

A photograph of a woman and a young child in a rural setting. The woman is crouching, wearing a brown jacket and a patterned skirt, and is focused on something in her hands. The child is sitting on a wooden stump, wearing a pink shirt and a colorful patterned skirt, looking towards the camera. In the foreground, a large metal pot sits on a small stove. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the rural environment.

A framework for
**TRANSFORMATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT**

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Transformational Development Defined

Transformational development can be defined as **“progressive, permanent, God-intended change.”** It is what God seeks for all the people He has created, and it is to this task He calls His followers. Transformational development, a concept deeply rooted in both physical and spiritual dimensions, is a holistic approach to fostering positive change in communities and individuals. This is the essence of Integral Mission. This article will explore the framework of transformational development, which operates at three levels:

1. The Macro Level
2. The Micro Level
3. The Individual Level

What many people—particularly Westerners—fail to understand is that transformational development requires divine Intervention at all three levels. You see, the Fall affected everything: micro and macro systems are deeply broken, and individuals are deeply broken. But the good news of the Gospel is, that God has not abandoned His world. On the contrary, through the power of His death and resurrection, Jesus Christ is “reconciling all things in heaven and earth.” (Colossians 1:19) To reconcile means to restore things to the way they are supposed to be, overturning the effects of the Fall at the individual, micro, and macro levels. This is the good news of the Gospel!

Reversing the comprehensive effects of the Fall requires divine Intervention. But God invites His people to participate in His reconciling mission! We are called and re-created to share the Gospel—the good news of the transforming power of Christ’s kingdom—through both restorative words and deeds. (Luke 9:1-2) And we get to participate in this “Integral Mission” wherever Christ is at work...the macro, micro, and individual levels.

As mentioned above and can be seen in the transformational development framework on page 8, this work is required at three levels. Healing of brokenness at the macro and micro levels is necessary in order to create a habitat in which people can flourish. But what many secular organizations fail to understand is that even if the micro and macro systems were made completely perfect, human beings still could not flourish. Why not? Because in addition to distorting our habitats, sin has impacted our hearts as well. As a result, transformational development includes the Holy Spirit applying the power of Christ’s death and resurrection to our hearts, making us new creatures in Christ! For believers, “the old things have passed away and everything is new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

“Reversing the comprehensive effects of the Fall requires divine Intervention. But God invites His people to participate in His reconciling mission!”





The following expands on all **three levels** of transformational development:

1-Transformational Influences at the Macro Level: The macro level of transformational development involves large-scale factors that can influence change across communities and nations.

These include:



Macro Economics: These are the broader economic policies and systems at the country level that can either facilitate or hinder community development. The growth of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of a nation or the lack thereof, can seriously impact how community development and transformation in that country occur. The macro-economic development of the region in which that country falls also has a strong influence. For instance, the Greater Mekong Sub-region of Cambodia has experienced significant growth in recent years, and this has added to the accelerated growth of that country's economy.



Macro Politics: The role of government, rule of law, and political structures are significant influences in shaping the environment in which communities operate. Justice and political stability in a region helps the nations that are part of it focus on internal development rather than focusing on war and countering external aggression.



Communication Networks: The impact of mass media and communication technologies in disseminating information and influencing public opinion is so significant, that though it is really a part of macro technology, it has been separated out as an independent influencer. Today, young people, even in the "majority world" have access to the internet through internet cafes and low-cost smart phones. They are not only aware of regional and global events but are disproportionately influenced by them.



Macro Technology: Large-scale technological advancements significantly help in shaping societal changes. Today, even in remote areas, it's encouraging to see how apps relating to transportation, delivery and payment have become commonplace. These impact the way business is done both efficiently and safely.



Global Trade: The effects of international trade and market forces on local economies and livelihoods is well known, and Dr. Bryant Myers has powerfully highlighted the impact globalization has had on a variety of aspects of development including the spread of the Gospel. (Engaging Globalization: Bryant L. Myers)

2-Transformational Circumstances at the Micro Level: Changes at the community level (the micro level), have significant transformational development impact. It is important for change to take place at the macro level, but if that change doesn't get extended to the micro level, through the agency of NPOs (Not for Profit Organizations) and others, then individuals and communities will not reap its benefits. The trickle-down effect assumed from economic development, doesn't naturally flow down to the grassroots level; it must be facilitated.

Key aspects that NPOs should focus on include:



Personal Health: The individual's ability to proactively access, influence and maintain their own health.



Micro Political Domain: The influence individuals have on local governance at the community level and influence that leadership exerts in their favor.



Personal Income (revenue): The ability of individuals to influence their own economic status through employment, entrepreneurship, or other means.



Micro Economics (expenses): How individuals manage their finances, including spending in a way which generates surplus and facilitates a habit of saving.



Community Cohesion: As communities become more transformed and more cohesive, the strength of relationships and collaboration makes the environment more conducive to greater equity in receiving the benefits from the changes noted above.



3-Transformation of Individuals: As individual hearts are transformed, human beings are called and re-created to express love in all our relationships. In this light, transformed relationships are both an outcome of the transformational process and a means to achieving further transformation in all aspects of life.

The Bible speaks of four key relationships that need healing:



Reconciliation with God: A personal spiritual connection that brings about transformation evidenced by a deeper sense of purpose and understanding.



Reconciliation with Self: Self-awareness, self-acceptance, and humble submission to the Holy Spirit leading to personal, spiritual, and holistic growth.



Reconciliation with Other People: Those who have experienced reconciliation with God and self will be able to build harmonious and supportive relationships with others, resulting in flourishing lives.



Reconciliation with the Environment: Human beings are called to care for the creation not to exploit it. Moreover, we are called to develop the creation through work that is glorifying to God and of service to humanity.

While we are called to communicate the Gospel in both words and deeds, ultimately transformation requires the reconciling work of Jesus Christ at all three levels.

In this light, truly transformational development is, at its core, a spiritual process rooted in the power of Christ's death and resurrection. And it is a process rooted in the Triune God's unfailing love...In His desire that people "should not perish but should enjoy abundant life." (2 Peter 3:9; John 10:10)



While NPOs and catalysts for change play an important role in being at the cutting edge of community transformation, it is important to recognize that God is the author and finisher of transformational development. Ultimately, He and He alone is the one who can bring about lasting and meaningful change at all three levels.

Conclusion: We recognize the framework for transformational development integrates both tangible and spiritual dimensions. It recognizes the importance of economic, political, and social factors, the role of individual and community agency, the centrality of reconciled relationships at all levels, and, most importantly, the profound impact of divine intervention. This holistic approach underscores the belief that for transformation to be truly effective and enduring, it must encompass every aspect of human experience; physical, spiritual, and relational.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Ravi I. Jayakaran's career spans over four decades, where he has made significant contributions to poverty reduction and strategic development programs. With experience in senior management roles in various sectors, including corporate, international NGOs, and development agencies, he has been involved in diverse projects across numerous countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe, and North America. Throughout his career, Dr. Jayakaran has worked on critical issues such as Participatory Development, Poverty Reduction, HIV-AIDS Programs, Human Trafficking Prevention, Corporate Social Responsibility, Capacity Building, and Integral Mission. His expertise and commitment to holistic development have earned him the position of Catalyst for Integral (Holistic) Mission for the Lausanne Movement. He is currently the President of Medical Ambassadors International.

Having lived and worked in India, Cambodia, China, and the United States, Dr. Jayakaran brings a wealth of cross-cultural understanding to his work. He has also provided technical support and expertise in over 23 countries, demonstrating his global impact and influence in the field of development. Dr. Jayakaran's dedication to his work is matched by his strong family values. He and his wife Vimla recently celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary, and they have two grown sons, both of whom share their love for the Lord. Amit David Jayakaran and Rohit Jonathan Jayakaran have their own families and reside in Maine, USA, and Dubai, UAE, respectively.

For those interested in contacting Dr. Ravi Jayakaran or learning more about his work, they can reach him at rjayakaran@lausanne.org, Ravi@med-amb.org or Ravi@Jayakaran.com. Do visit his website at www.ravijayakaran.com for additional information. His wealth of experience and passion for integral development continues to make a positive impact on communities around the world.

Thank you for your interest in Transformational Development.

DIVINE INTERVENTION

THEREFORE, IF ANYONE IS IN CHRIST,
THE NEW CREATION HAS COME THE
OLD HAS GONE, THE NEW IS HERE!
2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

TRANSFORMATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

- RECONCILED RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD
- RECONCILED RELATIONSHIP WITH SELF
- RECONCILED RELATIONSHIP WITH FELLOW MEN
- RECONCILED RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ENVIRONMENT



TRANSFORMATIONAL INFLUENCES AT THE MACRO LEVEL

- MACRO ECONOMICS
- MACRO POLITICS
- COMMUNICATION NETWORKS
- GLOBAL TRADE
- MACRO TECHNOLOGY

TRANSFORMATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES AT THE MICRO LEVEL

- ASSERTIVE INFLUENCES ON PERSONAL HEALTH
- ASSERTIVE INFLUENCES ON MICRO POLITICAL DOMAIN
- ASSERTIVE INFLUENCES ON PERSONAL INCOME
- ASSERTIVE INFLUENCES ON MICRO ECONOMICS (EXPENSES)
- COMMUNITY COHESION

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