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THE CHURCH'S ROLE IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



ABSTRACT



The role of Christian churches in fighting poverty through development activities cannot be overlooked. Churches have come of age and collaborate with different organizations to improve the well-being of communities around their vicinity through social and economic community development programs.

The purpose of this thesis project was to investigate which crucial role the church can play / plays in community building and uplifting the standard of living for the community within its vicinity. The method used in the research study was community-based qualitative research (CBQR). A case study is used to understand how the church contributes to community development. The purpose of the study was to understand the relationship the church has with its followers and community in its locality. Content analysis was used to identify key themes emerging from the interviews with vivo coding being applied in the analysis.

The results show that the church recognizes poverty as a problem that needs attention and has taken various social and economic actions to improve the well-being of the community around its vicinity. The findings manifest that the church's focus area in community development is health, education, spiritual well-being, social, family life, community empowerment and livelihood. Due to limitations of time and participant numbers, the study does not give any in-depth evaluations of the church activities and their sustainability. I therefore recommend further research of the church's role in community development and assessment of how sustainable the church development activities are. I also recommend the church to seek more collaboration with other faith-based organizations in community development activities.

Keywords: Church, Religion, community, development, poverty, social, economic

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1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis study is based on religion or church role in Africa community development with main focus on poverty in rural Kenya. Africa isn't just only the poorest continent; but globally Africa's poor are the poorest (Sakwa, 2007). The greater part of Africa's poor is profoundly religious and not only are faith communities most poor, but in many instances, they are the poorest (Belshaw et al., 2000).

Like other developing nations, Kenya faces the test of improving the lives of people living in rural areas and regardless of the existence of certain schemes and programs meant for rural development, limited success has been reported (Njogu, 2013). Over seventy five percent of Kenyans live in rural areas and depend on agribusiness for their livelihood. Poverty and food scarcity are severe in the country's arid and semiarid regions (Tenai, 2016). The World Bank (2018) also contends that most of Kenya's poor live in rural areas predominantly in the north-eastern parts of the country. This spatial dimension persists, and possibly exacerbated inequality across regions in Kenya. Access to fundamental amenities such as health care, education, clean water and sanitation, is deemed extravagance for many Kenyans (Unicef, 2014).

In 2010, Kenya instituted a new Constitution that particularly addresses longstanding historical, geographic, demographic and human rights violations that have impeded gradual development (Unicef, 2014). Since the launching of new constitution in 2010, Kenya's economy has exponentially grown to new heights. Kenya has made significant political, structural and economic reforms that have largely driven sustained economic growth, social development and political gains over the past decade. According to world Bank (2018), Kenya crucial threat to development still include poverty, inequality, climate change and the vulnerability of the economy to internal and external shocks.

According to Sakwa (2007) from independence up to the present time, poverty pose obstacles to operations of the Christian religion and this complexity arises because of what Christian religion had to provide to Kenyans in terms of social services. The role of the

church in community development is therefore an important subject that play in many minds of Kenyans today including me.

To show case God's kingdom, Christians and the church are called to convey integrity and fairness in the world and this call has broad implications for the church's operation in the world (Nkansah-Obrempong, 2018). People interacting in congregations can detect each other problems whether they are economic or spiritual in nature and development activities can materialize from the interactions of local religious organizations (Marshall & Van, 2007). Church offers impressive passionate image that recognize and tie people together even when there is a lot of resistance and this is because religion is at the center of values and beliefs that steer society (Njogu, 2013).

In the media and in education spheres, the role of religion in society is extremely debated (Van, 2103). Evangelism and social responsibility of the mission church has exceptionally been debated and the question of Christians role in society always arises (Nkansah-Obrempong, 2018). Wijzen, (2011) sees topic influence if one will think or ask whether development failed because religious beliefs were not taken into consideration. He thinks that an answer to such thinking will be complicated and inconclusive.

Belshaw et al. (2000) implies that the Christian church in Africa has remarkably grown like other religions. More than sixty five percent of Kenyans confess to the Christian religion and therefore religion role cannot be overlooked (Sakwa, 2007). In development Christian religion aspect need to be broadly considered because Africans have confidence in it and in the world Christian religion is thought to be helpful in uplifting the standard of living for the poor (Belshaw et al., 2000).

2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

2.1 Churches and development

Development is a topic that arises and is widely discussed by governments institution and even ordinary people (Alawode, 2016). Development is about people lives, communities and it is not something that can be categorized through measurements (Belshaw et al., 2000). Community development hold foot in many spheres of our history including education, economic, sociology, political, urban as well as regional planning and it is one of the most diversified practice in history (Phillips & Pittman 2014

In many circles of development, faith-based organization have good background and operate extensively in communities in provision of social services, health, education and act as community organizers (Marshall & Keough, 2004). Faith-based organizations are defined as “self-identified religious groups or institutions from a wide variety of traditions that include but are not limited to various Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, and Hindu groups” (Dionne & Chen, 2000). Faith-based organizations frequently play as sole providers of social services, they scheme out ideas and deliver services inform of developments in sectors that governments have failed to develop (Adkins et al., 2010).

Belshaw et al., (2000) argue that most African Christians were molded by missionary theologies through development activities such as education, farming and health institutions. Omenya & Anum (2014) notes that the central objective of the missionary societies was to change African religion with Christian religion; but they also point that the early missionaries did not pay attention to African culture and African way of life became a major hurdle in the missionary field.

Untold organizations engage in community development in various countries with diversified political systems to address astounding problems (Bhattacharyya, 2004). Community development is in fact a shifting system that operates professionally, and it is supported by different organizations as well as the public (Henderson & Verseg, 2010).

One of this organization is the church which hold foot in many countries and their cultures particularly in Africa. Belshaw et al., (2000) imply the church take spiritual topic sincerely and see development as more than a secular process. Church seeks to hold forth humane and spiritual values to underpin social, political, and economic development.

There are three objectives of sustainable development in society: economic development, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability (Sachs, 2015). According to Henderson & Verseg (2010), community development practice is a crucial empowerment method for the people and this empowerment occurs through community activities and community efforts taking place by the guidance of a development worker. Non-governmental organizations actions can be church or mission hospitals and dispensaries, theology schools, orphanages, refuge homes and other drives that target skills development, scholarship to universities and even community mobilization (Marshall & Van, 2007). According to De Temple (2012) development indeed has a background based from church principles and these principles promote and shape our present-day world

According to Alowode (2016) as a church, the following serious questions have been asked:

“Are we actively engaged in the difficult task of transformation that embraces the social, the economic and the spiritual?” “Are we making a lasting influence on the society?” What is the score of the church in this whole issue of spiritual and social transformation.?”

Most responses to these inquiries can be addressed solely on individual aspects related to the way one interacts with the community (Green & Goetting, 2010). Bhattacharyya, (2004) argues that community development should be based on different type of politics, politics that are just, fair, nonauthoritative and based on people’s wishes.

Community development include resources provision to the marginalized and it’s about providing assistance that is sustainable. Providers of such resources can range from government institutions, non-governmental organizations, charity organizations, philanthropic individuals, faith-based organizations and even businesses (West et al., 2014). Just like religion which operate ultimately, development is all about enacting quality actions by mobilizing community to be self-reliant (De Temple, 2012). The church capacity

to impact effectively to poor people is based on its followers and its stand in many countries through equitable evangelism (Belshaw, 2000). According to De Temple (2012) development can be anything that constructively defy institutions powers through actions, practices and ideas that are just and righteous. But, from a theology studies perspective it is captivating to highlight that there is a lot of argumentation about the concept of religion, and whether or not it contributes to development (Wijsen, 2011).

2.1.2 Churches and Economic development

Economic development is a far-reaching strategy that combine different types of actions that facilitate, sustain and expand an area economy and in fact economic development is a vital element of community development projects for any society or government (Phillips & Pitt, 2012). This age of neoliberal governance has, however, unfolded opportunities for revivification of faith-based activities within the public circle – activities that fills the gap left by the receding governments (Cloke et al., 2013). Marshall & Keough (2004) observes that the main principle of development solutions lies with worldwide community and therefore each system and people need to handle distortions that interfere with a more righteous and fair world.

Economic growth is an essential measure in poverty alleviation (Sakwa, 2007). Complication can arise if one will argue that economic process may be essential for achieving community developments and bettering community differences, however it is not an adequate condition (Munck, 2011). This is because most projects are based on values of productivity, skillful use of economic resources and in some cases relationship or negotiations between sponsors and beneficiaries (Belshaw et al. 2000).

According to Iheduru, (2001) economic consolidation has always been thought to be an essential and assured means of development strategy in African countries. This implies that although economic expansion is not enough condition to eradicate poverty, it is vital and important element for alleviating poverty (Sakwa, 2007). Henderson & Verseg (2010) raises this question, “how do the economic criteria that are central to social enterprises and other types of community economic development relate to community development?” Maybe a more appropriate question would be “if development projects would

perform better if they would take religions and religious leaders into account” (Wijsen, 2011).

The community acknowledges that the church role is not solely to preach and spread evangelism, but also to be included in progressive development (Alowode, 2016). De-Temple (2012) notes that development and faith are discourses that succeed physical, and historical boundaries. Diversification of earnings to help the poor is for example an important policy to ensure the poor benefit constructively from economic growth (Sakwa, 2007). Phillips & Pitt (2014) argues that putting together the financing for an economic development project entails calling the appropriate stakeholders and pinpointing assets they possess.

Community development is widely, and with no doubt influenced by economic influence (Henderson & Verseg, 2010). How religion influence economic development depends on different aspects that varies from place to place (Clarke, 2013). On a religion perspective economic development depends on the way people understand and work together to improve their communities.

2.2 Churches and poverty

Poverty is a relevant issue globally and especially in Africa where it is well known to be on the rise (Sakwa, 2007). Faith-based organizations and people inspired by religious faith and are worried for people living in poverty is undistinguishable act that is the same as provision of spiritual nourishment (Clarke, 2013). In history poverty has always been reflected by theologians and religion practitioners through activities such as education, health provision, community support, emergency aids and conflict resolutions (Marshall & Keough, 2004).

Poverty can mean lack of fundamental necessities and services such as food, clothing, housing, healthcare, unemployment and education (Duse et al., 2008). Poverty can be defined as a “state of being in shortage of basic elements required for a dignified living and this could be economic, material, moral, intellectual or spiritual, among others” (Ayiemba, et al., 2015). According to Wisor (2016) there are at least five competing

conceptions of poverty each of which has a different definition, each of which picks out individuals as poor.

- “Monetary conceptions define the poor as those who don’t have enough resources to reach some minimal standard of living.”
- “A second conception of poverty defines the poor as those individuals who are unable to meet their basic needs.”
- “A third conception of poverty defines people who lack basic capabilities as poor.”
- “Fourth conception of poverty defines people as poor who are socially excluded from normal functioning in society.”
- “The fifth conception of poverty defines a person as poor if the person is not able to secure his basic economic and social rights.”

Njogu (2013) highlights that communities in rural areas are challenged by poverty, food deprivation, lack of employment opportunities and substandard infrastructure. World Bank (2018) implies that scaling up and geographically targeting of anti-poverty through social protection programs can be of importance to help deprived families and lower geographical inequality. This implies that to eradicate poverty, programs need to be emerged and unified to make them more effective in poverty alleviation (Sakwa, 2007).

Organizations like World Bank engage in researches that target the poor and from those research’s there is acknowledgement that the poor feel vulnerable and unrepresented; the poor therefore lookup, rely and trust only their own institutions like the church (Belshaw et al., 2000). However, Marshall & Van (2007) emphasize that, many projects designated to reduce poverty fail to reach the most disadvantaged people and these people are so excluded that they seem irrelevant to the rest of the society.

The church particularly in Africa is always challenged when poverty and development are mentioned. Tenai (2016) argues that the existence of poverty in Africa brings and raises a question of whether the church acknowledgement and its counter measures to combat poverty are effective. Marshall & Van (2007) implies that projects aiming to fight extreme poverty might be evaluated based on a very simple question: “Has this project

allowed those who endure it to advance toward greater freedom, pride and responsibility rather than remaining in a cycle of deprivation and dependence?”

Belshaw et al., (2000) stress that the Church should broaden and share research information with governments and institutions like World Bank of the voices of the poor based on the Church understanding of poverty that's include religious, family, ethical and cultural aspects. Fighting poverty demands care and respect for fellow human beings even though the whole dimension of fighting poverty has its own practical aspects (Marshall & Keough, 2004). The Bible governs how Christian faith conduct itself irrespective of affiliation and therefore the church has a responsibility based on the bible to be included in poverty alleviation (Sakwa, 2007). People who are experiencing extreme poverty need to be reached and be treated as equals with considerations of human rights they have been denied (Marshall & Van, 2007).

2.3 Religion View on culture

African people are deeply religious with religious insight shaping much of African culture (Fonlon, 2010). African traditional faiths have no particular founders, nor are they written in any holy books and in fact they have no theology connection (Omenya & Anum, 2014). African traditional faith is culturally, socially and politically pure African in which they exist and pass on and it is one of the most ancient form of religious exhibition in the African continent (Omenya & Anum, 2014).

There is misinformation and misunderstanding between religion and culture; and indeed, if religion and culture are correctly understood they walk hand in hand and can be used to enforce community development and community mobilization (Murphy, 2012). Cultural customs develop slowly with time and form a compounding relationship both with religion and those involved in it (Marshall & Van 2007). Fonlon (2010) points out that religion enforces rights and wrongs through believes.

African history has been shaped through time by factors like colonialism, states instabilities, mistrust and suspicion, hardship, corruption and policies from foreign countries that

do not have African interests in mind (Iheduru, 2001). To transform African socially, knowledge of African culture is therefore a necessity (Njogu, 2013).

Religion can describe people way of life in a society and if one can define culture as a way of life then religion in this case play a vital role in the society (Ott, 2007). Sakwa (2007) asks this question; “why is culture a necessity when tackling societal issues?” Njogu (2013) observes that, there is a clear indication that religion and culture relentlessly impact the lives of people and shape them socially, politically and economically.

By safeguarding societies cultures, the church can be able to reach to the people evangelically and significantly (Berchie et al., 2016). In many communities, religion act and val- idly shapes people’s beliefs and ideas concerning how they should carry on with their lives (Marshall & Van 2007). Religion champion, support and strengthen certain beliefs in society culture and thereby helps to determine identification (Njogu, 2013). Thus, the importance of religion as a cultural component does not need debating (Fonlon, 2010).

2.4 Churches collaboration with other organization

International banks and international organizations have in recent years been seeking col- laboration with other developments organizations like religious institutions to broaden their role in fight against poverty. In actual fact the church work extensively with other organization like world bank in bringing forth development opportunities to marginalized communities. World Bank and the churches have respectively acknowledged their posi- tion and responsibilities in fight against poverty (Belshaw et al. 2000). Apart from World Bank, other organizations are stepping up to gain an understanding of poverty and while doing so they are also seek collaboration with religious organizations (Marshall & Keough, 2004).

Many religions have been involved in development endeavors, but realization of the re- lationship between religion and development has come out from more global unforeseen aspects (Harper, 2000). Religion and development organizations in different localities have constantly been engaged in activities, discussion concerning poverty and social

equity (Marshall & Keough, 2004). The church is called to engage, assist and support people who are excluded and socially disadvantaged (Berchie et al. 2016).

Global religions form molded societies that assist communities in hardship by strengthening them in their joint efforts, create relationship, coordination, and mutual assistance (Harper, 2000). Poor people increasing difficulties shows that they need appropriate partnership with other organizations to come out of poverty (Belshaw et al. 2000). Strong partnership forged through community development activities can usher new explicable approaches that reinforce trust, enhance public engagement, promote leadership, promote activities and actions that are more socially and politically tolerable (Phillips & Pitt, 2012). Economic development is more successful when public and private sectors collaborate (Phillips & Pitt, 2012). Although Murphy (2012) is quick to note that a “partnership with an agency, however, should not be confused with a partnership with a community.”

Charities and other non-profit organizations play unique social goals getting in touch with marginalized communities and usually assist them with education and skills needed in employment (Johanson & Adams, 2004). Partnership between institutions and organizations engaged in community development is proving to be productive and symbolically in many dimensions (Phillips & Pitt, 2012). As a result, religion has long played an important character in supporting the well-being of socially disadvantaged communities (Clarke, 2013). Kenya for instance has set a vision to eradicate poverty by year 2030. I view this as possibility if faith-based organizations will play their part in development that steer community towards self-sustainability.

2.5 Church and Human rights

In this section I will lightly focus on church involvement in human rights advocacy. This section does not provide a deeper analysis or the extent of church involvement in human rights.

Human rights theme is not a new topic. Human rights and need to have them, have been there for centuries. There are different perspectives from exactly the origin of human rights. Religions, and societies worldwide have distinctive origins inform of scripts and

beliefs that speak of human dignity and human rights (Van, 2013). The essence and extent of each religion beliefs shape and highlight the dimensions of origin of human reactions (Lerner, 2006). Human rights can be categorized as natural rights which lay down the background of religion beliefs and present day Catholic Christian theology state that human rights are inherent in natural law (Ghanea-Hercock et al., 2007).

Ancient people had conscience of acting accordingly toward other human beings. Human beings are different, and that difference has been there since the beginning of time. There are those of us who believe in religion and creation of man and there those who believe in evolution and that humans evolved from something. But all in all, we fall under the same umbrella of humanism irrespective of color, language, culture, place of origin etc. Human rights have been practiced for a very long time, from the times Babylonians, Persian era, Buddhism in India and many more. All these happened in B. Cs (Before Christ) times and had almost similar agenda; call of tolerance and establishment of rule of law. The concept of human rights can be found in prehistoric civilization in many cultures (Freeman, 2017). Not long ago two aspects about the past of human rights existed. One view was that before United Nations in 1945, there was little known about human rights while the other view was that human rights are much older (Freeman, 2017). Human rights should be seen as unavoidable progress that has been developing through time (Ghanea-Hercock et al., 2007).

Malkavaara (2017) implies that:

“Human rights had already sprung up in the Old Testament in Judaism, but for the first time they were formulated during the faith-critical Enlightenment period. Also, from the area of non-Western cultural circles, ideas of human values and their rights are known.”

Historically human rights together with reactions towards them have been known to all ancient religions and cultural based societies (Van, 2013). Freeman (2017) remarks that religion can brace human rights, but if religion opposes human rights that instantly pose a problem that is strong and dominating. A church that follow the word of Jesus and devotion to the marginalized by reconciling the work of Christ should also vigorously be committed to community and political imposition of human rights (Gräb & Charbonnier, 2015).

3 PURPOSE, AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTION

3.1 Mai-Mahiu town: the context of the research



Figure 1.0 portrays Mai-Mahiu town

Mai-Mahiu town is located in the escarpment of the Great Rift valley around 50km from capital city Nairobi. Mai-mahiu derives its name from kikuyu native language which means “Hot Water”. In the beginning of the town formation, Mai-Mahiu was a small village with few families mine included. The village center, was located in the junction diverging two main roads, one heading to Narok and the other one towards Naivasha town. The surrounding natural environment in Mai-Mahiu was something to be reckoned with. The sceneries were beautiful, and the forests were dense with indigenous trees. Wild Animals were everywhere lions, zebras, giraffes, gazelles, buffaloes, snakes etc. There was a lot of economic development opportunities at that time through tourism.

During year 1992-94 a tribal war broke out between two communities in Narok which lies in south-west of Kenya. People died, and some of the affected communities got internally displaced. Some of the displaced people came and settled in Mai-Mahiu. In year

2007-2008 Mai-Mahiu saw another influx of internally displaced people settling in this economically strained town. The population exponentially grew in a way no one anticipated. Demand for land and space to build houses to accommodate the population influx was high. A town started forming shape. Shops came up, and economically everything changed. Right now, Mai-Mahiu is not a village anymore but a big and thriving town.

Today Mai-Mahiu town act as a stopover for transit motor vehicles. The town visible source of income is farming, small businesses, building sand and stones mining. Sand and stones are mined near mount Longonot and Margaret hill which are quite near the town. Majority of the youths works in these mines and it's their main source of livelihood.

I feel sad because it's not the same place that I grew to love as a kid. The serene sceneries aren't any more like they used to be. The hills are barren, and few indigenous trees can be seen. The environmental catastrophe that people created has changed everything. Food security is the most threatening of all. The land which was used to cultivate food is scarce. The dryness is persistent throughout the year and the rains are unpredictable.

The government was not fast enough to develop infrastructure with the growing population. Water system, sewage system and infrastructure like garbage collection were never put in place. For many years this town had to suffer with dirt, spread of diseases and hunger. Today the government is putting this infrastructure in place but, in a very slow space. A lot still has to be done to improve the well-being of the population. Rights to basic needs like food, health, water and education haven't been completely met.

I was born in Mai-Mahiu and in the beginning there was no Anglican church. We used to go to church at least once a month in Naivasha town or in Limuru town. My parents mostly my mother pioneered for the building of an Anglican church in Mai-Mahiu. They teamed up with some other Anglican's church followers to build the first Anglican church in Mai-Mahiu. To build the church they had to do a lot of fundraisings. The first Anglican church in Mai-Mahiu was a semi-structured building made up of old iron sheets and old timber donated by well-wishers. Almost every month there was a function in the church to raise more funds to build a better church.

The building of a big, more accommodating Anglican church in Mai-Mahiu took many years and persistence of devoted Christians like my mother. Since my childhood I have grown having these pre-conceived ideas that in Kenya, people donate to the church more and the church give very little back to the same people. Today majority of Mai-Mahiu residents are Christians and there are also other religion dominations in the town.

3.2 Purpose of the study

I know residents of Mai-Mahiu are suffering silently and waiting for things to happen positively. The idea “positive” might feel to many farfetched.

In any type of research, objectives should be conveyed in a manner that the language used is clear, complete and precisely indicates the purpose of the study (Kumar, 2014). The purpose of this thesis project therefore, is to investigate what role can religion / church play to alleviate people from poverty around its vicinity. To what scope does Anglican church in Mai-Mahiu contribute to community development.? Can the church play a role model in rural community development? The study aims to understand the relationship the church plays between its followers and to what magnitude has Anglican church in Mai-Mahiu played in provision of developments to its followers and community as whole.

3.3 Research question

Qualitative project aims to disclose by exposing new understanding by narrating different ideas and viewpoints to answer a problem rather than testing existing theories (Johnson, 2017).

My research question is based on my preconceived stances that poor people donate more to the church and get very little in terms of development from the same church. Cooney (2015) argues on the point of donation that the Bible urge people to donate in order to reach heaven and therefore some church members do not donate to make the world a better place but vice versa. Kumar (2014) assert that, “qualitative research attempt to

sustain flexibility, openness and freedom to include any new ideas or exclude any aspect that initially included but later considered not to be relevant”. The research question in this study is therefore open for debate as long as there is freedom that seek openness and fairness.

The study therefore seeks to answer the following question:

- I. Which role can the church play / has played in community building and uplifting the standard of living for its followers or community within its vicinity?

4 METHODOLOGY

For this Thesis, community-based qualitative research (CBQR) method was used. My choice for using this method was because the method allowed me to assert myself as part of the community in the study case. The method provided a good learning process. I was able to apply theoretical knowledge learned in class into a real-life situation. The method enabled me to constructively connect myself with the subjects involved in the study. Kumar (2014) also argues that any study method chosen should be based on resources availability and expertise of the researcher. Multiple forms of data collection are applied in the study. In the background of the study, secondary data collection is used while in the case study a primary data collection is applied. According to Johnson (2017) the use of different forms of data collection is important as it supply the researcher with more detailed information and assist in development of themes.

Through time studies have not always taken society involved in the study in a participatory approach (Hacker, 2013). Most traditional researches on community development have always sidelined the subjects and the researchers have always put an assumption that they know better what the community need. Even after the research is over the community don't get credits from the results but rather the researchers use the findings for their own gains. The use of CBQR study method was helpful as it advocates the importance of the community voicing their views on the research itself. CBQR was advantageous in this study, because the aspects of the research were changed and an approach that made the community accept the research as their own was applied. Collaboration with the research community partner played a huge role. CBQR method is important in this study as it gave guidelines on how to build a better relationship with the community partner. The participants viewpoints and reflections are highly valued in the whole study.

4.2 Data collection

The research study was carried with the permission of Anglican Church of Kenya Mai-Mahiu. Method of data collection need to consider, the social and economic aspects of a population (Kumar, 2014). A case study was carried out in order to have a comprehensive understanding on which crucial role can the church play / plays in community building and uplifting the standard of living for its followers or community within its vicinity.

To establish key subjects and get answer for the study research question, a list of semi-structured interviews, were carried out (refer to appendix 2). According to Johnson (2017) interviews are primary means of acquiring information in many qualitative research's and they are particularly useful in community-based qualitative research (CBQR). Nearly all interviews in community-based research studies occur as planned meeting with semi-structured interviews being applied as guidance (Johnson, 2017). The goal of the interviews was to identify and obtain participants views about the role the church plays to improve their well-being through social-economic developments.

Data was also collected from the church and its partners websites. As Johnson (2017) states that social media, internet, digital sources have become vital sources of information within CBQR studies. According to her, pictures and writings can be useful in thematic buildout and hypothesis associated with a topic being studied

The interviews were conducted using telephone and were in three phases. The grouping was homogeneous. In homogeneous groups, "participants are grouped because of a common characteristic, such as age, gender, professional role, or membership in an organization, and help researchers tap into group norms and practices" (Johnson, 2017). The participants were therefore divided into three groups with different age sets and professional role.

Phase one: the church reverend was interviewed. According to Johnson (2017) community leaders can give vital information like community history and background to form the basis of the study. The reverend was interviewed alone in order to attain first-hand information on the church mandate and its position on community development.

The second phase was a group interview of three participants. Participants from this group were from ages of 50 years and above (two males and one female). Some of the participants in this group were from the time the church was established. Purpose of setting this group was to have a wider view on what role has the church played in people's life since its establishment. I wanted to gain their perception of what they think has been done well and has the church activities been of mutual benefits both spiritual well-being and social-economic developments.

The third phase was also a group interview of three participants from the ages of 18 – 40 (Two females and one male). The purpose of having this group was to understand the young generation views regarding the church development activities.

Before carrying out the interviews, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study and their ethical essences. The participants were also asked permission to record the interview conversation and was agreed that their identities will be kept anonymous.

The duration of all interviews was one hour per interview. Interviews with adults usually last between 45 and 90 minutes long (Johnson, 2017). Before the interviews I made sure that the participants understood the purpose of the interviews and that their insight on the subject is of high value both to me and the participants themselves.

Johnson (2017) contends that the language of the interview should be a language of fluency for the person conducting the interview and the people being interviewed. The interviews were conducted using the participants mother tongue language Kikuyu. Only the reverend was interviewed in English language upon his request. Pictures can be beneficial as they give comprehension overview within CBQR studies e.g. they can show or depict activities community (Johnson, 2017). After the interviews one of the participants sent me some photos portraying some of the church activities.

4.3 Ethical considerations

The code of ethics that guide all professionals have made progress through time (Kumar, 2014). The code of ethics is not only about protecting participants of research from harm, but it is also about methods and ideas used in the research (Blaxter et al. 2010).

There are untold researches which have been carried out in Africa and in other developing countries without the participants or society awareness. These types of researches violate the fundamentals of ethical conduct in research. Where people are involved in a research process, their consent must be sought, and the standard of conduct must meet the Belmont report (Hacker, 2013). Belmont Report which was issued in 1978 calls for respect for persons, beneficence and justice.

Differences in culture and religion must be taken into account when talking and relating to certain issues in a community for example issues that relates to gender (Besette, 2004). To assess informed consent at the community level, I sought to do a case study with community that I know their values, culture and way of life. Hacker (2013) contend that researchers need to understand the principles and beliefs of community at large, although she is quick to point out that there are challenges with this because community are not homogeneous and opinions from subgroups might differ substantially. Participants in social science are those people or society providing the information needed to understand certain incidents, events or a happening (Kumar, 2014). Before conducting my interviews, I discussed with the participants the reasons for doing the research and that I had permission from the church reverend to conduct the research. Participating in research is not only voluntary, but often also without compensation (Seale et al., 2004). I informed the participants that their participation is voluntary, and the study sole purpose is academic.

I sought verbally from the participants their consent to use the information they provide and permission to record their conversation. Kumar (2014) implies that informed consent includes making sure that the participants are satisfied by informing them the purpose and aim of the research and also how such information will affect them. I discussed with the participants importance of doing the research and sought their opinion relating to the study. I informed and agreed verbally with the participants that their identity will stay

anonymous. Blaxter et al., (2010) Implies that informed consent is confidential and protecting the participants should be done using proper research ethics that make sure participants are aware of the research purpose. The relevance of and usefulness of the research must be considered before embarking on information collection (Kumar, 2014). I discussed with the participants the title.

4.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis is about “moving from chaos to order, and from order to chaos” (Blaxter et al., 2010). Content analysis was used to identify key themes emerging from the interviews. Kumar (2014) implies that content analysis means “analyzing the contents of interviews or observational field notes in order to identify main themes that emerge for the responses given by your respondents or the observation notes made by you.” According to Johnson (2017) the purpose of analysis and coding is to build themes and opinions associated with phenomenon under research.

The interviews were conducted in Kikuyu language and therefore I had to go through my recordings many times and from that transcribe them to English. Johnson (2017) assert that “analysis of qualitative data is recursive and iterative in that it involves a back and forth, cyclical examination of data.” In this case, coding was the most effective way of dismantling the enormous content.

Vivo coding was selected for the analysis. Vivo coding entails the application of participants terms and language as codes to illustrate key information, and this is vital in CBQR because it concentrate building and outlining community awareness and knowledge (Johnson, 2017). Codes were first established by transcribing through the interviews recordings data and pinpointing interesting words. By doing so, I was able to come up with words which were set as codes. After getting the codes, I analyzed emerging church activities and assigned them some emerging themes. I fused the emerging themes together which cleared way forward to determine the main themes. The main themes were integrated, and the results was that the church play a role in social and economic sectors in the community within its vicinity. Refer to appendix 1. The themes are comprehensively elaborated in the results section.

5 RESULTS

5.2 Case study: Anglican Church of Kenya in Mai-mahiu



The Figures 2.0 portrays Anglican Church in Mai-Mahiu

Anglican Church of Kenya Mai-Mahiu division was established over 25 years ago. The church was established by five families. The families through the help of Anglican

Church of Kenya Provincial Board of Mission were able to form a congregation and get recognition as part of Anglican Church. According to one of the participants in the interviews, the first preaching of evangelism by a A.C.K reverend in Mai-Mahiu was done under a big acacia tree. The sermons continued for some time under the tree until well-wishers came to their rescue and donated some building materials. The first Mai-Mahiu Anglican church was semi-structured building made up of old iron sheets and old timber. The land where the church is built was donated also by a devoted Anglican church follower from Kiambu town in central Kenya. The building of a big, more accommodating Anglican church in Mai-Mahiu took many years and persistence of devoted Christians and well-wishers.

A.C.K Mai-Mahiu is part of Diocese of Mt. Kenya South. The church operates under the Anglican Church of Kenya vision which is A growing, Caring Anglican Church boldly proclaiming Christ. Core values are faith in Christ, Love, Integrity, Honoring God, Professionalism, Humility and Collaboration and partnership (A.C.K, 2009).

The current reverend has been in charge of the church mission for over year now. According to him he has a huge role to play in ensuring the church mandates and visions on community development are well coordinated. According to the church reverend, there are today over 200 registered members in Anglican Church Mai-Mahiu. There are also over 100 children attending church services meant for young children. The church developments projects and activities have hundreds of followers who benefit directly or indirectly.

The data analysis shows that Anglican church in Mai-Mahiu has prioritized its efforts in developing the community both socially and economically. These priorities have been placed on various issues that have been identified by the community as most pressing matters of concern. These issues are shown as themes in the figure below.

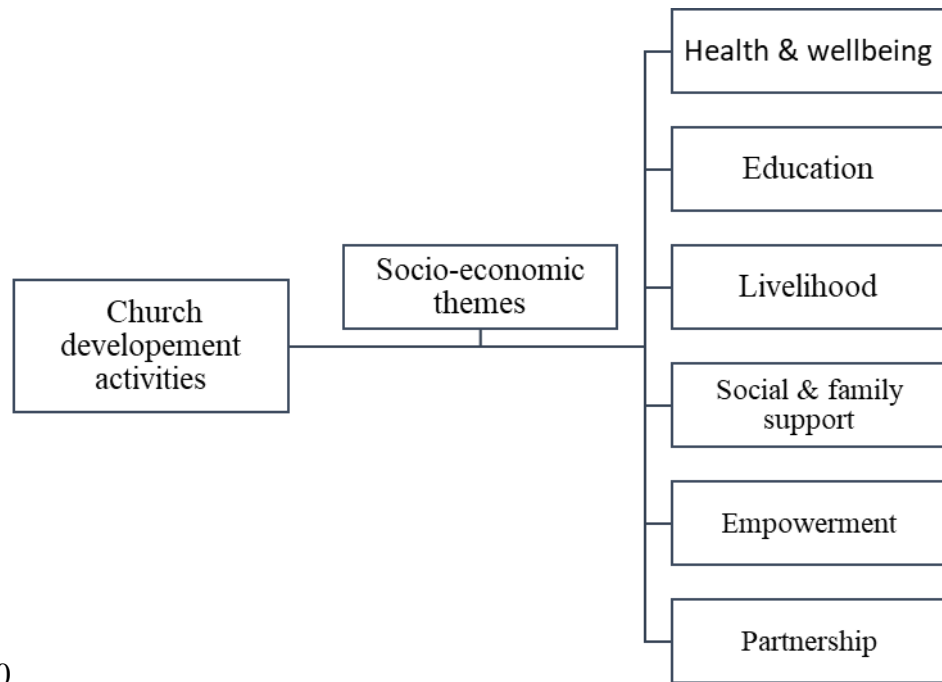


figure 3.0

5.3 Presentation of the themes

The themes in this section are presented as the study case findings. “The main purpose of using data display is to make the findings easy and clear to understand and provide extensive and comprehensive information in a succinct and effective way” (Kumar, 2014). The presentations of the main themes will be descriptive and narrative. I use descriptive method to answer my research objectives. Some organizations that came up in the study case will not be mentioned by name because their consent was not sought. Kumar (2014) contends that if research is predominant descriptive the central goals need to evidently represent the central focus of the research even far as disclosing the study organization partner location “unless these are to be kept confidential.”

When elaborating sequences and building key themes it is vital that researchers pursue distinct categories of evidence across phenomenon’s and even from participants (Johnson, 2017). The themes will therefore be represented also using some of the participants own words. The main aim is to illustrate the “variation in a phenomenon, situation, event or episode without making an attempt to quantify it” (Kumar, 2014).

5.3.1 Church position in the community

The Anglican church in Mai-Mahiu has taken a strategic position to support community development activities in the local area context. Almost every participant paid attention for the need to fight poverty by transforming the community through development. According to the reverend the development activities undertaken by the church are not meant only for the church members but are focused on the whole community. The reverend stated that:

“It will be wrong for the church to engage in preaching evangelism while the community members are languishing in poverty. The church is the community and there is no church if the community is suffering. Development is the key to manifest true word of God”

To achieve development objectives, the reverend reported that the church has been collaborating with other churches and non-governmental organizations to uplift people of Mai-Mahiu town from poverty. According to him, Anglican church in Mai-Mahiu has partnered with churches like African inland church (A.I.C) and Catholic church to help the orphans as well as create awareness on HIV/ AIDs and support those suffering from this deadly disease. The reverend reported that to improve the well-being of the community most vulnerable, the church has partnered with two other non-governmental organizations. These organizations have been extensively working with the community to improve lives and fight poverty. The organizations have assisted financially in housing projects, education on entrepreneurship, HIV/AIDs awareness, mentoring and spiritual development.

5.3.2 Church focus on Education, livelihood and Economy

The Anglican church in Mai-Mahiu seeks to eradicate poverty and empower its community members through education and ventures that support entrepreneurship. According to the reverend education can help empower the community with the necessary knowledge and skills to adapt to the global changes. He pointed out that, the church cannot be able to eradicate poverty among its community members by just preaching

evangelism. The church need to come up with smart educational ideas that benefit the whole community.

The participants for instance pointed out the need of education and job training provision for the youths. Participants from the ages of 50 years and above seemed to acknowledge and insist on the importance of education particularly for the youths.

“This town is full of idle youths who do nothing all day. Some work in the mines, but the mines are not enough for everyone. We need to come up with strategies, to help this young generation. They are like a ticking time bomb”.

The church needs to safeguard the lives of the young generation who are the people of tomorrow. To secure their future, the church has sort education as an area of interest where members of the community can be empowered. The reverend reported that education is a good mechanism of promoting economic growth.

One practical and visible development activity is the church library. According to one of the participants in the interviews, the library was started as an effort to promote literacy in the community. The library is moderately equipped and its managed by the church. The library is opened for everyone in the community to ensure inclusivity.

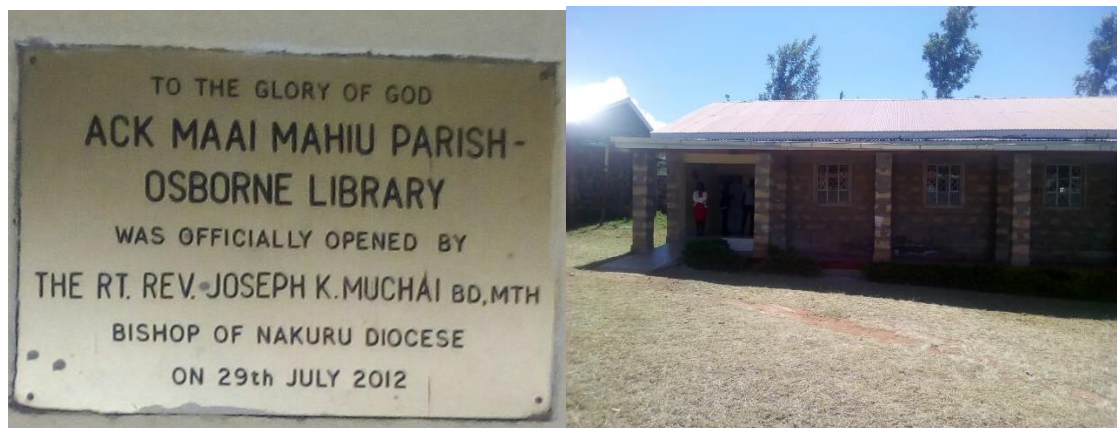


Figure 4.0 represent the church library

“Everyone is welcome to use the library facility and to make the library more accessible, no registration is required.”

The library is very popular among the students. One of the participant said during the interview:

“I don’t know what I will do without the church library. My grandchildren use it almost daily during the school holidays. This way, I always have peace in my mind because I know my grandchildren are not engaging in bad behaviors like taking drugs. I always know where to find them if they are not anywhere to be seen during day times.”

The library is open from Monday – Saturdays and from 8.00 am – 16.00 pm. The provision of an accessible and moderately equipped library for the community is valued as one of the most important contribution of church to the community. The participants agreed to the vital role the library has played in the community.

“Not only does the library serve as an education facility, it also serves as place where young and old gather to socialize. The library is an empowering engine for the community as it gives the community an opportunity to learn from one another, thereby gaining knowledge and skills. The library has created a good reputation within the community that even other organizations have been contributing for its expansion and maintenance.”

The church also promotes education by helping the orphan’s relatives in school fees payments.

“There are many orphans in this community whose parents have died from HIV. These orphans are left under the care of their grandparents or relatives who are financially strained. Secondary schools and colleges are not free here. As a church member I feel it’s my responsibility to help these children get proper education.”

The church organizes fundraising projects and the funds raised are used to pay for the orphan’s school-fees. One participants reported on the matter.

“You see, when we as church members notice that one of us is struggling to pay school fees for her/his children, we take the matter in our hand. First, we inform the church committee, who then organize a fundraising project and through that the school fees are paid. Everyone contributes to these projects. Am proud when I see these children going to school.”

To empower community members economically the church runs a micro-finance project within the church facilities. The objective of the micro-finance project is to encourage entrepreneurship and thereby creating small businesses into the community that boost employment. The project assist community members who cannot get loans from conventional banks. Anybody within the community can come and get a small loan e.g. to start a business, pay school fees, pay medical bills, farming etc.

To get a loan one need to register with the micro-finance and save part of his/her income for six months. According to the reverend, those who do not fulfill the criteria's and need a loan are directly assisted by the church. One participant reported that the micro-finance is a God sent project. Community members are now able to start up small business as well as farming ventures like poultry and rabbit farming.

“People here are so poor. Many people around here don't own anything, they have no land or anything to show as collateral damage if they go to the big banks, like those in Nairobi, but lucky us we have the micro-finance and people are able to make a living through small loans. We get loans just like that and nobody is coming after your house if you are not able to pay back the monthly installments on time. Beside the micro-finance loan interest is so low that everyone can afford.”

The reverend reported that the micro-finance project has opened new frontiers that even people from abroad, Tanzania and Ghana are coming to learn how micro-finance operates. The micro-finance project works with other organizations to empower the community to have mean-full transformation. The reverend said that one of the church partner train community members on business management, microfinancing, leadership as well as entrepreneurship startup.

To combat food security the church with its partners organizes seminars that promote small scale farming. One participant said that the church distributes tree seedlings to the community.

5.3.3 Church focus on Health, well-being, social & family life

The reverend explained that the church is seeking all ways to promote health, well-being, social and family life by creating opportunities and instilling moral values through material and information distribution. The church targets people in the community that face indirect discrimination on the ground of their health status and economic capabilities.

The church for instance is involved in providing education for people living with HIV/AIDs to promote their health and well-being. The church holds seminars where these affected group are counseled to help them cope better in life with the negative effect of knowing that they are HIV positive. There are also seminars been organized within the church facility to create awareness on the dangers of HIV/AIDs. These seminars have objective to reduce discrimination that people with HIV/AIDs suffer and encounter in their daily lives. According to the reverend the church has realized that majority of HIV positive are poor and cannot afford antiretroviral drugs. The church has therefore filled the gap by assisting these people get the much-needed drugs. The church distributes food and clothes to these vulnerable community members. One of the participants commented about food distribution.

“The church is not just a building, the church is you and me, her or him. Can we really call ourselves Christians if one of our community members is sleeping hungry or attending church service with worn out clothes? To me that would be disgrace and shameful.”

The church members and well-wishers come together every year and donate clothes and household goods that are then distributed to the most vulnerable community members. Members of the community like elderly, orphans and disabled are first priority.

The church has different types of men, youth and women associations. These associations are operated by the members of the church. Their sole purpose is to assist the church members during difficulty times e.g. death, ailments and old age. All the participants talked and commented on the importance of these associations.

“We have been assisting one another during difficulty times. We live in a place that no one can survive alone. We pay visits to those church members who are not feeling well, the old ones who are not able to come to church anymore and those whose loved ones have died. We do a lot of fundraising and assist them financially as well as emotionally. Like my brother here, referring to one of the participants. He was very sick sometimes back and we were all there for him. We prayed for him, supported him in paying his medical bills and now I find joy to see him smiling.”

The most notable of the associations was the women association. This is because apart from giving assistance, the association also organizes seminars that are solely meant for women and girls. In these seminars women and girls discuss their role in the community. Most importantly they discuss their rights as women and inequality issues that they have to grapple in their daily lives. The association also has an objective of breaking the cycle where women positions and contribution in the society is seen as weak.

The church has been engaged in Housing projects. According to the reverend the church has sort partnership with other organizations to help build better houses for the poor members of the community. The church has extensively assisted in building better houses that are more accommodating. According to the reverend the church target group has been for the orphans' relatives and widows. The church and its partners provide financial support while the community provides labor. The church aim is to see that the orphan's grow in a normal child life as possible. This according to the reverend, encourages ownership and responsibility. One of the young participants noted that the housing project is not in large scale, but some vulnerable people like widows have benefited from it.

“Families have been joined together and those broken psychologically have found true love in the church”.

In Mai-Mahiu town, water shortage is a prevalent obstacle that majority of the population faces. To tackle this problem the church with its partners have come up with rainy water collection project. In this project poor people are distributed with plastic water tanks which can hold over 1000 liters of rainy water. Community members are educated on how to collect rainy water, how to safely store it and how to treat it for safe consumption.

“After my widow neighbor got this tank, I have not seen her running around in search of water. She told me that, she now has time to work and take care of her two young children.”

Some of the beneficiaries have been using the collected water to grow vegetables for home consumption. One of the participant said that the impact the tanks have is high that more and more people are enrolling to the church programs because they can see what the church is doing for them. The church has seen its influence enhanced as an important local institution through provision of opportunities for the church members as well as the community.



Figure 5.0 Illustrate some water tanks donated by an organization that collaborate with Anglican church in Mai-Mahiu

The reverend reported that to improve security and prevent intertribal wars, the church frequently engages with community leaders from different tribes. The church brings them together and issues concerning their communities are discussed. The church helps in getting solutions to these issues and thus prevent conflicts in Mai-Mahiu town. The church also holds seminars that preach peace and the importance of living together without viewing your neighbor as an enemy. Participants said they always find companionship in the church and that companionship cannot be found anywhere else. The church also shows the importance of inclusivity through non-discriminatory activities in preaching evangelism. According to the reverend the church has two services on Sundays. One in native language Kikuyu or Swahili and the other one in English. One participant pointed out on the subject of peace and inclusivity

“The church cannot call for people to unite, while during Sunday service some of us cannot understand what is happening because of language barrier. That’s why the church has two Sunday services. I myself I attend the English Sunday service because one of my friend is from another tribe and he don’t speak the native language”.

According to the reverend the church has put inclusivity first hand to make sure no one feels left behind.

“I believe in Christianity that is inclusive. As a church we call for equality and promotion of opportunities that are equal to all. This town has many tribes who speak different languages. Services should not be rendered in a manner that doesn’t promote diversity. The church conduct itself in fairness that align with the gospel.”

The value of the church and its focus to promote Health, well-being, social & family life of the community was highly appreciated by almost all the participants. The participants were proud to tell how the church play an important role as a community institution within health and social life promotion. From above, the assumption is that the church creates supportive habitat that seek to promote health, social justice and equality.

6 DISCUSSION

6.2 Participants perspective views on the church role

The role of the church as an independent institution was regarded as a pillar for the weak and vulnerable community members by many participants. Devotion related with religion can sometimes make people engage in activities that are meant to help people in need through charity work or other assistive activities (Ter & Busuttil, 2004). The participants saw the church as the last defense in solving wider range of issues affecting the community. Like Green & Goetting (2010) have argued Society needs often include problem such as lack of employment, poverty, security instability and housing problems. The church call for unity and support to address these issues was viewed by many participants as true Christianity call. Participants said that church members are willing to serve and contribute to development with the leadership of the church.

Sakwa (2007) implies that “empowerment offers the necessary resources for the poor to champion their well-being e.g. micro-credits for the poor are praised for empowering the poor by offering them opportunities to strive for economic independence.” Participants views on the role the church plays to develop / empower them through social and economic means was positive. Entrepreneurship is all about creativity where one start from bottom and rise up (Strauss, 2013). The micro-finance project that helps in entrepreneur startup was seen as an empowering engine for many who seek self-reliance and personal development.

In Christian spheres families are fundamental social component of communities and many churches always stress the importance of family inside or outside the church compound (De Temple, 2012). Sometimes people are not able to control their lives and to understand and conceptualize what is happening around them, they seek God for help God (Murray, 2012). The participants mentioned that, majority of the community members are joining the church as way out to confront their stressful life and yield a sense of identity and self-worth. According to Henderson & Vercseg (2010) the purpose of

community development is to encourage society participation through communal inclusion with an aim of consolidating sense of identity.

The important aspect that came up with many participants was the need for the church to continue with the path of striving to achieve spiritual and emotional well-being of the community members. The participants see the church as a partner because they feel it's a place where they can gain strength and confront loneliness that is brought about by their perplexing poverty. They thought that the church has done well on the spiritual level as well as development level. The participants were quick also to note that there is a lot that still need to be done. The achievements the church has made should be taken as an example for improvement to bring about prosperity.

Many marginalized societies need extra resources to be able to execute their goals (Green & Goetting, 2010). Majority of the participants noted that the church access to resources to address to community needs is not sufficient. Anglican Church in Mai-Mahiu financial constraints has left some important agendas that the community have brought on the table not to be initiated. According to Njogu (2013) present day worries is lack of employment especially among the youth which he sees as waste of human capability. Three participants mentioned the need of having a technical college where youths can get technical skills needed in job markets. The prospect of starting such a project has been brought up many times, however the church is unable to heed to the call due to the huge cost the project can incur.

Establishing partnerships usually demand a change in viewpoints (Bessette, 2004). The participants noted there is need for the church to work more with other faith-based dominations in the town to improve the well-being of the community. Majority of the participants mentioned that the church collaborates very little with other churches and maybe that should change. One participant reported that churches in Mai-Mahiu need to change their attitude and think big on how to work together in development activities.

The participants would also like to see the government working more closely with the church to achieve its development agenda. Njogu, (2013) argues that "public-private partnerships have the potential to enable governments to increase public infrastructure or public services while using fewer of their own resources and maintaining or even improving the quality of the standards offered." The government, through its public policy, can

see to it that disadvantaged people enjoy from economic development (Sakwa, 2007). One participant noted that the problem they face is lack of collaboration between government institutions and non-governmental organization like the church.

I noticed one crucial finding, in that the participants had no conflict with the church. No single participant gave any negative reflections toward the church role in the community. This might reflect the positive opinions the participants have towards the church. This however should not be an assumption that the rest of the community feel the same because the positive opinions came from six participants if the reverend is excluded. The church understands the community situation and living condition better than any other organization including the government. It is easier for them to communicate their needs and feelings whenever they feel overwhelmed by issues. The participants do not hold the church accountable on anything, but they relay the accountabilities of developments on to their shoulders. The participants felt that they are much stronger in person than they were before they joined the church. They see the church as an organization they have created and that the church cannot operate without their full compliance. The participants seemed to acknowledge enormously that the church is making a huge impact on their lives.

6.3 Reflections based on the church role in development

- To answer the study research question, I will give an argumentation based on the church role in development: Which crucial role can the church play / has played in community building and uplifting the standard of living for its followers or community within its vicinity?

After the interviews and with the benefit of hindsight it is easier to see where the church is heading and what can be done differently to achieve more meaningful sustainable community developments. From the participants views, I see that the church has societal expectations and pressure to act according to its core values that governs its. I also see an emerging characteristic based on the participants views, that there is a drive that make the church to want to act perfect in every way possible towards helping the community. This is because the members of the church do not see the church as an organization that is

operated on hierarchy. De Temple (2012) proclaim that community-based activities requires that religious and standard of behaviors are merged with economic progress to create wholeness that promote positive morality. I see Anglican church in Mai-Mahiu seeking wholeness by energizing the community from the grassroot through activities that merge church values with community needs.

Cooney (2015) see charity in two components. First, he sees charity as something we do to assist those in need and second, he views charity as an objective to support and diminish hardship for those in need. Thinking of the church activities and the participants response toward church role in development, I find that, there is a confusion or misunderstanding of charity work and community development. Some of the activities that the participants named as community development can also be termed in other dimension as charity work. Maybe the confusion arises on the definition and concept of community development. Henderson & Vercseg (2010) argues that part of the complication when debating community development is unpredictability about its capacity. “On what scale is it operating?” “Is it essentially about voluntary involvement or does it depend on there being professional intervention?”

Maybe the church has not figured it out on how to separate between charity work and independent promotion of sustainable community development. If it has, then there is a conflict that emerge where the church is fighting for its independence. Murray (2012) contends that the Church has been a stable institution for many centuries and this stability is even mentioned and documented by ancient Greeks and Romans. So, by referring to “independence”, I see the church as organization that bring development when request to start an activity is brought by the community rather than the church seeking to initiate independently an activity. But at the same time, I cannot help but notice that this is a good community-based development practice. Community development action seeks to centralize roles and involvement from those the problems touches (Henderson & Vercseg, 2010). The church as an organization listens to community needs and develop activities based on those needs. The worldwide proposal is to begin development from people's own viewpoints of their problems, rather than instilling ideas with activities that do not reflect their community (Bessette, 2014).

People are sincere about the problems at hand and they take actions to solve them seriously (Cooney, 2015). From the participants mindset, it is crystal clear that the church is serious and committed in its development activities. The church is in a tough position though, because to cement stable relationship with the community, the church has to understand that it cannot satisfy everyone. When I think of satisfaction, I see another major problem arising from that assumption, because of the church members understanding of what is church. They see the church as themselves and without their presence and their roles, they see the church as just a building or a mean-less symbol. Roles in this case are what Murray (2012) define as responsibilities that people have in the daily life of the Church. In other words, they get satisfaction from the notion that they are the church. From this twist, there are many ways the church can operate differently to bring about more noticeable and sustainable community developments to the people of Mai-Mahiu without losing its “independence”.

The church has made its role completely known on what it sees as healthy, meaningful engagement of the community. I assume that the church engagement with the community is cyclically and perhaps it connects with the church members as they see best. Community development is an action based that promote social unification as well as community solidarity (Henderson & Vercseg, 2010). These developments can be achieved from what the church is doing at the moment by bring the community together through activities like education and health promotion. Togetherness of community opens new frontiers through education and activities that enhance learning (Henderson & Vercseg, 2010).

The participants see a healthy dynamic that the church creates through its role in community development. The themes that emerged from the interviews shows that the church stresses the need for community engagement based on good relationship through its evangelism purposes and community development. The church put efforts on reaching to everyone in the community regardless of their affiliation with other faith-based domination. This is manifested with the church activities that are open to everyone. According to many participants, the church through its activities has cultivated meaningful relationship that's go out beyond its evangelical interests. The church call for love and care through practical actions has shown community willingness to participate in the church activities. The themes presented in the result section shows indeed that the church has taken some steps with programs that address the community needs.

Based on the participants views on role of the church, there is a real and general compassion by the church towards those in need around it. The Anglican church in Mai-Mahiu recognizes that there is grinding poverty that people experience and there is need to address it. Its effort to combat poverty and bring hope to suffering community members is certain.

The participants took enormous pride in telling the achievements of the church and I cannot take the position of bringing skepticism on the church development work. I mentioned earlier on, that the church has not drawn a line between charity work and community development. I want to clarify my opinion in that, I do not have any cynics toward the church activities. This is because I see the church operating on what it sees best for the community. The church members participation in church activities are based on their viewpoints and believes of what is a good Christianity. I therefore call for improvements on how the church engage on its development activities and also improvement of existing programs. I propose to the Anglican church Mai-Mahiu to improve the use of bottom up approach in its quest to uplift the community from poverty.

6.4 Recommendations

Building a community using a bottom up approach requires calculated moves and ideas must be holistically inclusive. To have beneficial and impact in community building everything the community owns, should be thoroughly looked through the lens. Identifying assets in a local setting is one of the many approaches that the church need in order to cement the foundation for a bottom up approach context. Awareness of local environment entails knowledge of area natural resources and how they are controlled (Bessette, 2004). Asset based community development (ABCD) is a “community development approach that uncovers and unlocks assets within a community and in doing so generates opportunities for economic and social development” (Phillips & Pittman, 2014).

Religious sites and buildings are multipurpose and not only are they used for worship, but they act as centers for socialization (Marshall & Van, 2007). Religion beliefs presents ideas of why we live, and people define their situations by how they act and behave in

their communities (Clarke, 2013). Investing in public and engaging in proper community-based development requires proper understanding of community needs. Bhattacharyya (2004) see community development as any activity or economic development that mobilize everyone and activate everyone to be involved without exclusion.

Community practitioner's responsibilities is building a community from the grassroot, where they map community potential and strengths. Recognizing abilities and skills the community have should definitely be a priority. Other things to look upon while building a community using a bottom up approach are Institutions whether governmental or non-governmental, culture, religion and environment. The church partners are philanthropically structured and therefore I propose a relationship with them not based on financial assistance, but rather on creative of shared value. With shared value in mind, it is easier for the church to formulate a methodology that aim to achieve joint goals. This in my view lay a foundation on the basis on where to start in order to create and develop relationship that is of potential interest to the community.

A bottom up approach should be more focused on the strengths and interest of the community. Focus on community resources should play the upper hand of fostering the way forward in making the community understand one another and from that compassion build a thriving community from what already exist. Robert & Pittman (2014) define assets as the "stock of resources people uses to build livelihoods which can be tangible or intangible."

Development means a process of "enabling people to accomplish things that they could not do before – that is to learn and apply information, attitudes, values and skills previously unavailable to them" (Alawode, 2016). Bhattacharyya (2004) observes that most people understand development as economic growth, however community development advocate action by talking and acting on issues affecting the community. I cannot argue on this point because most of the church activities are based solely on community requests. However, some of the social issues that affect the people of Mai-Mahiu e.g. health, education, unemployment, hunger etc. needs and requires some more concrete church activities that can solve community social economic problems.

Education is a path to a more productive life as a citizen and an income earner (Sachs, 2015). Good development activities like education which the church has in place can be good mechanisms to boost its economic developments agendas. For instance, the church can request its partners to include as part of their educational programs, courses that help improve communication skills. With good communication skills, community members can be able to skillfully communicate their needs and issues that affect them to the government and other non-governmental organizations.

The church should seek developments that drive the community to be self-sufficient. Bessette (2004) argues that, promoting community self-organization is the only approach when the state does not have the necessary resources to assume all of its responsibilities regarding human basic needs and socio-economic development. The church is a good community asset and community members seems to acknowledge with pride its presence. The church should focus on capacity building where community can develop skills and competency needed by the community in order to have a better control of their lives. I argue this on the aspect of the participants understanding of development.

Most communities also have numerous formal and informal organizations. These institutions are prospective strong players in development operations because they have social assets that can and do promote quality actions (Green & Goetting, 2010). Church associations that focus on well-being of the community members can be used to fight for better distribution of health services by the government. Social health inequalities that the people of Mai-Mahiu faces can take a turn for the better, if for instance the government can take the role of provision of good health services. Poor community members would not anymore need to use expensive private hospitals and instead they can use government owned health institutions. The church associations can use the resources they use on health to focus on other tentative issues facing the community.

The use of bottom up approach by the church associations can help the community to pay special attention on the environment. Physical environment for instance should be considered. Environmental degradation can have great negative impact on any community. Ways to improve or protect it should be formulated with local assistance. Empowering community to have a sense of ownership of the physical environment should be a priority. Focusing on the environment can help solve food security issues in Mai-Mahiu. Educating farmers on how to maximize yield through proper farming methods that don't deplete

the soil its nutrients can have a big impact in resolving food security. The church should encourage community members engaged in farming to take advantage of the micro-finance organization. This can assist farmers to access capital needed to buy farm inputs.

There are many different dimension, values and structure to survey in order to conduct and encourage community inclusion (Sachs, 2015). Appreciating the community culture and laying collaborative policies that help in safeguarding the community is a good bottom up approach. Policy makers should think more locally in order to make policies that have positive effect on the community. Policies that don't help in development should be done away with and encourage those that help the community develop. Good policies that empower people are good for the economy. It encourages communities to be more innovative which is good for development and creates a sense of independence. Some policies encourage people to work together which is good for social capital. Phillips & Pittman (2014) argues that social capital is present when people work together. "We have a purpose to fulfill, we try to do that by following certain methods, and we implement the methods by means of certain techniques" (Bhattacharyya, 2004). There are lot of potential if the church bottom- up approach is used accordingly in community building.

6.5 Extra recommendations

The church activities to develop the community socially and economically are promising, but this study had no conclusive evaluations on their sustainability. The case study results might come out short as whole representation of church role in community development due to the fact that the information was based on interviews of less than ten participants. I therefore recommend a follow up study for some time in the future to determine the success and failure of the church development activities. Reviewing of the church development activities will bring forth a deeper comprehension of local needs and identifying area resources to have a better perception on which needs to address first. This can help to determine long-term, sustainability and impact of future church programs in Mai-Mahiu town.

I recommend that the church seek collaboration with other churches in development sectors. Anglican church in Mai-Mahiu should recognize the importance of collaborating

with other faith-based domination in Mai-Mahiu to boost its community development activities. To boost people moral and trust I recommend that the government of Kenya seek partnership with churches to achieve its development visions. The gap of mis-trust that has developed between the people and its government can be scaled down if the government recognizes the need to partner with institutions like churches which seek and engage in development activities.

7 CONCLUSIONS

Churches in Kenya operate in a diverse local community and thus need for involvement in community development activities. A powerful action that connects nearly all religions is kindness and concern for those in hardship (Marshall & Keough, 2004). Faith-based organizations and churches have played important role in alleviating people from poverty, but marginalized people calling are hardly considered (Nixon, 2013). Time to change is now, where disadvantaged people voices are listened to and actions that impact their lives positively are enacted.

Anglican Church in Mai-Mahiu has applied different strategies to fight poverty in the community. The strategies use a bottom up approach that the church members see fit to cater for their needs. The findings of this study revealed that the Anglican church of Kenya Mai-Mahiu is doing well to its capacity to fight poverty. On the issue of empowerment, Anglican church in Mai-Mahiu scored very well in that participants in the research were satisfied with the church development work. The church was commended on issue of inclusion through activities that are warm and welcoming. The participants thought that the church has sufficiently done well to attract new members through projects with the central objective of spreading the word of God. Church facilities can be of vital use in civic engagement and can be useful in facilitating service provision and information distribution to the local communities. This is manifested by the church use of its facilities for various activities meant for community development.

The church needs to continue with the good work of addressing poverty by creating effective programs that can adequately and sustainably empower community for a long time. However, the findings also reveal that there is much that is needed to be done to fight unemployment, food security, water scarcity and overall poverty. There are lot of opportunities that the church can take advantage of e.g. in tourism sectors. Mai-Mahiu town is located in a strategic place and the surrounding natural environment if well managed can be good source of income and employment through tourism.

Churches see development as something that attend to person's physical and divine development (Alawode, 2016). The study results manifested that a local church can play both role of spiritual well-being as well as uplift community from poverty through development activities. The study also manifests the ability of a local church to heed development calls from the community. The church can play a vital role in addressing poverty, because different measures can be used to address poverty (Jensen & Patason, 2010). However, Marshall & Keough, (2004) argues that fighting poverty has a technical dimension, but even more it requires a capacity to respect and care for fellow human beings.

According to Dionne & Chen, (2000) it is "critical that churches and church-based organizations not get so wrapped up in daily operations that they fail to address the all-important question of how to translate their faith and their experiences into advocacy of effective public policies." The results from the case study is evident that local churches can fill the gap left by government institutions to support and develop socially as well as economically marginalized individuals within their locality. The reputation of the church therefore depends on its ability to confront community issues while staying harmonized within its core values.

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APPENDIX 1. Data analysis: vivo coding system

Codes	Church activities	Emerging themes	Main themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Povert • Education • Community members • Food • Security • Diseases • Health • Housing • Water • Family • Parents • School • Farming • Well-being • Displacement • Orphans • School fees • Economy • Hardship • Library • Security • Enviroment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Management of a community library that is wholly owned and funded by the church ✓ Church Organizes seminars to create awareness on the dangers of HIV/AIDs and how to cope with the disease once acquired ✓ Engage in housing projects. Build houses for the most venerable community members ✓ Church Assist in paying school-fees for orphans and for those with very low income ✓ Church support entrepreneurship through a micro-finance project that is owned and managed by the church ✓ Church organizes seminars and educate community on how to engage in small scale farming to fight food security ✓ Helps to fight hunger and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Majority of church followers earn less than a dollar a day ➤ There is a large population of community members living with HIV/AIDs ➤ Poor parents struggle to pay school-fees for their children ➤ Housing is a major issue among relatives left with orphans and widows and widowers ➤ Land is scarce ➤ Majority of youth lack technical skills needed in job markets ➤ Education is highly valued ➤ Security risk: Risk of intertribal conflict is prevalent ➤ People within the community lack access to clean water ➤ Unemployment rate is very high among the youths ➤ Lots of orphans being left under the care of grandparents ➤ People lack technical skills to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Health ❖ Well-being ❖ Family & social life ❖ Economy ❖ Livelihood ❖ Education ❖ Partnership

	✓ malnutrition food distribution. Education on farming	engage in meaningful farming ➤ Food security poses a major threat ➤ Access to healthcare is a challenge mostly for those living with HIV & AIDS	
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APPENDIX 2. Data collection through interviews

Interview guide: Semi-structured interviews

1. Tell me about your history with the church?
 - What made you / influenced you to join Anglican church and not any other church?
2. What does the term church bring to mind? Or how do you understand the term church?
 - With the description you just gave, can you tell me a little more, how you feel about the church?
3. How is the church involved in development projects in the community?
 - Can you tell me some examples of these projects or activities?
 - What make the church / or what is the drive force that make the church want to get involved in community development activities?
 - Who suggests these activities / where do these ideas of community development come from?
 - Who are the target of these development projects? Can you tell me more about the beneficiaries of these projects?
 - Is the church involved in any peace building activities? How does the church maintain inclusivity?
 - Can you tell me more how the community as a whole is benefiting from these projects?
 - Where is the physical location that these projects take place in?
 - Have you been involved in any of these projects and have you personally benefited from these projects?
 - Does the church collaborate with other churches in development projects? And are there other organizations working with the church? If there are what do they do? Does the church collaborate with government institutions?
 - Where do you think the church has made progress? Has the church been able to initiate all projects that have been tabled? And are there any obstacles that hinder church progress?

- Do you think the church is doing enough to uplift the lives of vulnerable community members?
- Do you have any suggestions, ideas that the church should do to bring more sustainable developments to the community?