

FONDACIO

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Fondacio Christians for the world is an international Christian community sharing a common spirituality: to live in union with Jesus Christ and to love the world. As Christians for the world, the members' faith in God, which calls each one to live life to its fullness, is at the heart of their daily lives and their commitments within society. They have the desire to proclaim the Good News, and come together to share, pray, engage in personal and spiritual development, and be at the service of others.

As people who are looking for meaning in their lives, Fondacio's members believe that encountering Christ and living the Gospel leads each one to the core of who one really is, and opens one to a journey of self-discovery. This path of discovery, which they offer to others, reaches out to each person in one's own life experiences and acknowledges and respects each one's free will and conscience.

1. History

The community was established in France in 1974, in the wake of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal and at the initiative of Jean-Michel Rousseau, a young married layman. It was originally intended to provide Christian instruction for young adults, but from 1980, with the admission of people with social responsibilities and lay persons engaged in parish activities, it decided to broaden its sphere of activity and become international in character. Following a serious internal crisis in 1991, the community was revived and took on a

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more collegiate government. In 2009, Fondacio received the Canonical status of Pontifical right from the Vatican.

Fondacio's journey in Asia began in 1981 with the birth and growth of the two communities in Malaysia and the Philippines, through the presence of French members of Fondacio who came to Asia as full-time lay missionaries. Initially, it was a period for the transmission and integration of the spirituality of Fondacio and the formation of local leaders. The 1990s was a period of integrating this spirituality in the Asian context, and the process of inculturation, or rooting in the local Filipino and Malaysian Churches, continued into the third millennium. The 1st Asian Congress in 2006 presented Fondacio with a clear challenge – to be at the service of the local churches in Asia. The message of the late Pope John Paul II “to go out into the deep” was also a call towards mission: to move from being active in the local parish to being sent in mission to other countries.

Since 2000, visits were made to Myanmar and China. In 2003, Fondacio Malaysia and Fondacio Philippines, with the support of Fondacio International Council, took a step of faith to start a mission in Myanmar and to continue regular mission trips to China.

The international community now has over 3000 members in 24 countries located in Africa, North and Latin America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East. In Asia, Fondacio has established communities in Malaysia, Myanmar and the Philippines.

Since 1974, the community has been known by other names “Christian Community of Formation” and “Foundations for a New World,” which were translated to the language of the country where she exists. In 2002, corresponding to a new way of organizing our community, one same name – “Fondacio”, which bears no meaning in any language – was chosen for all the countries. It means that it is ONE community spread in many countries. The subtitle “Christians for the world,” which defines what it is, is translated into the language of the country where Fondacio is established.

2. Spirituality

Driven by Vatican II and its openness towards the world, Fondacio is animated by the following:

A spirituality of blessing: “When I behold your heavens, the work of your fingers... what is man that you should be mindful of him, or the son of man that you should care for him?... You have given him rule over the works of your hands” (Ps 8:4-7).

A spirituality of docility to the Holy Spirit and of unification of the person: “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes down on you; then you are to be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8)

An apostolic spirituality, and of friendship with the world: “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him may not die but may have eternal life” (Jn 3:16).

A spirituality of communion: “Thus says the Lord God: I will gather you from the nations and assemble you from the countries over which you have been scattered. I will give them a new heart and put a new spirit within them” (Ez 11:17-19).

3. Mission

Fondacio engages in a spirit of communion and dialogue with the other who is different. As members of Fondacio, Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox walk a path of unity in mutual respect of their differences. Being sensitive to cultural differences, especially through its presence in countries where Christians are a minority, Fondacio also engages in a dialogue between cultures and religions. In addition, to aid further development of its missions in a spirit of mutual aid and synergy, Fondacio has established partnerships and collaborations with diverse ecclesial and civil structures – universities, dioceses and parishes, religious communities, lay movements, and other institutions, who desire to work in the same spirit.

Fondacio’s mission is to proclaim the Gospel and to set up missions at the service of humanity. More precisely, the apostolic project of Fondacio has four elements:

- To propose the Good News to men and women of today
- To contribute to the construction of a more humane society
- To call and form workers for the Kingdom
- To contribute to the growth of the Church.

Discerning the “signs of the times,” the community has privileged five groups of people to which it reaches out to: the youth, couples and families, seniors and elders, leaders in the society, and people in need or those who suffer different forms of marginalization.

Fondacio initiates and animates times of prayers and reflection; exchanges and meetings; evangelization activities including weekends, teens’ camps, and youth forums; formation and training sessions; and economic, social and educational development

programs. Each country defines its annual activity programs independently according to its needs and culture.

4. Membership and Covenant

Fondacio proposes specific ways to journey with the community. Members of Fondacio follow a proposed path of growth through a covenant. To live as “Christians for the world” means to remain in the presence of the Father daily, in all the areas that life is made of, and to be transformed, little by little, by Christ, through the action of the Holy Spirit. Thus, members are encouraged to commit to these four priorities: (1) prayer life, (2) mission and evangelization, (3) formation, and (4) community life. Every year, they evaluate their progress in the community and discern to renew, or not, their commitment for another year.

Some members, who have been committed at least seven years, may discern to commit themselves in the long-term. The existence of members with long-term commitment represents a guarantee of continuity for Fondacio. They do a public commitment in front of the community, family and friends, and the Church, represented by a local bishop. They specifically commit to (1) docility to the Holy Spirit, (2) authenticity in relationships, and (3) sobriety of life. They are married couples or otherwise (single, widow/er, etc.) who continue to hold careers, or discern to work in the missions of the community. Globally, there are more than 70 members with long-term commitment; 8 of these are Asians (all Filipinos) who made their public commitment in 2006.

Permanents, or full-time workers, answer to specific calls to commit their professional skills to serve Fondacio or work for her missions for a specified period of time. The call to sponsorship often comes with this choice.

Others participate in Fondacio’s life without feeling called to seal a covenant. These friends are the permanents’ sponsors, fundraisers, participants in gatherings, volunteers, collaborators, etc., who give their time and expertise at different levels.

5. Structure and Governance

An international congress comprising of those responsible for each country and representatives gathers every five years. They define the orientations and priorities for the future. They elect the President and his/her council to drive the community based on the directions taken in collegiality. Each country is driven by a responsible and a country

council or team. The country responsible and team work in direct link with the international council. The community works in collaboration with local ecclesial realities. She pursues the necessary civil status where it is implanted according to the laws of the country. Each country remains autonomous from each other in carrying out her different missions and activities.

6. Forming Disciples in Mission

“There can be no new humanity without new men and women.” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 18). Answering this vision of the Church, the Institute of Formation Fondacio Asia (IFFAsia) was launched in Quezon City, Philippines in 2006. Similar Institutes of Formation have also been established in Europe (France), Africa (Togo), and South America (Chile). In Asia, it was a step of faith towards the challenge to be at the service of the local Church.

IFFAsia proposes an integral and holistic approach to formation which includes human, spiritual, social and pastoral formation. Its 10-month Basic Formation program seeks to form young Christians to be initiators and actors for development and renewal in the Asian Church and society. It helps young people to be rooted in their faith in Jesus Christ and gives them existential foundations (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) from which they can build their future. On the other hand, the On-Going Formation was created recently to answer the need to sustain the laity in mission and lay missions.

Since its inception in 2006, the Institute has seen the bearing of fruits among its participants. 100% of the graduates of the Basic Formation have since gone back to their respective countries to work in various ministries in their own dioceses or continued on to help in the missions of Fondacio. 85% of them have chosen to serve full-time. Because quite a number now work in different church ministries, there has been a bigger call for IFFAsia to continue to support these young church workers and sustain them in their missions.

Graduates of the Basic Formation program have come from Cambodia, China, Japan, Laos, Myanmar, Malaysia, Vietnam, and the Philippines.

At the same time, Fondacio Myanmar also initiated in 2005 the Youth Leadership Formation Program (YLP) in Yangon. The YLP has been forming youth leaders and preparing them for mission work in the Archdiocese. Starting this year, however, the program is now run at the national level, with students coming from each of the 14 dioceses in the country. Being implemented in partnership with the National

Catholic Youth Commission, YLP has been offering the young people in the country the opportunity to become effective workers in the “vineyard”. YLP’s formation team is mostly composed of graduates of YLP and IFFAsia. There are four main modules - Human, Spiritual, Leadership and Social Formation.

7. Loving the World, Serving Humanity

Fondacio aspires to be a visible presence of God’s unconditional love and commitment for each and every person. The members work to resolve the challenges of a holistic development of people and society. They are particularly engaged in the needs and challenges faced by young people, by people living in poverty (material or spiritual), by the marginalized and suffering, and by those simply questioning the meaning of their lives. They want to help each person to be responsible of their own development, aiming for the unity of all dimensions of the person.

Globally, Fondacio carries out more than 35 development and solidarity projects, in partnership with other institutions or as projects directly managed by the community. These projects emerge from the specific need in the countries where the community exists. This covers education, health, economic, social assistance and rehabilitation. Particularly in Asia, Fondacio initiates the following social development projects, in partnership with local parishes and other private institutions:

1. The Youth Development Center (YDC) is a project of Fondacio Philippines which caters to out-of-school youth and project volunteers in Payatas, an urban poor community. It offers English Proficiency and Computer Literacy Program with values formation to provide employment, livelihood and scholarship opportunities to the youth.
2. The Health Development Program, also in Payatas, trains mothers to become volunteer paramedics and community health workers who give their services in clinics set up in the area to help develop a healthy community.
3. The Capacity enhancement project in Davao, south of Manila, Philippines is a project initiated to help build the capacity of a community, which has an extremely high risk for landslide susceptibility, to better manage community affairs, issues and problems.