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The Anglican Church and Poverty Alleviation in Maseno and Winam Divisions of Kisumu District, Kenya

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Abstract- This paper is concerned with the influence of the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) on poverty alleviation in Maseno and Winam Divisions of Kisumu District. It analyses some of the development activities the ACK is involved in as an attempt to improve the local people's standard of living. Poverty is an outrage against humanity. It robs people of their dignity, power and hope of freedom and power over their own lives. This paper seeks to affirm that the Christian Churches in their teachings believe and insist that the world can be changed to one where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty. Similarly, the paper argues that any work for profound change that eradicates causes of poverty, striving to achieve equality, dignity and freedom for all regardless of faith or nationality is an indelible work of the Christian Church as amplified in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. The paper concludes that the ACK has made some progress in its efforts to alleviate poverty and at the same time faced several challenges in Maseno and Winam Divisions. Making education available to the community members, providing primary health care, training small-scale farmers on marketing their products, and creating employment opportunities are the most outstanding achievements and major contribution of the ACK to poverty alleviation efforts. Some of the major challenges faced by the Church in carrying out its activities include; lack of support from the people themselves, political interference, and corruption, mismanagement of financial and human resources combined with impending moral, social and cultural issues.

I. INTRODUCTION

This paper presents findings from the field as well as discussions on what proved to be valid or invalid as per the study objectives. The paper further describes the demographic features of both Maseno and Winam Divisions. It has also given some definitions of poverty from the World Bank, other relevant bodies as well as from some church leaders and local peoples' point of view.

The issue of poverty remains both a material and economic concern that affects the spiritual growth of Christians as well as other people of the world today. It is a concern that cannot be ignored from all angles of human development. The study confirmed that the nature of poverty was more complex than as other socio-economic political issues.

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II. POVERTY SITUATION IN MASENO AND WINAM DIVISIONS

It is important to note on the outset that before and immediately after independence, the economy around Lake Victoria region was vibrant. There were a lot of economic activities around on various spots in the region such as fishing, rice schemes and sugar cane plantations, among others, which ensured that there was enough food on the table for most families. However, all these activities have slowed down with time or collapsed thus raising poverty levels in the region high. There is abject poverty in the midst of natural resource endowment including active human power. Lake Victoria plays a key role in the lives of communities living around it, as it is one of the main sources of livelihood. It provides fresh water for human consumption, irrigation, farming and sustainability. In fact for decades, the lake has provided a rich variety of resources to the communities.

Several reasons were given by respondents for this reversal of misfortunes in the region, chief among them being politics. The study established that the disagreement between Jaramogi Oginga Odinga with the KANU regime and the death of Tom Mboya in the late 1960s led to total mistrust between the people of Nyanza and the Government of Kenya. This was the beginning of underdevelopment in the region due to less commitment from the Government as the study established that the Government's partial withdrawal from supporting socio-economic and political developments in the region in terms of resources had negative impact on the region's development agenda. Other reasons given, which some of the respondents insisted hold the key to underdevelopment of the region, are lack of commitment from the people themselves and poor leadership.

Fisheries resources serve as a source of economic welfare of the region by providing employment opportunities and attractive incomes for the people yet, studies conducted report that Lake Victoria region constitutes a "belt of poverty" (Ong'ang'a, 2002). This is a sign of clear contradiction between the availability of abundant resources and rampant poverty in the region. The greatest challenges facing Maseno

and Winam Divisions, like all other divisions of Kisumu District and other districts surrounding the Lake Basin are socio-economic, which are related to the inter-linkage between poverty and environmental degradation. The situation is particularly made worse by lack of capacity among the institutions, the government, the NGOs and the Church to manage the resources of the region, both human and natural in a sustainable manner.

The study observed that there has been little progress in terms of poverty alleviation in the two Divisions for a while, not even in recent years, when both its economy and political system has become much more open. About ninety eight per cent (98%) of the total respondents interviewed confirmed that the two Divisions are affected by poverty. Tables 1 and 2 below for Church leaders and community members, respectively, show the interviewees' responses to the question on whether or not Maseno and Winam Divisions are affected by poverty.

Table 1 : ACK Leader's Responses to Areas Affected by Poverty

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	67	100.0
No	0	0.0
Total	67	100.0

Source: Field Data (2008)

Table 3 : ACK Leaders Views of the Percentage of People affected by Poverty

Poverty Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 50%	0	0.0
50%	6	9.0
Over 50%	61	91.0
Total	67	100.0

Source: Field Data (2008)

Table 4 : Community Members Views of the Percentage of People Affected by Poverty

Poverty Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Valid less than 50%	0	0.0
50%	13	9.4
Over 50%	125	90.6
Total	138	100.0

Source: Field Data (2008)

Information gathered from the respondents, both the ACK leaders and the community members, paints a gloomy picture of the nature of poverty of the areas under study. Most group discussions' members emphasized the fact that unless serious measures are taken by those concerned, and particularly the Church, to urgently address poverty in the two areas, sooner than later, extreme hunger may become a reality in some households in addition to some already existing problems bedevilling them such as poor health.

Table 2 : Community Member's Responses to Areas affected by Poverty

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	134	97.1
No	4	2.9
Total	138	100.0

Source: Field Data (2008)

All the sixty seven (67) of the ACK leaders interviewed representing one hundred per cent (100%) indicated that the two Divisions of Maseno and Winam are affected by poverty (Table 1 above). Whereas, one hundred and thirty four (134) out of one hundred and thirty eight (138) representing ninety seven point one per cent (97.1%) of the community members interviewed (Table 2 above) affirmed the same, with only four (4) members out of a total of 138 representing one point ninety five per cent (1.95%) of community members' respondents disagreed and noted that the study areas do not suffer from poverty. The cumulative percentage for tables 1 and 2 is ninety eight per cent (98%), which is a confirmation that poverty is experienced by residents of Maseno and Winam divisions. This is in comparison to ninety point seven per cent (90.7%) of the total respondents, both Church leaders and community members, who believed that over fifty per cent (50%) of the residents in the study areas are poor while only nine point three per cent (9.3%) disagreed (Tables 3 and 4 below).

Respondents in both Maseno and Winam Divisions indicated several dimensions of deprivation and inequality and a correspondingly wide range of assets and capabilities they would need to improve their standards of living and get out of poverty, some of which are discussed here below.

a) Health

There are a number of ways through which health can affect people, particularly on growth and

income levels, which are important ingredients in overcoming poverty at family and community levels; health can play an important role in determining the rate of return to education. Children who are well nourished become more alert and gain more from a given amount of education. Their learning is higher compared to those not well nourished; healthier workers are more productive than unhealthy ones; when health is good, more output can be realized with any given combination of skills, physical capital, and technological knowledge; and, just as a healthier person can be more efficient in producing goods and services, so is the person likely to be more efficient in producing new ideas, and hence his or her ability to be more creative and innovative.

The respondents explained that health and poverty are closely related because one may lead to the other. For example, being able to perform daily duties:- breast feeding for mothers; work to grow food for both men and women; attend school for school going children, earn a living or feed a family all depend on some level of good health. Extreme poverty interacts with health in many ways, which undermine a whole range of human capabilities, possibilities and opportunities. The general health situation in the study divisions is alarming, as we found out that mortality in diseases such as cholera, malaria, tuberculosis and HIV and AIDS is very high. HIV and AIDS impact on the regions is great and has aggravated economic problems because many children have been orphaned as a result of the disease thereby putting more strain on extended families. The respondents argued that there is a very close and clear link between poverty and health. Inadequate food leads to weakness and reduced energy to work, which in turn leads to lower income and less food for households, leading to worsening weakness and illness. Furthermore, the link between poverty, hunger and poor child health leads to poor school performance by children at school and later their inability to secure good work and support the family. Posting of poor results by schools in the study areas was attributed to poor health of school going children, which is due to poverty.

For women interviewed, well being requires a physically fit husband and sons to work in the farms to produce enough food for the family. They emphasized the fact that their bodies are their only asset and their ability to do hard labour even on empty stomachs depends on good health. Discussion group in Winam Division noted that unsanitary, dangerous, crowded and poorly serviced houses (slum) increases people's exposure to health risks. This finally results in illness which in turn leads to destitution or death. Most local people have no means to safeguard the good health they need to work and survive. In other cases, health services are nonexistent or substandard and people still have to grapple with paying for transport, consultations, medicine, and even bribe to receive the so called "free

services". Although most respondents interviewed viewed health to be a 'right' for all, they argued that its short term improvement may be a mirage due to government policy based on red-tape bureaucracy or just not willing to act. One emerging fact from the study was that majority of people in the region did not have means to meet medical treatment and recourse to self-medication in the event of sickness because they are too poor to pay.

Poverty can also affect health through the growth process of an individual. High poverty may result in worse health, which feeds back into lower growth thus creating a possibility of a vicious circle. Sickness has both social and economic implications. In the New Testament, for example, health as a precondition for life is aptly stated. The shrewd steward, who feared being "retrenched", acknowledged the usefulness of his physical health: "I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg" (Luke 16:3). The opposite is Paul's argument of working with his hands to earn a living (Acts 20:33). The two contrasting situations best explain the social and economic implications of either good or ill-health. The steward is only too aware that without a strong body, the pending retrenchment posed an existential threat to his survival. On the other hand, Paul boasted of a strong body which enabled him to being reasonable self-sufficient. By implication, no one should depend on the mercy of others when their bodies are fully functional. This line of argument was quite explicit in the focus group discussions. Clearly, physical health plays a vital role in movement and productivity of individuals and is paramount in poverty alleviation. Health is the driving force between social policy and human productivity in any human settlement.

a) Education

Perhaps it is important to note on the outset that the increase in education has been blamed by some scholars for many of the problems in the developing countries, particularly to the problems of unemployment and of rural-urban migration (Grooms, 1980). It would, however, be a serious misconception to conclude from this that education is somehow responsible for these problems and created them. From the focus group discussions, the study ascertained that education is also a casualty of some of the problems it is accused of, for example, children from poor households cannot afford good education because of lack of school fees so they remain wallowing in poverty. As a result, education becomes a casualty of poverty. There is, however, a clear relationship between education and poverty reduction when good education leads to sustained income and hence sustained poverty reduction.

The role of education in development, and therefore poverty alleviation, has been recognized since the early days of Plato (Tilak, 1989). Education is believed to be indispensable to economic growth

through its ability to increase the productivity of the population or the labour force in particular, which leads to increased earnings for individuals. Education transforms people into productive 'human capital' by inculcating the skills required by both the traditional and modern sector of the economy. It also makes individuals more productive not only in the market place but also in the household (Ibid). While classifying countries into four categories, for example, poor, very poor, rich, and very rich Tilak concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between education and economic growth of nations because education increases productivity of the labour force leading to increase in economic growth. Education directly contributes to worker productivity and to more rapid technological adaptation and innovation. The study highlights the fact that poverty and growth interact through the education channel. Higher education, for example, results in higher growth and higher household income, which ultimately leads to lower levels of poverty. At the same time, lower poverty levels feed back into the system and result in higher education, creating the potential for a vicious circle between growth and poverty.

In agriculture, for example, education significantly influences methods of production, use of modern inputs like fertilizers, seeds and machines, and selection of crops which lead to increased earnings for the farmers thereby reducing their poverty levels. Wages among landless agricultural labourers are also positively influenced by differences in their levels of education. The level of education is relevant not only for farm efficiency but also for other activities like utilization of credit facilities and adoption of family planning methods, which have a direct bearing on poverty alleviation. Basically, the impact of education on poverty alleviation cannot be over emphasized. That education earnings relationship is proved to be real is evidenced in its contribution to the other facets of development like improvements in health, mortality and life expectancy, fertility control, among others (Cochrane, 1979).

In general, the paper found out that respondents with good education backgrounds had many attributes associated with poverty alleviation programmes. For instance, those with more education had the following qualities: knew that land consolidation is good for farming; knew more about keeping money in banks and post office a savings account and would not hesitate to turn to any financial institution for farm credit; had more knowledge about irrigation; know more about soil erosion as a source of soil destruction; talked about employment with good income as a means of getting out of poverty; and, had more modern conception of wealth (working capital, cash crops, farm machinery, value addition of farm products among others).

The correlation between education and poverty alleviation came out most clearly from the views expressed by the respondents. They argued that men

and women without education could not get good jobs and were easily manipulated became easy targets for fraud. A number of respondents gave example of DECI which collected money from the public in the hope of returning borrowed money with profit but soon went under with poor people's investments. People who have good education could get good jobs, could learn better ways of engaging in metalwork, create household artefacts, and could improve their farming techniques, among others which could enhance their well being.

While some respondents reported that women's access to health and education services had somehow improved since the introduction of free health care and free primary education, especially in urban areas (Winam Division), their access to education in rural areas (Maseno Division) was still abysmal. They noted that girls in most households were not treated the same as boys when it comes to education. The low female literacy rate therefore makes it difficult for rural women to meet the skill requirements of future jobs in nonfarm economy. Some women respondents wished to have their children educated and employed. They, for instance hoped to have educated daughters-in-law, would like their sons to buy land, build a nice house, and have whatever they missed in their lives. For them, formal education was key to human development and in all areas of improving people's livelihood.

b) *Social Belonging*

Living in poverty is not appealing, but to be poor is sometimes full of fun to a category of people in society because it binds them together and through that they help one another in case needs arise. This was the view of some members of a focus group discussion. The study found out that poor people like all others, experience a deep sense of belonging; to care and be cared for; to be honoured; and, to experience the bonds of solidarity. A sense of belonging not only affirms one's humanity but also creates bonds of trust and reciprocity. The idea to give and take they noted is part of being human and is quite healthy for their survival. According to these respondents, social ties provide valuable support in times of need and they further intimated that it is better to have "a hundred poor friends than a hundred rich goons". Respect, influence and honour in society are important indicators of well being.

The group, however, further noted that lack of material wealth (economic deprivation) has placed social ties and mutual obligation under great stress by reducing the circle of support to the family. Poor people are unable to meet their friends in social places because they cannot afford to buy a bottle of soda or a cup of tea to their friends, which lead to social isolation and depression. This view was corroborated further by one respondent, who from the researcher's own observation looked poor and led very low lifestyle. However, when asked to comment on how poor people survive under

these difficult times of inflations his response was that poverty is in the mind. He gave the example of himself by noting that he was quite happy in his state because he had a small cottage enough for himself and the family and he had a small farm where he was able to produce enough food for the family's survival. According to him, he was not poor because he had never gone to ask for any form of assistance from the neighbours.

This particular respondent's view was quite significant to the study because it raised the issue of subjective poverty, which a many times has been overlooked by scholars when discussing poverty. The respondent's pride of not having gone to neighbours to ask for assistance is a clear indication that poverty may not necessarily be lack of material wealth but lack of happiness, purely detached from material possession. One may lack material things under his possession but if he is happy and feel comfortable in life then such a person may not be regarded as being poor. Hence poverty (economic) unlike spiritual poverty is relative and could be overcome through equitable distribution of natural resources which God gave to humanity from time immemorial.

III. POOR PEOPLE'S ASSETS AND CAPABILITIES

Without the protection of material assets, the slide into poverty is real and quick. In group discussions, respondents noted the central role of material assets in preventing them from falling to the bottom of society. They argued that once households lose their property either through natural disasters or through paying of dowry or through selling off property to pay debts, hospital bills and feed the family they give up hope of ever getting out of poverty. Furthermore, declining access to "common property resources" aggravate poor households insecurity and keep them trapped in low paying formal jobs or on the lower rungs of the informal economy.

People with few assets have extremely limited bargaining power to negotiate a fair deal for jobs, wages or other contractual arrangements. Some respondents named entrepreneurial activities as key livelihood strategies. Yet for those with few assets, as most poor people do, the type of entrepreneurship within reach, such as petty vending, does not necessarily increase their wellbeing. So it was noted that selling sweets or exercise books in the streets is not a business that can improve one's standards of living. To them, business means owning a retail shop, bookshop, hardware shop or something else reasonable one can live off.

So to improve their assets and capabilities there is need for the poor to have access to human skills and capital, which may range from social, natural, physical to financial support. Social assets are intangible. They are benefits that come through relationships with other people and institutions and access to resources,

whereas, material assets are tangible, they are the actual physical things which people own, control or have access to, including land, water, money, credit, tools, among others. The church can provide both social and material assets to lessen the burden of poverty on poor people.

IV. POVERTY AND GENDER

Gender relations in the study regions are far from being equitable. Women compared to men are more disadvantaged in economic status throughout their lives, which has made the fight against poverty more complex. Respondents both men and women stressed the economic and social vulnerability of female-headed households. They singled out divorce and death as the reasons behind the fluttering of many female-headed households. These two factors and the destitution they bring is a major risk facing women.

Poor women mostly in rural areas have typically become supplementary earners and are likely to be primary earners in households where men have lost jobs through retrenchment at factory and construction sites. This has not necessarily changed the traditional gender roles. The women reported that for the most part, they have added the increased earning responsibilities to their existing household labourers. Some respondents (men and women) confirmed that women still shoulder a heavier and more diverse physical decision maker within and outside the household. Women respondents specifically reported that men do not share household work or take care of the child if a woman must work outside the home thereby increasing the burden of domestic chores on the woman.

Attitude in favour of or against men or women is another major compounding poverty-related issue. Traditionally, a man who takes care of his young children or prepares food is branded a weakling and is incapable of training his wife properly among many communities in the study areas. Such a man is looked down upon by the community and cannot participate in any serious decision making. This attitude was noted as a major deterrent to men who would otherwise wish to help their wives with some domestic duties in their wives' absence from home in search of justifiable income for the family. The study, however, established that this attitude is changing with time and now young men are more accommodating and sometimes helping women in performing domestic chores considered feminine in nature. According to a youth discussion group, now it is possible to see a man preparing food and even baby-sit if the woman is held by work outside the home. It is important to point out that one should strive to earn a livelihood or some income however little it might be regardless of his/her gender. Some people just give up on life simply because they are poor and lack resources. They should search themselves and see

if they have any talents or skills and utilize them to their advantages. Believe or not, they can make it if they engaged in some form of work and asked for God's blessing of their hands.

That a woman sitting by the roadside selling vegetables is better than that one spitted by the fireside at home with nothing to cook for the family and lamenting to anybody who comes to listen that she is too poor to afford even food is more proactive cannot be overemphasized. A lady who cleans or washes other people's clothes or compound at a small fee is happier and better still than one who begs and expects handouts from passersby. One has to do something believing that it yields something for the survival. By engaging in some productive and income generating activities, one will be surprised at how much she can achieve. Life becomes better when one can afford doing simple and basic things to earn a living. This study discovered that this is the spirit the ACK passes to its members as it attempts to empower them socially, economically, politically, spiritually and morally. It is futile to lament about life and not do a thing to improve it. Waiting for the Church and the Government to improve one's life without being involved remains a futile activity.

Suffice to point out that there were mixed opinion among the responses, both Church leaders and community members, about the ACK's achievements in poverty alleviation since its inception in the region.

While majority of Church leaders respondents eighty five per cent (85%) opined that the Church has made great strides in its socio-economic service to the community and, therefore, has been very successful in its fight against poverty, more than half of the local people interviewed fifty six (56%) argued on the contrary. They claimed that the Church has done very little in terms of poverty alleviation because a large majority of the community members still wallow in poverty. Those who credited the Church's role in poverty alleviation mentioned its role in the provision of educational facilities, health, water and sanitation services, and advocacy. In these areas of the Church's operation, the group noted that the Church has done quite a lot and has helped to improve the local peoples' standard of living. On the other hand, those claimed that it has done very little gave reasons that tended to border on complete eradication of poverty, which is a tall order to achieve given the complex nature of poverty. This group gave examples of problems that still face the majority of residents in Maseno and Winam Divisions as food insecurity, lack of school fees, not having access to good health facilities and mass unemployment, especially among the youth. However, considering the fact that poverty is quite fluid and that it affects people differently under changing social, economic and political conditions, the study made an objective assessment of the groups' responses and came up with independent

observations about the ACK's achievements and challenges facing it in its efforts to alleviate poverty.

V. DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Churches, starting from the early Missionaries' era, have been engaged in development in order to elevate the standards of living of Christians in the country. Among the projects which churches have been fully engaged in are; the building of schools, hospitals, training of personnel in various fields such as teachers, doctors, accountants, among others.

The ACK was first established in Kenya as the Church of the Province of Kenya (CPK) in 1970, and immediately thereafter, embarked on programmes of fellowship and expansion of its development programmes to empower the local communities. The programmers' objective was to promote social, spiritual and economic welfare activities which included community development assistance to vulnerable groups such as children, elderly, persons with disability and, rural and urban poor. The overall aim of the programmes was to assist in eradication of poverty and was facilitated at the community levels. This chapter, therefore, presents results and generates a discussion on various development projects the ACK has embarked on to eradicate poverty in Maseno and Winam divisions of Kisumu County.

It is important to note on the outset that ACK leaders interviewed claimed that poverty cannot be eradicated but can only be alleviated. They based their claim on the fact that what is minimally accepted today may vary over time, from individual to group or from one village to another. Hence, poverty varies with levels of economic development, and the perceptions and expectations of the majority on what is minimally acceptable. For example, while clean piped water may be part of acceptable standard of living in an urban set-up, it may not be a requirement in a village set-up. Similarly, while taking tea and bread for breakfast may be a basic necessity in some homes, it may not be a requirement in some homes that can only afford porridge without sugar. Based on this, the ACK leaders intimated that their primary aim of engaging in development projects is to alleviate poverty to minimal standards as eradicating it may prove a tall order to achieve.

The development and community services department is an outreach arm of the ACK. It is involved in the physical, intellectual, environmental, social and economic life of the poor, the marginalized and all other vulnerable groups in the society. The department has carved a niche in the overall holistic ministry of the ACK under the name of Christian Community Services (CCS) which believes in "an abundant life" for all people of God.

According to the ACK leaders interviewed, the CCS department was established in 1983 after the Church leaders' consultation meeting in Limuru where the leaders articulated the philosophy and theology of ACK's involvement in participatory community development. This consultation was a response to the Church's earlier findings that good work was taking place in areas of education, agriculture, health and water development projects which had been started in a few dioceses in the country from as early as 1975. The CCS department runs a core secretariat with

programme officers who provide facilitation services and capacity building to community based groups and individuals through a well-defined CCS regional structure encompassing all ACK dioceses and diverse vulnerable groups.

The CCS regions have evolved into operationally autonomous effective organization with specific legal entity, board of directors and staff that combine competence and church ownership. This was planned to offer efficient management and better delivery of services to

Table 3 : Distribution of ACK Organizations by Dioceses

Region	Name of regional organization	ACK DIOCESE
Coast	Pwani CCS	Taita Taveta and Mombasa
Nairobi / Kajiado	Naika CCS	Nairobi, Kajiado and All Saints
Nakuru	Nakuru Region Inter-Diocesan CCS	Nakuru and Nyahururu
Nyanza	Inter-Diocesan Christian Community Services Ltd.	Maseno South, Maseno West, Southern Nyanza, Bondo
Eldoret	Eldoret Region Inter-Diocesan Christian Community Services	Eldoret, Kitale
Western	Western Christian Community Services	Nambale, Mumias, Katakwa, Butere, Bungoma and Maseno North.
Southern Eastern	Ukamba Christian Community Services	Machakos, Kitui
Mt. Kenya East	Christian Community Services of Mt. Kenya East	Kirinyaga, Embu, Meru, Mbeere
Mt. Kenya	Christian Community Services of Mt. Kenya Region	Mt. Kenya South, Mt. Kenya Central, Mt. Kenya West, Thika

Source: Inter-Diocesan Christian Community Services Limited (2008).

community members. The geographical coverage of each region follows administrative boundaries of the ACK as shown on the Table above.

The department is involved in a wide range of development programmes at national and regional levels all aimed at improving the well-being of the poor. These include food security programmes addressing production, transportation, marketing and processing of agricultural products. Safe drinking water as well as the conservation of soil water and the environment form part and parcel of the Rural Integrated Development Programmed (RIDP) implemented by CCS at community level.

ACK's focus on capacity building through CCS national and regional levels ensures a workforce with appropriate skills to promote participatory and sustainable community development, while at the same time empowering the people to be more analytical about their situations, resources and develop appropriate interventions to address their challenges. The local peoples capacities are enhanced further through gender, justice and equity, conflict resolution, civic education and advocacy programmes. Participation and consultation in policy formulation is the driving force behind CCS on poverty alleviation because it empowers local communities to be fully involved in campaign, lobby and advocacy on issues that affect them.

Suffice to say that ACK through CCS remains a place of solace and hope for the vulnerable members of community. It endeavours with greater vigour and commitment to dedicate effort to alleviate all forms of poverty by working with a network of local, national and international partners in sponsoring of projects. Thus, ACK through CCS involves in a wide range of programmes which have had far reaching impact on the social, cultural, economic, health and religious lives of many individuals, families and communities. From the table, it can be noted that ACK's CCS department has a wide geographical coverage, including Kisumu District, which is the geographical area of focus of this study.

a) Inter-Diocesan Christian Community Services (IDCCS) Limited

Starting from the early Missionaries' era, churches have been engaged in matters of development in order to elevate the standards of living of Christians in Kenya and more so in areas where they operate. They have built schools and hospitals and created employment for the local communities. In 1970 for example, the ACK then known as The Church of the Province of Kenya (CPK) embarked on a programme of fellowship and expansion of its education goals to empower communities. The main objective of this work was to promote social welfare related activities, which

included community development assistance to vulnerable groups such as the poor orphaned children and women. The overall aim of the programme was to assist in the alleviation of poverty. This culminated in the formation of Provincial Board of Christian Community services that was charged with the responsibility of looking into thematic issues such as poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods, the rights and freedom of the poor, public policy and service delivery. A face to face interview with Mr. Philip Ombidi, IDCCS Ltd. former team leader revealed that the Church organization aims at achieving the following goals:-

- i) To expand the Church ministry to cater for both rural and urban poor;
- ii) To act as a catalyst to development in rural areas;
- iii) To establish provincial and diocesan development offices with a coordinator at the province and in every Anglican Diocese; and,
- iv) To develop critical awareness about issues besetting the people.

These strategies were developed to enable the church have a more focused approach to community service. To implement the recommendations, the ACK consultative development meeting resolved that the provincial and Diocesan Board of Christian Community should design strategies that would promote self-reliance and provide for socio economic and spiritual growth of the community. The holistic and integrated approach ACK employs includes evangelization, educational and engaged in a wide range of innovative and experimental projects in appropriate and affordable technologies in food security, water and reproductive health.

Because of the wide geographical coverage and the wide range of services to be covered, major partners to ACK recommended that CCS wing of the Nyanza region dioceses operate on regional basis. Thus in 1995 four dioceses of the ACK in Nyanza region (Maseno South, Maseno West, Bondo and Southern Nyanza) formed Inter Diocesan Christian Community Services Limited (IDCCS Ltd.). This body was mandated to hold in trust, stimulate and manage sustainable development for the four dioceses. It was registered as a company limited by guarantee and not having share capital in 1997. According to IDCCS team leader, the body is a non-profit making organization which aims at serving the community irrespective of one's social status, religion, political affiliation and ethnic background.

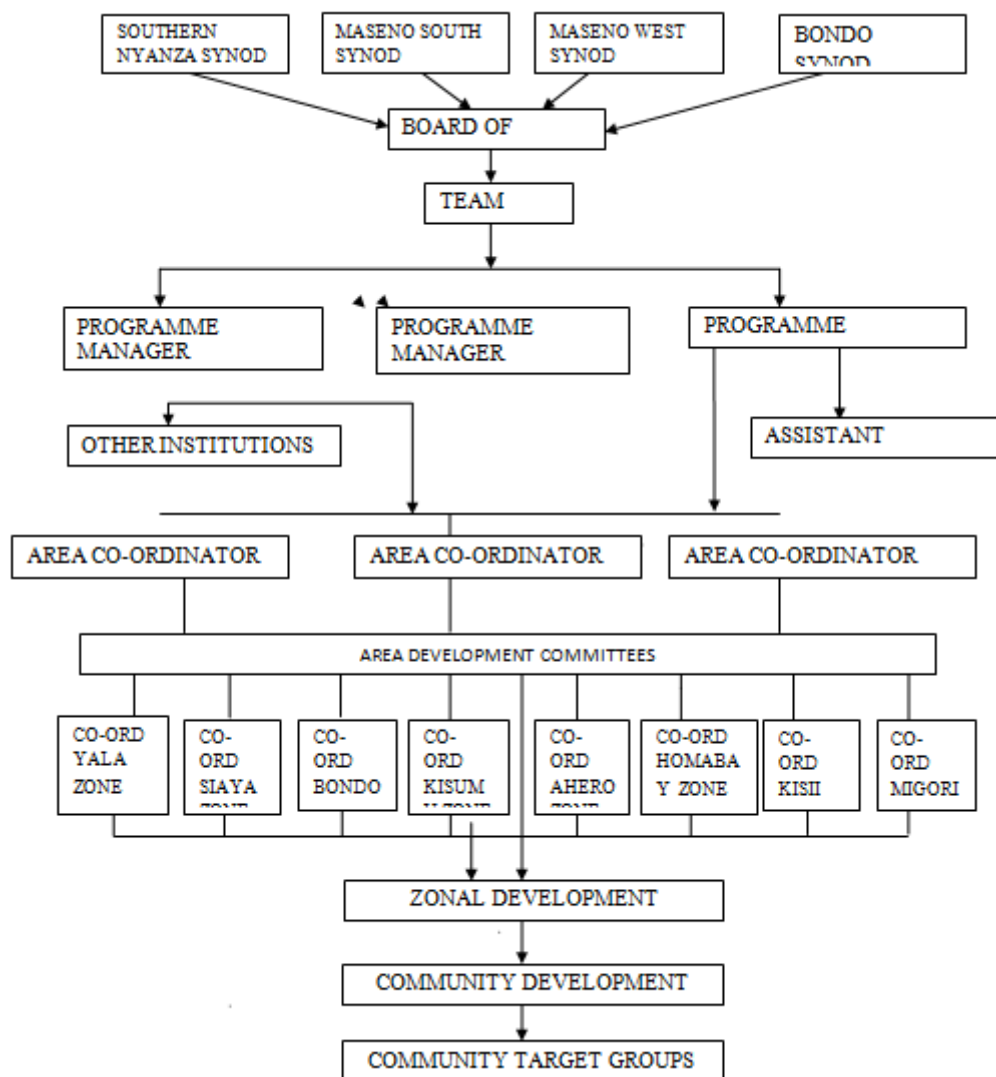


Figure 1 : IDCCS Organizational and Operational Structure

Source: IDCCS Ltd., Profile June, 2008

The Figure above shows the organizational and operational structure of the IDCCS Ltd. The company is owned by the ACK and is governed by Board of Directors whose responsibility is to formulate policies and regulations for better management. Members of the board are picked from the synods of the four respective dioceses constituted by:- a sitting Bishop, one clergy and one laity from each Diocesan Synod. The chairman of the board will always remain one of the diocesan Bishops.

IDCCS staffs are represented in the board by the Team Leader- who also serves as the board secretary, two programme managers (Main Programmes and Special Programmes) and Programme Accountant (Financial Manager). IDCCS development services have been decentralized in order to offer better services to the communities by creating eight zonal offices, including Kisumu zonal office which is the main focus area of the study. Zonal development

committees have been formed at the zonal level to serve as the entry point to the community because they are charged with creating awareness about the bodies activities and what it can offer to improve the people's standards of living. To this end, IDCCS works with common interest groups who have been made aware of what it offers by zonal development committees and have been vetted to partner with the body on priority basis.

The Board of directors appoints a Management Committee from its membership, and the staff to oversee personnel matters including terms and conditions of service, recruitment and staff discipline. The management is headed by the Team Leader with the support of the programme managers and programme accountant all who constitute the Senior Management Team. In addition, there are senior area coordinators in-charge of the zonal activities and support staff (as indicated in the Fig. above). Like any

other organization, IDCCS' participation in development is grounded on a strong mission statement derived from the ACK's philosophy of human development. Its mission is to enable the communities through member dioceses achieve fullness of life and the integrity of creation through sustainable, participatory and integrated community development programmes. This is based on a vision that a dignified humanity enjoys the fullness of life and is responsible for the stewardship of God's abundant resources.

IDCCS' mission and vision aim at achieving some values which include the following:-

- Integrating community programmes with evangelization as a means to improving life.
- Realizing the integrity of humanity so that one is spiritually nurtured, physically developed, mentally productive and socially integrated.
- Involvement of community through participatory approaches to development.
- Improvement of the communities' standards of living through their resource mobilization and productivity through the creation of wealth.
- Promoting gender balance through participatory development to enhance a socially cohesive society.
- Promoting human dignity and rights in the family and community with special attention to the poor.
- Concern for conservation and management of resources.

Establishing mechanisms for collaboration and networking with other partners in evangelization and development (O.I., IDCCS Ltd. Programmes Co-ordinator, Nyanza Region).

These values are contained in IDCCS short-term and long-term objectives, which aim at community empowerment and gender equity in development, increasing access to safe and affordable water supply and sanitation, improving food security and increasing access to affordable and sustainable health care.

Empowering community based organizations, for example, self-help groups and church groups is a long-term plan IDCCS uses to alleviate poverty. About ninety per cent (90%) of the respondents, specifically lauded IDCCS' intervention strategies such as training for empowerment through capacity building of the communities, holding of workshops, seminars, and provision of information, civic education and communication in Maseno and Winam divisions, which they noted have helped many families cope with poverty. Through networking with the government, NGOs and other church organizations, IDCCS has been able to take services to some remote regions of the study areas where the Government has failed to do so. Its involvement in agriculture, health, civic education,

and water and sanitation in particular is a confirmation of the ACK's resolve to alleviate poverty. According to the IDCCS team leader, the body has been able to influence and improve many people's standards of living because it has created a democratic space in its system of operations and management that has enabled both staff and the beneficiaries to freely participate in their own development.

b) Agriculture

The hope of farmers in Kisumu County attaining self sufficiency in the supply of food stuffs has not been achieved over the years. The failure has been caused by among other problems poor climatic conditions, poor soils, small acreage, and high cost of farm inputs, inappropriate farming techniques and unreliability of seeds. Other problems have to do with marketing, acquisition of credit, storage and lack of incentives from the government. Maize is the staple food of the communities in the study area. Over eighty five (85%) of the respondents interviewed, both church leaders and community members, intimated that in order to address food security in the region maize must be made available as most people often consider it "sleeping hungry" if they have not eaten *ugali* of maize. It is important to note that households here depend largely on crop farming, livestock farming, fish farming and poultry farming. Crop and fish farming practiced for family supply (food) whereas fish farming is practiced for both family supply and commercial purposes. Poultry farming though practiced in small scale is mainly for commercial purposes.

c) Crop Farming

Poverty in the study areas is highest by far among those whose principle livelihood is food crop farming. This group accounts for fifty six per cent (56%) of those identified by the study as poor. Subsistence agriculture is the main livelihood in every household in the study, and all are faced with food insecurity and hunger.

In addition to lack of resources the other problems such as small acreage, poor soils, unreliable rainfall and poor techniques of farming, have resulted into poor harvest leading to less food supply and the consequence is lack of food further leading to biting hunger. A respondent in Rata Village, Maseno Division, had the following to say in reference to the small acreage:

We were five brothers and four sisters. Our late father had a few acres of land which we had to share between us (five brothers). Each had to get a small piece of land which was not enough to build a homestead and spare some for farming. But, thank God, our sisters could not claim a stake of the land because our custom does not allow that. Otherwise we would not have had enough even to put up a

homestead. The piece of land I inherited from my father was just enough to put up a homestead. You can see for yourselves . . . and that small piece for farming. I have sons who will also want land to inherit from me, but it is not there. However, that is not the issue, this small piece of land I have put aside for farming cannot provide enough food to feed the family, it has been over used, the rainfall is unreliable, I have to hire somebody to harrow it for me but I have no money to do that so at the end of it all I have nothing to feed my family on (O.I.).

This story by the respondent represents many of such cases in the study. It is a pointer to the high level of poverty in some homesteads occasioned by small acreage, poor soils, unreliable rainfall and poor techniques of farming and not forgetting the costs involved. The ACK Church leaders interviewed acknowledged such scenarios and confirmed that the church through its development wing, IDCCS, is trying its best to assist the families cope out of such predicaments though some situations such as land size and unreliable rainfall are beyond their means. The study revealed further that IDCCS has put measures in place to help farmers improve their crop yields by conducting training in better methods of farming. IDCCS, for example, conducts community trainings in compost making (organic farming), horticulture, home-made pesticides and soil conservation to help farmers increase crop yield for better food security. It is hoped that this would generally improve food situation in the regions and go a long way in mitigating poverty.

d) Horticulture

In horticulture, IDCCS agriculture specialists train the locals in plant propagation and cultivation, crop production and plant breeding. They train women groups who are involved in planting of fruits and vegetables particularly along the lakeshore in Winam Division. They also train local farmers on better ways of improving crop yields, quality and nutritional value. IDCCS put emphasis on landscape horticulture which includes production, marketing and maintenance of landscape plants and horticulture (the production and marketing of vegetables). Locals are trained on activities in nurseries ranging from preparing seeds and cutting to growing fully mature plants. These are often sold or transferred to market gardens. Horticulture is encouraged among peasant farmers because it enables them to cultivate a variety of crops on small scale around their dwellings to take care of their home food supply needs and sell surplus to meet their financial needs.

Marketing of agricultural products is a very challenging but important process to the farmers. IDCCS thus train local farmers on value addition for their farm products before they take them to the market for

sale. Value addition is important to agricultural products because apart from proper packaging for sale, it adds value to some products so that they can fetch high prices in the market. It also takes care of quality, taste and nutrients. Value addition to food products has assumed vital importance due to diversity in socio-economic conditions, industrial growth and urbanization. It is not merely to satisfy producers by way of higher monetary return but also with better taste and nutrition. Value is added by changing their form, colour and other such methods to increase the shelf life of perishables. IDCCS through agricultural specialists organize workshops and group discussions in Maseno and Winam Divisions where they train the local farmers on various related issues amongst people of various categories to increase level of value addition and improve the quality of value added food products for marketing. By doing this, they have turned some crops from a poor man's subsistence crop to a commercial one. IDCCS is not only interested in putting food on a peasant farmer's table but also money in his/her pockets. The study respondents in Rata location of Maseno Division praised IDCCS for training locals on value addition because they can now sell their products in the market more than they used to and this has enabled them to improve their family incomes.

It is important to note that adding value to an otherwise raw product may provide viable entrepreneurial opportunities and get traditional farmers out of poverty. It is because of this reason that IDCCS does not only concentrate its value addition training on agricultural products but intends to cover dairy farming and bee-keeping as well. The IDCCS leaders interviewed admitted that they have not done much in these two areas but added that they have developed a policy and in the near future they would start training local dairy farmers on how they can add value to their milk for sale. They will be trained on how to milk and bottle milk for sale and, churning the milk to produce butter. The farmers will also be trained on simple technology of making yoghurt with many different flavours as well as many types of cream such as whip cream and ice cream. They will also be trained on how to keep bees, how to harvest and put honey in branded containers for sale. This would enable the local farmers market their products with ease and increase their income.

e) Health

Kisumu District has a total of five hospitals, fourteen health centers, forty seven dispensaries and seven maternity and nursing homes. Winam Division has twenty six health facilities, which is the highest in the District. The table below shows the distribution of health facilities in Winam and Maseno Divisions.

Table 6 : Health Centre's in Winam and Maseno Divisions

Division	Hospital	Health Centres	Dispensaries	Maternity & Nursing homes	Total
Winam	3	5	13	5	26
Maseno	1	3	9	0	13

Source: Kisumu District Development Plan, 1997 – 2001

Kisumu District hosts Kisumu City which has been declared a Millennium Town by the United Nations. As such, the town which is in Winam division is being closely monitored for the achievement of Millennium goals. As a millennium city, Kisumu is expected to attain short-term development goals by alleviating poverty through health care. It is expected within a short period to reduce child mortality and improve maternal health, combat HIV and AIDS, Malaria and other diseases to manageable levels (<http://povertyalleviatin.org/wsr/pagehtml>).

For this to be achieved there is need for stakeholders in the health sector to enhance their participation. The enhanced involvement of the private sector and the NGOs, the church in particular, is therefore, a welcome gesture.

A number of respondents interviewed, seventy six per cent (76%) of them, noted that Maseno and Winam Divisions of Kisumu District experience high level of poverty. They argued that the majority of people in the two Divisions lack access to essential health services. As a result, they experience mental and physical health problems which make it harder for them to improve their situations. Some deaths occur due to poverty-related causes with most of them affecting women and children. Poverty related diseases reflect the dynamic relationship between poverty and health. Those living in poverty suffer social isolation because cannot socialize with the rich. The death of a breadwinner, for example, decreases a household's resilience to poverty conditions and causes a dramatic worsening in their situation as they find themselves between a rock and a hard place by the demise of the sole breadwinner. Most respondents averred that health systems were lacking in the study areas and the few present were faced with the problem of increase in mortality burden mainly caused by HIV and AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, pregnancy related problems, childhood illness and malnutrition, just to mention a few of these problems. Health service delivery in the area is wanting and urgent intervention from the stakeholders is greatly needed. It is as a result of this great need that the Government, the ACK and the NGOs are making great efforts to educate the locals on how to deal with ill health conditions. The ACK, for example, has intensified efforts to inform people about HIV and AIDs epidemic and how it can be prevented through abstinence or safe sex practices. The study discovered that the ACK has since its inception in Nyanza region provided preventive and curative health

care to communities living in Maseno and Winam divisions. 67 out of 138 community member interviewed indicated that the ACK has initiated a number of development programmes in the area, health inclusive. The table below shows the local people's responses to four major areas they think the Church has done much in terms of development.

Table 7 : ACK Areas of Activities

Activity Areas	Frequency	Percentage
Education	38	27.5
Health	67	48.6
Agriculture	18	13.0
Water and Sanitation	15	10.9
Total	138	100.0

Source: Field Data (2008)

It is evident from the table above that the local communities view education and health as two of the major areas where the ACK has done a lot compared to agriculture, water and sanitation with health leading at forty eight point six percent (48.6%) followed by education at twenty seven point five percent (27.5%). This view was corroborated by the Church leaders who 64 out of 67 respondents noted that the Church has done a lot in the provision of education and health care to the communities where they operate. In health, for instance, Maseno Hospital is situated in Maseno division whereas St. Stephens Clinic is in Kisumu City, Winam Division. There are other 50 small mobile clinics run by the Church in the two areas which provide quality services to the communities around. Both the Church leaders and community members interviewed expressed strong sentiments that poverty cannot be alleviated unless people's health is given proper attention because hunger causes weakness and illness, which can be catastrophe to rural folks who rely on their physical strength to work for their survival. The situation is made worse by the death of the earning member of the family (breadwinner). This sentiment was echoed in a discussion group in Maseno Division where members argued that the biggest challenge and source of anxiety among the villagers is the prospect of falling ill. Falling ill is a nightmare to them because most villagers are poor and therefore cannot afford hospital charges. Hence, when they fall ill and cannot get treatment, they lose their ability to work and produce food for their survival.

The study established that the ACK has played a significant role in the provision of health care services

for its members and to the communities where it operates regardless of one's faith since its inception in the 1970s. The efforts made by the Church in this area have helped to improve quality of life and members of the community have been able to attend to their daily work. It is also worth noting that although the locals hailed the ACK for this great service, they also complained of high charges, which are sometimes beyond the reach of most vulnerable of groups. This particularly became apparent among respondents in Maseno Division which is rural and members' earnings are very low due to poor marketing strategy and low prices for agricultural products from where their livelihoods depend on. Forty four point seven per cent (44.7%) of the ACK leaders interviewed acknowledged this concern by the locals and noted that it actually affects so many families, who largely depend on low earnings from small scale farming for their survival.

The leaders, however, further argued that it is not the intention of the Church to charge more for their health services but it is due to the high cost of securing drugs and other health related gadgets including workers' salary that force them to raise the cost of their drugs and the fees charged for other services such as consultation and laboratory tests. But they also were quick to counter this by noting that whatever the church charges for health care services offered is still cheaper compared to what other private health institutions charge because theirs is not based on profit-making but on service to humanity. This argument by the church leaders was lent credence by the response of some locals who praised the ACK for their services because they operate in areas where the Government has failed to reach and other private institutions cannot venture into because of the expected loss or less profit. The study established that private health institutions operate only in areas where they could get profit but close shop in areas where the returns were low. It was also noted that even in areas where there were Government health centres or dispensaries, one was not assured of getting better services because they lacked drugs most of the time and staff lacked courtesy in the way they handled patients. Sometimes people have to pay bribes to receive even the so-called "free services" in Government health centres. Those who could not afford bribes or use other corrupt means to gain access to these facilities died before any services were offered or remained alive though God's mercy.

The ACK health sponsored programmes aim at disease prevention and treatment. Mobile health clinics form a common feature in the ACK provision of health services with the help of community resource persons (CHW) supported by various departments such as the youth, mothers Union and Kenya Anglican Men Association. The Church considers provision of health care as a sense of obligation alongside the spiritual duties to address the socio-economic challenges of the

communities in order to successfully contribute to the wholeness of life in the midst of pain and despair.

The importance of good health to poor people cannot be overstated. "It is when we have good health that we can work for the money we need to buy food, pay school fees, buy clothes and prepare *shambas* for planting," remarked a respondent in Maseno. Physical health is vital for the types of livelihoods on which poor people depend and they worry about the prospects of illness or injury which are costly in terms of both lost earnings and medical care. Most respondents identified lack of health care facilities as a major concern in their livelihoods. When illness strikes, getting medical care for poor people across the two communities is out of question due to the long distance to the health care facilities, exorbitant transportation fees and cost of treatment. The provision of health care services to the local communities, especially through mobile clinics is therefore a major relief to the locals albeit the cost involved.

f) ACK and HIV and AIDS

The HIV and AIDS pandemic is one of the most serious health problems facing Kenya today with Kisumu County being no exception. According to the UN-HABITAT, despite Kisumu's rich resource base, it is still one of the poorest cities in Kenya due to food insecurity, growing urban poverty and the high prevalence of HIV (<http://www.unhabitat.org>). This was particularly of interest to the study because Kisumu City falls within Winam Division which is part of the study area.

The study found out that the ACK has plays a key role in dealing with the HIV and AIDS pandemic in the area. One of the major steps which the ACK taken, according to respondents, is breaking the silence on or about the HIV and AIDS by talking freely to members about it thus reduces its stigma that is still very much present within as well as outside the Church. Stigma and discrimination was identified as a factor that interferes with healing process of persons affected and infected with HIV and AIDS. Furthermore, the ACK's concern with HIV and AIDS was due to the high number of children heading households after the death of their parents due to the pandemic by playing parental role to their siblings. The phenomenon of child headed households is common in the area which is a threat to child development and in turn leading to serious repercussions on poverty alleviation. The ACK's involvement in (pastoral) care and support programmes for persons living with AIDS was recognition of the fact that poverty is not only a cause but an effect of HIV and AIDS pandemic. The victims cannot access adequate clinical care because they are poor. To persons living with HIV and AIDS, the ACK's involvement was timely because in addition to other basic necessities they require in life they also need spiritual care. The ACK has

identified the following factors as the driving force behind the vulnerability of the youth and married couples: low level of education; wife guardianship; early marriages; rural urban migration; and, wrong attitude towards VCT and the use of condoms

In order to address some of these factors, the ACK conducts education to its members on cultural, social, economic and political issues that contribute to vulnerability so as to reduce the vulnerability to infection of HIV and AIDS. Church leaders interviewed particularly pointed to the following measures being taken by the Church both regionally and internationally to address HIV and AIDs pandemic:

- i) Promotes and stimulates dialogue within the Church on how to deal with the HIV and AIDS challenges and the stigma;
- ii) Supports the global HIV and AIDs initiative of the World Council of Churches (WCC) with the establishment of AIDS Coordinators; and,
- iii) Promotes and supports the introduction of an HIV and AIDS curriculum in Theological Institutions.

Over eighty six per cent (86%) of the Church leaders interviewed in Maseno and Winam Divisions were aware of HIV and AIDS pandemic in the area and indicated that the ACK was doing the much it can to address the issue. The study further observed that the ACK is changing in its message moving towards an inclusive theology and starting integrated programmes which address pastoral issues alongside poverty eradication programmes and gender disparity as some of the factors that predispose many people to HIV and AIDS vulnerability. About sixty two per cent (62%) of community members interviewed both in Maseno and Winam Divisions were aware of some activities undertaken by the ACK in addressing the issue and is actually contributing to HIV and AIDs' prevention in the areas of the study.

g) *ACK and Education*

The study revealed that education is one of the most important social institutions that should be used in poverty mitigation process because it reaches the largest segment of the population in any country with the goal of guiding it through a systematic learning process. Poverty alleviation needs the support of livelihood systems and survival skills that can help poor people manage their social, economic and political affairs on their own. The role of education in helping people forge close co-operation with other social sectors in order to improve their standard of living is thus very crucial. Not only is education important in helping people acquire systems and skills for survival in life but it is also key to wealth creation. Education would help children from poor families improve their skills in trade and assure them of monthly income through employment. This would ultimately contribute to their economic well-being and that of their families. More precisely, education

would enable children from such families break the poverty circle.

The study established further that there is a very close link between education and well being for households in Maseno and Winam Divisions. Households with people who have attained a minimum qualification of secondary education with some professional training and were working were much better in terms of their well-being in comparison to those households whose members' level of education is extremely low. This was particularly so because those with low levels of education missed out in employment which were well paying. They could only manage to secure hard labour jobs which by their very nature were low paying and could not assist them much in feeding themselves and sending their children to school. The ability to move into more remunerative off-farm employment, to adopt more productive but more risky and complex agricultural technology, or to make a successful transition to urban livelihood is closely linked to literacy and to some levels of education. Individual responses and group discussions reported that over eighty per cent(80%) members of the poor households in Maseno and Winam Divisions had not gone beyond class seven of the old system of education (7:4:2:3) or standard eight of the current system (8:4:4) or had no education at all. Like health care, education is often out of reach for poor families who face formidable barriers of access and cost in trying to send their children to school. Attendance at primary in public schools is supposed to be free but in practice these schools collect forced contributions from parents to supplement their budgets. This is beyond reach to many families which leads to many boys and girls dropping out of school consequently leading a life of thuggariness, prostitution and involvement in many other social ills. In addition, the levels of achievements are also low in terms of standards because of high enrolment due to free primary education.

The study revealed that a large number of poor households (65%) were illiterate and therefore unable to effectively initiate local business development projects. This probably informed their views on the role of education in alleviation of poverty. For instance, some respondents, who were interestingly of low level of education, argued that education given to the children should be able to cater for their diverse needs and provide additional support outside school such as providing them with skills to start local business projects and other survival means. They at the same time noted that the effect of education on poverty alleviation may be slow and less direct although it provides long term benefits to families and the whole community.

Kenya like other third world countries has embarked on poverty alleviation through education. In 2003, when NARC Government took over power from KANU, it declared a universal free primary education

(FPE) to all children. This was aimed at providing for the education of poor children. Even long before that period, communities through NGOs and churches had successfully provided for the education of poor children through sponsorships. They combined school education with health care, guidance and counselling services and income generating activities. The ACK is one of those churches that for sometimes now have successfully sponsored schools and provided for the education of poor children in Maseno and Winam divisions of Kisumu County. The two tables below show ACK leaders and community members' responses to the ACK's involvement in education.

Table 8 : Responses of the ACK Leaders to the Church's Participation in Education

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	64	95.5
No	3	4.5
Total	67	100.0

Source: Field Data (2008)

Table 9 : Responses of the Community Members to the ACK's Participation in Education

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Education	38	27.5
Health	67	48.6
Agriculture	18	13.0
Water & Sanitation	15	10.9
Total	138	100.0

Data: Source: Field (2008)

The questions on the two tables (Table 8 for Church leaders and Table 9 for community members) were the same except in Table 9 for community

members where four items; education, health, agriculture, and water and sanitation were given. Respondents were asked to tick one or more areas where they thought the ACK had done a lot in terms of provision of services. The aim of providing many items for the community members was to check the Church leaders' responses to the same questions. In table 8 representing Church leaders' responses, 64(95.5%) out of 67 respondents indicated that the ACK has done a lot in the area of education while only 3(4.5%) responded to the contrary. In table 9 representing community members, where a number of items were provided for the respondents to tick where they thought the ACK had done a lot, only 38 out of 138 respondents affirmed the Church's participation in education.

Health had the highest responses of 67(100%) of the leaders' responses with agriculture and water and sanitation having 18(26.8%) and 15(22.4%), respectively. 38 respondents who affirmed the Church's participation in education, representing 27.5 percent of the respondents, excluded schools, colleges and other tertiary education institutions which were started by the Church but were later taken over by the Government. 64(95.5%) out of 67 Church leaders who affirmed the Church's participation in education included all schools, colleges and other tertiary educational institutions started by the Church whether they are still under the church management or not. They argued that even those schools and other educational institutions which were previously managed by the Church but were later taken over by the Government still maintain the tradition of the Church and champion its mission and vision. The ACK is the second church with the largest following in the region after the Catholic Church, and therefore, based on its mandate its participation in education is crucial in poverty alleviation.

Table 10 : ACK Sponsored Educational Institutions

Division	Primary	Secondary	Business College	Village Polytechnic
Maseno Division	16	10	0	1
Winam Division	30	17	1	1
Total	46	27	1	2

Source: Diocese of Maseno South (2008)

It is evident from the table that the ACK sponsors a number of educational institutions in Maseno and Winam Divisions. In Maseno the Church sponsors 16 primary schools, 10 Secondary Schools and 1 Village Polytechnic whereas in Winam the Church sponsors 30 Primary Schools, 17 Secondary Schools, 1 Business College and 1 Village polytechnic. The grand total of all ACK sponsored institutions in Winam and Maseno Divisions is 76. This is by all standards greater achievement by one church in the region. It also explains the fact that the pursuit of poverty alleviation through education continues to be at the heart of the Church. Furthermore, it reinforces the Church's view that

matters of poverty are quite complex and cannot be addressed in isolation as it cuts through many thematic areas including health, education, development, agriculture, among others. Since education is one of the thematic areas where the ACK Church has positively contributed to nation building that translates into better livelihoods for all, suffices to consider ACK's philosophy of education.

VI. THE ACK'S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

The ACK leaders interviewed argued that the ACK's philosophy of education is based on the premise that each person finds identity, meaning and purpose in

life through connections to the community, to the natural world and to spiritual values such as compassion and peace. Education with a holistic perspective which the ACK advocates is concerned with the development of every person's intellectual, emotional, social, physical, artistic, creative and spiritual potential that ultimately lead to compassion and peace in a person. It seeks to engage learners in the learning process and encourages personal and collective responsibility. Spirituality is an important component of education as it emphasizes the relationships of all living things to God and stresses the harmony between the inner life and outer life.

The Church leaders further noted that while the term "education" does not appear in the Bible, educational terms including "teach", "teacher", "learn" and "learning" appear several times. Education theologically implies beginning with God. God's original intent for man was to learn how to eke a living through education by conforming, communing and co working with Him (Genesis 1:26-28, 3:8).

God created humankind in His own image, after His likeness and assigned him occupation of and dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:26-28). Humankind in the image of God had mental and moral capacities, but the human was not omniscient and needed to learn so that he might accomplish God's purpose for him. The first education occurred when God communicated to humankind, in the form of a command, which explicitly stated human's purpose on earth; "be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth, and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28). This was the first form of education in the Garden of Eden and which was later on passed to the descendants of Adam, consequently to the entire humankind.

The ultimate purpose of education was to see Jesus Christ formed within humanity so that people could increasingly commune and co-work with God for His glory and for mankind's blessing (Galatians 4:19; Ephesians 4:11-13). It is for this reason that the Christian Church and the ACK in particular, put emphasis on holistic education to the children because it promotes several strategies of survival as communicated by God Himself to humankind in the Garden of Eden. The survival strategies communicated to humankind in the garden included how to get out of poverty. An ACK leader respondent noted that the poorest people are those who, while they were children, were excluded from opportunities that would lead them break out of poverty circle. Similarly, children who are denied the opportunity to get education would be the future victims of the vicious circle of poverty. This is a concern for the family (parents) as well as the Church because God commissioned the family to have jurisdiction over child training and education (Galatians 4:1-2; Ephesians 5:22-6:4).

The Church is thus a teaching institution. God has commissioned the Church to discipline (teach) all

nations (Matthew 28:18-20). In addition to each individual's personal spheres of responsibility for which he is accountable to God (Romans 14:12), God has established other spheres of responsibility (authority or jurisdiction) such as the family (Genesis 24-25), the state (Genesis 9:6, Romans 13:1) and the Church (Matthew 18:15-20) to have authority over education. The role of the state in provision of education is particularly important because its primary role is to protect the family and the Church in performing their educational responsibilities (Romans 13:3). Consequently, schools have authority only as the family and the Church delegate that authority to them. Thus, the Bible (Both Old and New Testaments) are the framework for all true education (Romans 17:17).

The ACK recognizes the fact that children have needs that surpass learning standard curriculum concepts such as reading and writing. So for the poorest, meeting these other needs is critical, if they are to succeed in the school system. For instance, there are basic needs of food, health care, shelter and clothing that should be dealt with first. Education is thus hampered by health issues such as malnutrition, either because they simply do not get enough food or because their diet is not balanced enough to provide all the essential nutrients. Hungry and malnourished children cannot concentrate, and are more prone to different diseases. Working together with the Government of Kenya, the communities and other partners, the ACK considers issues in education system to help in alleviating poverty.

VII. WATER AND SANITATION

Water is one of the greatest necessities of human life. A clean supply of water is necessary for life and health in the society. According to the indicators set by UN-HABITAT water should be available at any quantity of at least 20 litres per person per day (Mugo, 2004). However, many homesteads in rural areas do not have access to clean, safe drinking water. Proper sanitation facilities are also rare, particularly in slum dwellings in towns and in rural areas. Access to clean drinking water and basic sanitation facilities could transform the lives of the poorest families in the world. It was for this reason that the United Nations (UN) Millennium Summit 2000, and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (SSD) 2002 launched 21st Century with a challenge and a promise to reduce by half the proportion of people who are unable to reach or afford safe drinking water by 2015. The safe, drinking water campaign is also part of the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) for poverty eradication in the 21st century (Khosla, 2003).

Despite Kisumu District being surrounded by Lake Victoria – the largest fresh water lake in Africa, many households in Maseno and Winam Divisions do

not have access to clean, safe drinking water and lack proper sanitation facilities. While various efforts have been made by local and national governments, international NGOs and church organizations the problem still persists. Water-borne diseases such as typhoid, cholera and dysentery contribute to numerous deaths in the regions. The unfolding scenario has made interested parties such as the local and national arms of Government, the NGOs and the Church to redouble, their efforts in the provision of water and sanitation facilities.

The study found out that the ACK is one of the Churches in the region that has taken up the challenge of providing water and sanitation facilities to the local communities. Through IDCCS it provides the necessary assistance by engaging in community mobilization and capacity building in health and agriculture in addition to water and sanitation with a view to alleviating poverty in Maseno and Winam Divisions. In the process, the Church particularly targets women groups for water and sanitation. As the traditional water bearers and custodians of family health, women shoulder a huge burden in coping with the lack of access to sanitation services.

It is the view of the ACK that lack of these facilities coupled with poor hygiene behaviours contribute heavily to poor health and indignities that women and their families suffer. For example, the study established that lack of sanitation facilities has significantly different impacts on women than men. Due to deforestation and the expansion of cultivation in the study area, women and girls mostly in rural areas have to get up early in the morning than they already do to attend to their biological needs. Similar societal pressures for privacy do not put the same onus on men. Some respondents reported case of women and girls having been raped and assaulted when attempting to go out to help themselves in the dark insecure places far from their homes. Sanitation is thus more of a woman's issue though it impacts on both genders but women and girls face the highest burden because traditionally they are in charge of fetching this precious commodity for domestic use. They also walk long distances to go and fetch water, which is time consuming and quite tiresome especially to women who have to attend to the house work. The study found out that most households buy water from vendors, rainwater and unprotected wells exposing them to great risk of contracting water borne diseases.

Although the paper observes that the ACK has not done much on the ground in the provision of water and sanitation services, it has an ambitious plan through IDCCS to sink bore holes in all its sponsored schools and buy water tanks for the harvesting of rain water. It also intensifies efforts to maintain high standards of hygiene by training managers of learning institutions and community members on how to make modern pit-

latrines for use. The aim is to promote basic health for students and teachers as well as to the local communities to reduce risk of contracting diseases. The study ascertained that lack of safe, drinking water and proper sanitation facilities have led to considerable increase in water related and other easily spread diseases due to poor sanitation such as typhoid, dysentery and cholera leading to severe sickness and deaths, particularly among infants and young children.

a) *Achievements and Challenges Facing the ACK in its Areas of Operations*

The success of any organization dealing with poverty alleviation related issues may be measured in terms of services rendered and the peoples' responses to those services and how they impact on their lives. It is also important to note as reported earlier in the study that poverty is relative in nature, therefore, is not very easy to virtually eradicate but may easily be minimized to a level that may enable the vulnerable groups meet their basic needs in life. The study thus assessed the achievements and challenges facing the ACK's influence on poverty alleviation in Maseno and Winam Divisions of Kisumu District based on the relative nature of poverty, the respondents' views and the researcher's own observations. It was also the assumption of the study that for the ACK to succeed in reducing poverty it must base its interventions on certain principles such as equity and ethics, relevance of intervention activities to the needs of the poor, accessibility, efficiency and sustainability, participation of the communities concerned, and taking into account of gender specificity.

Interventions comprised actions aimed at improving education by sponsoring schools, health through the provision of hospitals and health centres/dispensaries and the intensification of the fight against practices harmful to health, HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis, maternal and child mortality, malnutrition; through immunization, education, environmental health and clean water supply. Poverty can also be improved through better agriculture methods of farming, provision of shelter and employment; through job creation in farming and ACK institutions.

The challenges call for considerable work in view of the lack of the skills required and given the complexity of the problem of poverty. The study particularly noted that the poor perception by the people of the contribution of the interventions to poverty alleviation; the strengthening of the efficiency and/or effectiveness of the ACK in comparison to other bodies; desired results in the context of limited resources; participation of the people themselves; and the low level of education of the vulnerable groups have greatly influenced the church's overall achievements in the fight against poverty.

VIII. ACHIEVEMENTS

a) Education

i. Achievements

The role of education in poverty alleviation and in close cooperation with other social sectors is quite crucial. People with at least a basic education are more likely to have access to a range of social services, and to participate more actively in local and national issues. Education empowers individuals by opening up avenues of communication that would otherwise be closed, expanding personal choice and control over one's environment and providing the basis for acquiring many other skills. The study respondents revealed that children from poor families have numerous disadvantages in comparison to their better-off counterparts because they develop negative attitude towards life; being generally emotional and physically deprived. However, education gives them access to information, which trains them how to cope better with work and family responsibilities, and changes the image they have of themselves. The relationship between poverty alleviation and education is thus very clear and cannot be overemphasized. Educated people have higher income earning potential and are able to improve their quality of life. Education is, therefore, very crucial to achieving sustained economic growth and hence sustained poverty alleviation. From the foregoing, there is a strong relationship between ACK implemented programmes in education and which correlated with performance in schools and general literacy levels of the respondents in the study area.

The paper findings reveals that the ACK has made major strides in the provision of education in Maseno and Winam divisions of Kisumu District thus aiding in the alleviation of poverty. Maseno High School, one of the most prominent and famous national schools, and Maseno School for the deaf and blind are sponsored by the ACK. These schools stand unique in the study area and attest to the Church's success and commitment in providing education to the citizens. There are several other schools and vocational training colleges sponsored by ACK which have contributed a lot in raising the literacy levels of the local people. Through education, the ACK has empowered, both individuals and groups, by increasing their skills, earning ability and participation in community governance which is a powerful instrument for helping break the poverty circle. Provision of education is thus a success story of the ACK's involvement in development in general by increasing earning potentials of the locals, expanded labour mobility, promoted the health of the households (both parents and children) and reduced fertility and child mortality. For example, households whose heads had university education were found to earn more income than those households whose heads had secondary or below levels of education, which

subsequently translated to good life. The co-efficiency of variation in education points to the efforts by ACK.

ii. Challenges

It is important, however, to note on the outset that a large number of schools in Pre-independence Kenya were established by the churches and missionary societies. However, at post-independence, some of the schools were handed over, taken over or acquiesced to the Government of Kenya by the respective churches and Church related organizations. As a result, the Government and some local communities have been wrestling the Church out of the sponsored schools and the property rights of churches have been ignored as the government seeks to control the education system. For example, the Church has been marginalized in the management of such schools. This has discouraged the participation of the Church in the management of such schools, as they would have wished because they are regarded with contempt. The ACK is no exception to this as it poses a serious challenge in its provision of education to the communities.

The other critical challenge that the Church faces in its attempt to provide education is lack of resources, both in terms of funds and human resources. The Church depends on some donor aids to finance its schools, yet some of these aids are limited and not reliable. Sometimes, students admitted in the Church schools come from poor families and fail to pay school fees on schedule. This adversely affects the management of these schools because in the absence of donor funding they depend on school fees collected to run the schools. The ACK thus faces a multiple of challenges caused by lack of resources as it cannot employ enough and qualified teachers and expand physical infrastructure for the ever increasing number of student population.

The conflict of interest in the management of schools sponsored by the ACK is another serious challenge facing the church. The paper established that the Church nominates some members to sit in the Board of Governance (BOG) or sometimes appoint the chairman of the board. However, the Church sometimes nominates ineffective representation to the BOG who on several occasions do not attend the meetings or have not grasped education policies, which result in poor management of such schools.

The sacred-secular divide also presents another challenge to the Church. The pervasive belief that some parts of humankind's life are not really important to God but anything to do with prayer, Church services and church-based activities among a section of leaders have seriously affected the Church's commitment in the provision of secular education to the young ones. Some ACK leaders interviewed revealed that this feeling among those who have failed to harmonize their thinking of the sacred-secular divide have hindered some

Church funding to education projects, arguing that secular aspects of education tend to overshadow the spiritual aspects, which should be the focus of the Church.

b) *Agriculture*

i. *Achievements*

The Church recognizes the fact that rural folk depend largely on agriculture for their survival. Thus to alleviate poverty in rural areas there is need to enhance the prestige of the farmer and constantly to show humanity's role as honourable and desirable. To achieve this goal, the ACK through IDCCS Agricultural specialists, hold advocacy seminars for farmers in Maseno and Winam divisions where they instil in the minds of the local farmers the importance of raising family income through agriculture. They train the farmers how to improve farm yields through better methods of farming and how to market their products and fetch good prices on the market through value addition. This approach by the Church has encouraged the youth, many of whom are school leavers and are unemployed, to embrace farming as an occupation. The local farmers and the youth who have embraced farming and now consider it honourable and desirable have been able to raise their families' food security and income. Though modestly, the ACK has been able to contribute to poverty reduction in the area because those unemployed now engage in full time farming and improve their products for marketing thereby earning good income. It is, therefore, outright to conclude that the co-efficient of variations in agriculture has led to tremendous development changes in Winam and Maseno Divisions due to interventions by ACK. Through the agricultural programmes, poverty reduction has taken place despite Kisumu District still being rated at 48.9% in poverty rates in 2010.

ii. *Challenges*

Poor rural access roads and other key physical infrastructure leading to high transportation costs have impeded IDCCS officers moving around the villages to advice farmers and also hold trainings on better methods of farming. In addition, lack of qualified agricultural officers employed by the Church has meant reduced effectiveness of extension services to the farmers in the study regions. Inadequate research-extension-farmer linkages to facilitate demand-driven research and increased use of costly inputs such as seeds, pesticides and fertilizers are high for poor farmers. Such high costs and inadequate financial and human resource continues to constrain ACK's participation in agriculture.

c) *Health*

i. *Achievements*

Perhaps one of the most fundamental areas where the ACK has made a mark in its effort against

poverty alleviation in Maseno and Winam divisions of Kisumu District is health. The Church regards good health as constituting the physical, mental and social well being of people and its achievements is critical in enhancing the fight against poverty. The study revealed that the Church since its inception has and continues to play a major role in the provision of health care services to residents of the two study areas. Community members interviewed commended the Church for its good health service programmes which they noted have helped to improve the local people's standard of living.

Through preventive curative services such as immunization, primary health care, treatment and through proper nutritional tips, the ACK has been able to assist the Government in controlling water borne diseases; such as cholera, typhoid and amoeba; reduced child mortality rate, new HIV and AIDS infections, and new deaths in general. On HIV and AIDS, for example, it was revealed that the church has changed its message from an earlier one which viewed people living with the pandemic as sinful because of its association with sex to a more inclusive theology and starting integrated programmes which address pastoral issues alongside poverty eradication programmes and gender disparity as some of the factors that drive people to HIV and AIDS vulnerability. To this end, the Church has come up with a range of interventions that include preventive therapy, impact mitigation, and lobby and advocacy. Of special importance are voluntary counselling and testing centres, strengthening the coping strategies at household and community levels.

As a result of the ACK increased efforts in the provision of quality health care in the study area, there has been a remarkable change on the socio-economic potentiality of the local people. Ill health which used to reduce people's potentiality in farming, education and engaging in other income generating activities have been checked leading to an overall improvement in the standards of living. The health sector also exhibited a growth and thus a co-efficient of variations in reduction of child mortality and improvement in maternal health care could be attributed to the health programmes implemented by the ACK in the study area.

ii. *Challenges*

The paper found out that the main source of funding for the ACK health services when it started health ministry included the following:-

- i) Finance and in-kind donations from sister churches abroad;
- ii) Donated drugs, medical supplies and equipments; and,
- iii) User fees – fees charged to patients who sought treatment at the ACK health facilities.

The situation is, however, different today as the ACK relies heavily on revenue generated from patient fees, which the Church leaders' respondents attributed

to be about eighty per cent (80 %) financing of the recurrent expenditure. This is posing a sustainability challenge to the Church's health care services because revenue generated from patients is on downward trend due to poverty and decline in patient numbers as a result of competition from the government and other private health institutions. Donations from other bodies have also become quite irregular and in most cases designated to capital development, provision of equipments or special programmes like the HIV and AIDS. The Government grants that used to be given to churches are no longer in existence. The Government support, if any, tends to be in the form of medical supplies such as vaccines, TB drugs and ARVs but in limited quantities.

As a result of the dwindling financial resources, there is no staff motivation and the Church cannot attract specialized staffs that have essential competence and skills in health management and governance. Financial sustainability has thus become a major challenge to the ACK, with the situation being further complicated by high costs of healthcare inputs. This has ultimately minimized the ACK's policies and focus on affordable and accessible primary health services for the poor majority of Maseno and Winam division residents.

It is, however, important to note that the relationship between poverty and health is quite complex and is a major challenge to all those who want services and the service providers as well. Many factors play into this web including low educational levels and awareness of needed medical care, environmental conditions, financial barriers in accessing health services and a lack of resource necessary to maintain good health status.

Lack of financial means and health insurance by the residents to pay for health care services provided further worsens the ACK's ability to provide health care to the local people as its financial resources are limited and depends on revenue from paid services to continue with the work.

d) *Employment*

i. *Achievements*

Employment serves as a very good link between growth and poverty reduction because it is the direct source of income to a household. Job creation contributes significantly to the objective of poverty alleviation in situations where people have low income or are unemployed. The ACK has made a significant contribution in the area of employment to the people of Maseno and Winam divisions of Kisumu District since the time of its inception. The Church has and continues to provide employment opportunities in many of the schools it sponsors, health centres and dispensaries and in the Church itself. People of varied professions such as clerks, accountants and administrators not to mention the clergy have been employed by the Church

to perform various duties to enable it carry out its mandate of offering services to the community. The direct income these people receive in form of salary is a great boost to the areas' economy because some employees of the Church institutions have invested in other business ventures where they have also employed other people to earn a living.

Through IDCCS, the Church has increased employment opportunities in the offices and small farm sector. For example, IDCCS has a team leader, several programme managers and area co-coordinators, financial manager and account assistants. These positions have attracted young and educated members of the church, and priorities are given to the members of the local communities. IDCCS has also helped the local farmers to improve their crop yields by conducting training in better methods of farming and value addition for better marketing of farm products. This has encouraged small-scale farmers to redouble their efforts in farming and very many young educated unemployed have joined farming because it now pays and is a better alternative to formal employment. IDCCS has proved that increased work opportunities can be provided in this section through self-employment. The variations which are notable in the two divisions due to job creation by the ACK are quite visible. The income generation programmes initiated by the Church have provided many young people with employment and created many other opportunities for self-employment in Winam and Maseno Divisions. These variations in employment could also be accredited to efforts by the ACK.

ii. *Challenges*

Just as in health, education and agriculture a number of limitations impinge on employment to the ACK. First, there is the problem of limited financial resources. Because of this, the Church cannot employ more people as its social service, specifically services aimed at poverty alleviation, must compete with its spiritual service. This is a great challenge to the ACK as it finds itself at the cross-roads; whether to employ more Church ministers to promote spiritual growth of the Church or to employ more specialists in education, health, agriculture and any other area to improve the people's social welfare and standards of living.

Secondly, it was observed that the ACK may be slow in engaging in development activities because the church leadership believes that some of its clergy involved in social work in one way or another tend to set aside their religious vocation by engaging too much in secular matters, which pose serious danger to the growth of the Church. This was because some Church leaders may be tempted to spend much of their time engaging in secular work instead of sacred duty of spreading the gospel, which is the primary mission of the Church.

Thirdly, the paper further notes that very often Church leaders do not receive the necessary support from some pious Church members as well as some Government and political leaders whenever they engage in activities outside their spiritual beliefs because they view them as indulging in secular activities (politics). A good number of Church leaders interviewed reported the above mentioned as some of the major impediments to the Church's efforts in poverty alleviation. As a result, some churches resort to giving lip service to the effect that development is part and parcel of the gospel ministry but do not participate in it fully for fear of their work being sabotaged.

Fourthly, perhaps the greatest opportunity for the creation of new employment opportunities in the small farm sector lies in expansion of cash crop areas which are labour-intensive. Unfortunately, a number of limitations impinge on this and the most important of these is the capital requirement which applies, not only to acquisition of the basic planting material, but also for the working capital that is required to finance and develop them until they come to maturity. This is a challenge both to the farmers and the Church. The farmers cannot afford to acquire the basic planting materials and the Church too cannot afford to employ qualified agricultural specialists to train the local farmers. The above four mentioned including the inadequate land for farming and enough space for carrying out other income generating activities have greatly impinged on the ACK's contribution to employment as a means of combating poverty.

e) *Overarching Challenges*

Some of the overarching issues that threaten the ACK's full participation in poverty alleviation in Maseno and Winam divisions of Kisumu District can be grouped into two main categories: those that apply to all technical areas and those specific to each area. Some specific to each area have been looked at in the foregoing discussion (section 4.14.1) above, for example, challenges specific to education, agriculture, health and employment. Discussed below are some of the challenges which the study considered overarching to the Church and cut across all the areas of its operation.

i. *Poor Infrastructure*

Poor infrastructure especially in the transport sector is a major hindrance to the ACK's participation in poverty alleviation. Many roads in rural areas of Maseno division are impassable due to their bad conditions. In some cases the roads are not there or they are badly constructed, just looking like semblance of footpaths, which may not be accessible to all vehicles. One of the major tools that ACK uses to alleviate poverty in rural areas is through advocacy, training and civic education of the locals. However, bad roads hinder movement of IDCCS workers who carry out this work for the Church

as they take longer times moving from one village to another thus resulting to time wastage. Vehicle maintenance is also too costly to the Church because of bad conditions of these roads that it uses to reach the communities in need.

ii. *Ignorance*

Ignorance among the local people is another overarching challenge to the Church. The study found out that most people, especially in the rural areas believe that the services they need can only be provided by Government institutions and for free. Hence strong apathy exhibited towards Church Health Centres or Dispensaries in some regions by sick poor. Sometimes they would prefer travelling long distances to access Government Health Centres to attending Church Health Centres in the neighbourhoods. Three reasons were noted as the contributory factors to this apathy:

- i) First, members of a different faith do not feel comfortable seeking treatment in a health centre or dispensary belonging to another faith because of doctrinal differences. This rekindles the rivalry between the Catholic Church and Protestant Churches.
- ii) Secondly, most poor sick believe that treatment in Government health institutions are free, but if not free, are cheaper and have qualified health personnel compared to Church health institutions.
- iii) Thirdly, because of the poor state of most people in rural areas, some believe that they can corrupt their way to get free or cheap services in government health institutions through some small tokens. Since church institutions are known to uphold principles of honesty and integrity such poor and sick rural people would prefer Government health institutions where they can easily corrupt their way to get the so called 'free services'.

This attitude caused by ignorance has slowed down the ACK's efforts in combating diseases, which is a major drain to the poor household's finances and is a significant contributor to low productivity of labour force in those areas.

iii. *Social and Cultural Obstacles*

The socio-cultural attitudes of the people are another serious overarching challenge in the way of the Church's poverty alleviation efforts. Apart from being ignorant of how to improve their own standards of living, most people in the two divisions are still conservative in their habits. They take pride in their native culture and are not generally receptive to what the Church teaches which they regard to be 'foreign ideas'. The extended family system, for example, increases the burden on a few members of the family who might be lucky to have some form of direct income from employment thus reducing their ability to engage in micro-economic investments. Moreover, the ACK's teaching against the unnecessary expenditure on deaths and funerals as a

way of tackling poverty has not helped much as some local Christians still value these practices important virtues in their lives. There are also some taboos and customs that prevent the women folk from engaging in income generating activities that could improve their standards of living yet women head majority of homesteads after the death of their husbands.

These socio-cultural attributes acts as impediments on many sectors that may be used to fight poverty. In education, for example, supporting boys' education is preferred to girls because girls' status in the family is regarded as temporary. This increases illiteracy rates among girls who are the greatest suppliers of labour force in rural areas and later become the heads of many households after the death of their husbands. On health, the culture of wife-inheritance among the local communities in spite of the Church's teaching against it has proved to be a major challenge to poverty alleviation. Health workers and the Church blame the spread of HIV and AIDS, which has caused miseries to many families to wife-inheritance and sexual cleansing performed after funerals, burials and initiation ceremonies. AIDS is a great burden to the infected and affected persons because they spend fortunes to manage the disease by buying expensive drugs and food supplements instead of taking care of their other needs.

iv. *Ethical Dimension*

Another area important considering and cited by some ACK leader's respondents is the ethical dimension. In order to make progress with solving the problem of poverty, it is indispensable to grasp the ethical nature of the whole issue. If the cause of poverty is a moral evil, above and beyond all the physical, structural and cultural causes, the challenges are also of a moral nature just as they are of social, economic and political dimensions. This challenge involves acquiring a better understanding of the phenomena (People's capacity for mutual service), which may be done through well-understood economic forces and also doing away with corruption of every kind.

The huge task the ACK is facing, just like other secular organization, is to foster mutual service and good conduct. Some respondents intimated that greater efficiency in management; greater respect for social justice; and practice of solidarity (preventing corruption, and defending the interests of all), which should be the guiding principle of Church's development programmes were lacking. The study established that some ACK leaders engage in corrupt deals by redirecting funds to unintended purposes for their own benefits. Other instances are simply a case of misuse of funds, for example, spending on seminars and workshops in big hotels whose end results do not have direct benefits to the poor on the ground. Cases of projects being taken to some areas because the leaders happen to come

from there were noted to be too common. Nepotism in employment, conflict of interest and sabotage in addition to other malpractices, collectively impede on the ACK's performance on poverty alleviation. Although the Church is generally expected to maintain a high degree of honesty, transparency and accountability in all levels of its operations, this ethical issue was found to want thus putting the Church's record on poverty alleviation at jeopardy.

v. *The Dependency Syndrome*

The attitude and belief that the local people cannot solve their own problems without the outside help was noted to be another overarching challenge to the ACK. The study discovered that some projects started by the ACK collapse immediately it pulls out either because of lack of funds or because of political interference. When the Church ceases to manage the projects and hands them over to the community, in most cases, the community members lack motivation or skills to continue with the work, for instance, repair and maintain the facility if it was a borehole. In order for such projects to be maintained and sustained, the community members must have a sense of 'responsibility' and the necessary skills for the project. This lack of 'ownership' of some projects by community members was noted to come about as a result of the ACK's failure to involve members in some decision making, planning and management at the initial stages of project formation.

vi. *Monitoring and Evaluation*

Monitoring and evaluation is another critical area that was observed to be one of the major overarching challenges to the ACK's participation in poverty alleviation projects and programmes. The obvious reason given by the Church leaders was lack of human and financial resources. However, a close scrutiny of the problem from some respondents' reactions made the study to conclude that those charged with the management of the projects and programmes and the staff view this to be a fact-finding mission by the management. In some cases, project staff and management consider themselves as too busy to evaluate their activities. In others, the people charged with the process do not know the objectives, aims and purposes of monitoring and evaluation thus ending up with retrogressive reports that affect the normal project operations, hence the feeling that it is a fact-finding mission targeting workers for dismissal. It is true that evaluation reports have been used to victimize staff, particularly with the introduction of retrenchment in the public and private sectors. However, this only happens where genuine monitoring and evaluation process does not involve the project team in decisions pertaining to the outcome of the exercise.

IX. CONCLUSION

It is imperative to note that the ACK initially established as the CPK in the 1970s immediately embarked on serious development activities to empower the local communities in areas of their operations without any form of discrimination based on one's religious or denominational affiliation. The CCS department of the ACK runs a secretariat with programme officers who provide facilitation services and capacity building to community based groups, with a view to empowering them spiritually, socially and economically to improve their wellbeing. As a result, the church has focused its activities on several areas including provision of educational facilities, health care services, training locals on proper methods of farming, water and sanitation as well as job creation to the local communities.

Although the ACK was initially slow in handling HIV and AIDS related issues, the study established that its present move towards an inclusive theology and starting integrated programmes which addressed pastoral issues on people infected and affected by the HIV and AIDS pandemic alongside other causes of poverty in social, economic and political arenas and gender disparity concerns has endeared the ACK to the poor. All the above stated areas of the ACK operations in Maseno and Winam Divisions of Kisumu District are clear proofs of the Church's response to the plight of the poor and a clear manifestation of its contribution to poverty alleviation in the study areas.

It is also important to point out from the foregoing findings and discussions that the ACK has made some progress in its efforts to alleviate poverty and the same time faced several challenges in Maseno and Winam Divisions. Making education available to the community members, providing primary health care, training of small-scale farmers on marketing their products, and creating employment opportunities perhaps are the most outstanding achievements and major contributions of the ACK to poverty alleviation efforts. Some of the major challenges faced by the ACK in the process of carrying out its activities include; lack of support from the people themselves, political interference, corruption, mismanagement of financial and human resources combined with impeding moral, social and cultural issues.

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