

IFCM 2026 Elections

Application Form for Elections of the Board



Given names: Kennedy (Ken)
Family name: Wakia
Date of birth (Day/Month/Year): 25/08/1972

Residential address (Postal Code & City): BN25ND Brighton or 00621, Nairobi
Street and number: Peel Road, UK or Evergreen Apartment, Kandara Road, Nairobi
Country of residence: United Kingdom and Kenya. I split my time between the UK and Kenya.
Please note that according to IFCM Bylaws the attribution to the regions of the world depends only on the country of residence, not on possible nationalities of a candidate.

Region of the world:

- North America
- Latin America and Caribbean
- Sub-Saharan Africa
- Middle East and North Africa
- Northern & Western Europe and Israel
- Central-Eastern & South-Eastern Europe
- Asia (Central, East and South)
- Oceania (Australia, New Zealand, South Pacific)

Email: ken@kenwakia.com
Phone: +254722175511 or +447857124066 **Website (if applicable):** www.kenwakia.com

Spoken language(s): Luo, Kiswahili, English
Place of employment: Self-Employed
Title at your employment: Musician

For individual members - IFCM membership number: 16874

For candidates nominated by member choirs or member organizations:

My candidacy is supported by / I am nominated as candidate by:
(name of member choir or member organisation, country in which the choir/organisation is based)

IFCM membership number of the choir or organisation:

Please outline your experience/involvement in the IFCM to date:

I have been involved with IFCM activities for nearly 30 years, since joining the World Youth Choir as a singer in 1997 and later as a conductor in 2017. My choir, the Nairobi Chamber Chorus has also participated in IFCM projects for more than 15 years now, organizing concerts during the World Choir day as well as being the country contact for the recruitment new members to the World Youth Choir since its formation. I have been on the board of Africa Cantat, an IFCM project. I have also given talks on Youth Choirs organized by IFCM. For several years now, I have been involved with the Europa Cantat, another partner of IFCM.

Please write a short text to present your vision as a Board member (Max 300 words in English):

I am who I am because of IFCM! Over the years, IFCM has played a pivotal role in capacity building for up and coming choral musicians from around the world. I have been lucky to be among those who have benefited from the strategic implementation of IFCM's purpose. It is now time to give back to an organization that has

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been so generous to me by joining the board and together with other members, support its next level development. I am passionate about the development of choral music in Kenya and Africa at large. Africa is one of the richest continents culturally and my vision for IFCM is to see it expand its activities here. As a board member, I will support IFCM's objectives/purpose and to oversee their implementation on the continent. Over the years, I have seen the many projects initiated and patronised by IFCM and I am convinced that several of them would suit its expansion in Africa. This includes but not limited to hosting its signature program, the World Symposium on Choral Music on the continent. I would also like to see an increase in membership to the IFCM from Africa especially among the youth. In my interaction with choral musicians in Africa, it seems that many of them have little or no knowledge of IFCM. I would first of all like to find out why this is the case with the goal of incorporating as many of them as possible. After three years, I would like to see at least a 10 percent increment in the overall awareness of IFCM's activities by choral musicians in Africa and a similar percentage in membership enrolment to the organization. If elected, I will leverage my strong networking skills to achieve this goal.

Ken has had a rich and diverse career, blending music-making, cultural diplomacy, and education. He has had extensive leadership roles in both the arts and public sector. He was named one of the *top 100 most influential people in Africa* in the creative category for the year 2024, by the New African Magazine.

With a Bachelor of Education degree in music from Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Ken started his career teaching music at Precious Blood Girls Secondary School in Nairobi. He gained a Master of Music in choral conducting from the University of Miami, Florida, studying with Prof. Jo-Michael Scheibe as a Fulbright Scholar. He later became the Assistant Dean of Students and music lead at the Africa Nazarene University. Ken went on to make significant contributions as the Cultural and Educational Affairs Specialist at the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi between 2010 and 2022, managing a wide range of cultural diplomacy programmes.

Motivated by his membership in the World Youth Choir in the early years of his career and his time in the U. S. singing with Jubilate, Ken founded the Nairobi Chamber Chorus with a vision of enabling young Kenyans to participate in a high-quality musical forum from which they can build their careers and expand their realm of knowledge and interest in the arts. Since its inception, more than five hundred young Kenyans have gone through Nairobi Chamber Chorus and many are now leading musicians in Kenya, performing and teaching music across the country and beyond. Under his leadership, Nairobi Chamber Chorus has performed to audiences across the globe. They represented Kenya at the Queen of England's Diamond Jubilee celebrations at Windsor Castle in 2012 and at the American Choral Directors Association national conference in Kansas City in 2019. He has also led the choir on tours through Europe, Saudi Arabia, the USA, Australia, China, Hongkong, South Korea and Japan performing with the *World of Hans Zimmer – A New Dimension* and *Hans Zimmer Live* productions.

Ken has gained extensive local and international conducting credits as a guest conductor with the Nairobi Music Society, the Nairobi Orchestra, the World Youth Choir and the International Schools of Southern and Eastern Africa. He enjoys the opportunity to meet new choirs and to share his passion with them.

Ken was also the founding director of the Safaricom choir, a work-place choir for the leading telecommunications company in Kenya.

Ken is known for leading several initiatives and collaborations which bring diverse musicians together to share their cultural heritage through music. Alongside Dr. Kevin Fenton from Florida State University, Ken co-founded AVoice4Peace project which seeks to promote non-violent resolutions to conflict around the world through choral music.

As a result of his dedication to promoting Kenyan and African choral music internationally with the Nairobi Chamber Chorus, Ken was recognized as the 2019

African Image Maker by the Voice Achievers Award International. He was also enlisted as a *Nexus Global Leadership Council Member* by Nexus Arts and Culture.