) are increasing. The same situation is also happening in ICMICA. Leaders of ICMICA have been complaining about the hardship of mobilizing members at a local level. Professionals became unavailable for the activities of the movement. While work commitment was cited to be an apparent reason for the unavailability, many participants during the webinars disagreed that it is the main rationality behind the non-engagement or non-participation of the members. Further analysis showed that the majority of the members lack knowledge and understanding of the movement. In short, the **problem lies in the identity of the movement**. It is, therefore, not a surprise if many members do not know what they need to do and why. They do not know how they are supposed to contribute. There is a need to find a creative way to address identity issues within ICMICA. It was pointed out that commitment

is everything for an action-oriented movement like Pax Romana. Members have to find ways of defining their commitment that relates to the movement. On another note, it was also clarified that Pax Romana, despite the effort to increase membership, should not put much focus on the number; the focus should be on the quality of the contribution. *“It is how we, as a movement/ as an entity, build the foundation on the few that are ready for the frontline”*.

Other challenges that were mentioned were the financial challenges, the issue of leadership, the transition between two teams, the lack of a national chaplain, the lack of a permanent office to facilitate physical meetings, and the transfer of memory (archiving). Members also pointed out the difficulty of not having a legal status, which affected their fundraising and partnership abilities. Some countries also experienced challenges within the frame of their relationship with the Church. They said, sometimes the Church is too cautious in taking a position on a specific matter (especially in politics), making it difficult for the movement and the members to position themselves too.

Within the frame of membership within Pax Romana, national movements cited a few challenges: the formalization of the membership (from correspondent to constituent), the legal or statutory framework (what role for the elected officials and what role for the legal persons), the official recognition by the national conference of Bishops (lack of understanding of the identity of Pax Romana), the problem with the membership structure (related to individual membership), and the payment of membership fees at the international and regional levels (due to the local situation).

## **8. EXTENSION AND MOBILIZATION**

The majority of the movements declared that ICMICA is not sustainable in terms of mobilization or participation of the members. Other members said sustainability would be partially attained if they are able to operate at a diocesan level on a daily basis. Very few confirmed that they see sustainability. The few that foresee sustainability are those that have fresh graduated from university joining the movement. They have good relationships with the students' movement. The good news is that almost all movements have plans to ensure longevity. It was also noted that Pax Romana is a membership organization, and people come in freely and contribute with whatever they have (time, talents, ideas, money, etc). Money should not hamper their engagement.

Therefore, The term “recruiting members” is not appropriate. It may portray a negative interpretation or misinterpretation. Pax Romana does not recruit people. They come freely.

To ensure sustainability in terms of membership, several national movements proposed to have Pax Romana ICMICA in all Parishes. The idea, however, received a lot of criticism saying that initiating Pax Romana at the parish level has been a discussion over the years; some tried but it never worked. It is impossible. The reason could be connected to the nature and identity of the movement. The idea of starting from a parish may not be reflective of who we are. **What is needed is a very strong movement that is aware of its capacity and social inputs, organized around intellectual and professional thinking, not just to respond to membership development.** However, this does not mean Pax Romana should not focus on membership development, the idea of reaching out to students’ movements (YCS, CSO, IMCS) and bringing ICMICA to the dioceses outside the capital city is still very good and should be pursued. One recommendation is also to reflect together and develop a common loyalty strategy for Pax Romana members.

## **9.RELATIONSHIP WITH ICMICA INTERNATIONAL**

In terms of value addition, members affirmed that the movement continues to support them spiritually and socially. It provides a platform for the exchange of experiences, information sharing, and training among the members. The movement has been a niche for Catholic intellectuals to pursue their commitment and to add a dose of faith to their professionalism. It has supported collaboration and opportunities for evangelization. Some members mentioned that it has connected them to opportunities in the fields of work, and scholarships (through the connection), and getting more exposure that creates room for learning from other professionals. Others stated that it facilitated their growth in leadership and in careers.

Being members of Pax Romana creates the sense and feeling of belonging to a universal movement and a global family and the connection to a historical institution. However, the reality is that some potential members are not aware of the advantages and instead they think that there are a few advantages to being members of the movements. Members appreciated the cross-border interaction, representation at international forums, and global influence, networking, and international sharing on subjects of common interest. International openness creates work synergy,

communication, and information. They appreciate the benefits of membership in terms of numbers and skills that broaden global perspectives.

### **How to strengthen joint international action?**

To strengthen the joint international action, members in Africa recommended to the international office to maintain communication with national movements, continue with the regular virtual sessions and experiences sharing, develop a common strategic plan to ensure synergy of activities, and create a permanent consultation framework and mobilization of resources. They also emphasized that the international office initiates joint campaigns to support the respect of human rights, environmental preservation, and the fight against poverty and social injustice in conjunction with other movements, creates international projects for self-financing, and fundraises for programs geared towards human and community development.

### **The changes required according to the global reality**

As part of the changes required, members recommend that Pax Romana rethinks its strategy by positioning itself as a reference secular movement. This requires an overhaul of its governance system. This governance has to be centered on the management of projects that are helpful to society and support the maximum contribution of the members. This will give work to the members and will retain them. It was also said that there is a need to adapt to information and communication technologies and continue with online initiatives such as training, webinars, celebration, etc. If possible, to offer some certificate courses in various fields. Establish a serious publication of the region and a serious presence in the UN bodies and other regional bodies present in the continent (AU, SADC, etc.) Pax Romana should have a strategic positioning through its members who are in international organizations for a better influence as a network of intellectuals and professionals in the world. It should focus on the agenda that responds to global needs. Members also observed the need to gradually move towards self-financing, given the fragility of the organizations' cash flow; to think of the kind of investment that fits the movement.

## **10. SYNODALITY AND INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE**

These countries have good relationships with other Catholic groups: Cote d'Ivoire, Gabon, Burundi, Kenya, Madagascar, DR Congo, Ghana, Tanzania, Zambia, Togo, and Nigeria). They do not have any joint projects with non-Catholic groups or Christian organizations, nor with other

religions. Only three movements are members of the civil society network: KMCP (Kenya) is a member of the APR network, but not a permanent member. MIIC RDC is a founding member of the Network of Organizations for Human Rights and Civic Education of Christian Inspiration (RODHECIC), a platform of 72 civil society organizations. MCCP Madagascar is a member of the CSO (Civil Society Organization), touching the Human Rights dimension.

## **11. FUTURE PERSPECTIVES**

### **➤ Regional office**

For the regional office, members recommended a structural administrative reform to fit the standard of an international NGO. They emphasized the importance of setting up a project team to write proposals and seek funding for regional and country-specific projects. In line with this, they advised the regional and international office to develop a 5-10 year strategic plan that would give direction to the regions and the movements at a national level. Another big recommendation was that the regional office should put in place a replicative learning process or model within the organization to disseminate good practices and to support peer learning among the movements. The model will enable members to customize, contextualize, and capitalize on what is good.

### **➤ National movements**

For the national movements, it was recommended to improve the local management to look more organized: obtain legal personality (certificate of registration), open bank accounts, set up a national secretariat for the coordination of programs and mobilization of resources, and initiate the process of getting recognition from the Church body. On the latter, members requested support from the international office to get a letter from the bishop in charge of the laity (if any) or a Bishop that knows Pax Romana to introduce the movement to the Bishops' conference in every country that is not recognized yet. However, they also acknowledged that recognition is a two-way process. National movements also need to make themselves relevant and make their engagement at a national level more visible.

#### **a. National activities and programs**

At a national level, leaders were encouraged to support the growth of the members through visits to chapters and dioceses, training (human, technical, doctrinal, and social formation), and handbook. They were advised to organize joint conferences with IMCS, open more internship

opportunities for young people, support the evangelizing mission of the Church as Lay intellectuals and professionals, and initiate monthly meetings at a local level and annual programs at a national level.

Members also encouraged the creation of a poll of reflection (Engineers, Lawyers, environmentalists, medical doctors, economists, etc.). Pax Romana needs to engage in transformative actions, through an engagement that speaks to the people and speaks on the issues that they are confronted with. These actions should come from the traditional way of praying and coming together. Members are required to have critical thinking. Pax Romana should be able to create such kind of a platform. A platform that supports political participation that is able to influence development priority.

## **12. CONCLUSION**

The consultation process enabled the regional office to get feedback from the national movement members. The process was successful. Several recommendations were provided to enable the respective leadership to take action to bring reform to the movement. One big focus is to redefine the identity of the movement in the current context and to find approaches to support quality social engagement for the members. In this regard, the movement serves as a social platform that enables members to address the issues that are facing the world.